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The Case of New Institutionalism:
Maria Lind at the Kunstverein München, 2002–2004.

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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INTRODUCTION

Now, since this world of nations has been made by men, let us see in what institutions all men agree and always have agreed. For these institutions will be able to give us the universal and eternal principles (such as every science must have) on which all nations were founded and still preserve themselves.

Giambattista Vico, *The New Science*, 1725

Think we must. Let us never cease from thinking—what is this “civilization” in which we find ourselves? What are these ceremonies and why should we take part in them? What are these professions and why should we make money out of them?

Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, 1938

This thesis focuses on a particular moment in the history and development of the Kunstverein München’s identity. Founded amidst the social turmoil and changing civil society in early-19th century Bavaria, in Germany, the kunstverein is a peculiar type of art institution. My analysis focuses especially on the directorship and curatorial practice of Maria Lind at the Kunstverein München from 2002 to 2004 (Figure 1). Her tenure there is often referred to as exemplary of the New Institutionalism, a phenomenon and discourse developed around the practice of international curators and museum directors in the 1990s and 2000s, mostly within social democracies of northwestern Europe. With the belief in the transformative potential of public institutions as sites of ideological and ethical contestation, it evolved at a moment of increased corporatization of the art world. The contention of the thesis is that when we speak about institutions there is an inherent interdependence between the historical, financial, and the sociopolitical. To be able to bring this out and approach Maria Lind’s directorship from the perspective of New Institutionalism, I attempt to bridge the gap between what the Kunstverein München was thought to be doing, and what it actually did. Consequently, the thesis builds on a rapidly growing body of literature on New Institutionalism as an idea and practice,

read through the lens of the concept of a director-curator and institution as an “agonistic space,” as conceptualized by Chantal Mouffe.

This choice is practice-driven as well as personal. *Sputniks*, the collaborative model Lind developed at the Kunstverein München to re-approach the structural and conceptual envelope of the institution had a significant impact on my practice as a curator. My personal commitment to the institutional sphere and understanding of an art institution as a medium open to both curators and artists is largely due to acquaintance with Maria Lind’s work in 2012. Curatorial maneuvers within the institutional structures of a contemporary art space must be considered beyond the mere logic of survival or economic gain. Lind’s belief in curatorial risk-taking that aimed to amplify and develop the institution’s capacity to influence political and ideological agendas is both longed for and not impossible, as demonstrated by the case of the Kunstverein München.

Before delving into the workings of the kunstverein under Lind, we need to investigate what kind of institution Kunstverein München is. Therefore it is important to pose the question: what is an institution in general? What constitutes an institution has recently been under constant discussion and re-negotiation. Every particular institution attempts to answer this question by formulating various relationships both inwards and outwards. It implies interrogating an institution’s identity, understanding of its function in society as in relation to other social institutions, its goals, and respective formats to enable their realization and empower those involved. I, however, am less concerned with re-writing institutional art history, and even less with attempting to pin down a single institutional history. As a practitioner, I am instead concerned with mapping the possibilities for re-inventing and re-inhabiting in current conditions of economic frustration and almost chronic precariousness of art institutions. Learning about and from less widely known or unduly forgotten institutions can help us to put these issues in context. The pressing question can thus be outlined: what are the models, re-

sources, skills, and knowledge bases needed to develop relevant and responsive research-led art institutions? How can we use existing institutional frameworks and develop strategies and “instituent practices”¹ for the future?

Mary Douglas’s 1986 social anthropological study *How Institutions Think* has been crucial to my conceptual approach to institutions.² Douglas argued that different kinds of institutions allow individuals to think different kinds of thoughts and experience (and respectively express) different kinds of emotions. She writes that “for better or for worse, individuals really do share their thoughts and they do to some extent harmonize their preferences, and they have no other way to make the big decisions except within the scope of institutions they build.”³ Douglas was not the first or the only one to write about individual cognition as socially constructed and controlled, but she places the emphasis on our responsibility for the thinking we produce through the institutions in which we take part. Within Douglas’s theory of institutions, thinking itself appears dependent upon institutions. So when we “think institution,” despite our attitude or possible lines of development such thinking might take (critical or submissive, oppositional or supportive), we find ourselves deeply embedded and confined by the already present experience of institutions.

There is no unified canon, model, or standard of what an art institution is, despite the fact that international bodies like the International Council of Museums (ICOM) do provide a certain assumption, filtered through the decades, about what a museum and its principal func-

¹For an outline of the “instituent practices” concept see Gerald Raunig’s and Steven Nowotny’s essays in *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique*. When Raunig and Nowotny speak of “instituent practices” they describe a “movement of flight” that can and should resist the power of institutionalizing processes, a critical engagement with and continuation of institutional critique, and an examination of the institutional conditions of artistic production as well as its forms of presentation and reception. See Gerald Raunig, “Instituent Practices: Fleeing, Instituting, Transforming” and Steven Nowotny, “Anti-Canonization: The Differential Knowledge of Institutional Critique”, both in *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique*, eds. Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray (London: MayFlyBooks/eipcp, 2009).

² Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986).

³ *Ibid.*, 128.

tions ought to be.⁴ But whatever definitions or rules are suggested or might appear, they are not set in stone.

The philosopher John Searle, in his text “What Is an Institution?”⁵ brings a linguistic perspective to the question and argues that language is the primary institution, as it does not just describe a preexisting institutional reality but is largely constitutive of that reality.⁶ According to Searle, institutional facts only exist by virtue of collective acceptance of something having a certain status. Status functions are the glue that holds human societies together, as their underlying ontology reveals a common structure. Searle sees the essential role of human institutions as creating new sorts of power relationships. Above all, human institutions are initially enabling, because they stipulate deontic powers,⁷ such as rights, duties, obligations, authorizations, permissions, empowerments, requirements, certifications, etc.⁸ Without the recognition, acknowledgement, and acceptance of deontic relationships that can be manifested only through language, institutional power is worthless. Deontology enables structures of

⁴ According to ICOM, “A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study, and enjoyment.” See ICOM, “ICOM Statutes: Definition of Terms,” accessed August 18, 2018, <http://archives.icom.museum/statutes.html#2> and “Definitions of the Museum”, *ICOM News*, no.2 (2004), http://archives.icom.museum/definition_museum.html.

⁵ “You would think that by now there would be a very well-defined and worked-out theory of institutions. One reason for the inadequacy of the tradition is that the authors, stretching all the way back to Aristotle, tend to take language for granted. They assume language and then ask how human institutions are possible and what their nature and function is. But of course if you presuppose language, you have already presupposed institutions. . . . Instead of presupposing language and analyzing institutions, we have to analyze the role of language in the constitution of institutions.” John R. Searle, “What Is an Institution?”, *Journal of Institutional Economics* 1, no. 1 (2005): 1–22.

⁶ Searle explains that the general logical formula of the imposition of status functions is *X counts as Y in C*. According to Searle, status functions are constitutive of institutional structures and can be performed by an object or a person only by virtue of the collective acceptance of the corresponding status.

⁷ Deontology (Greek *δέον*, *δεοντ*- that which is binding, duty (neuter of present participle of *δεῖ* it is binding, it behoves) + *-λογία* discourse) is the science of duty; that branch of knowledge which deals with moral obligations; ethics. See “deontology, n.,” OED Online, accessed December 05, 2018, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/50155?redirectedFrom=deontology&>.

⁸ According to Searle, not all deontic power is institutional, but just about all institutional structures are matters of deontic power: “An institutional fact is any fact that has the logical structure *X counts as Y in C*, where the *Y* term assigns a status function and (with few exceptions) the status function carries a deontology.” Searle, “What is and Institution?”, 10.

power relationships and, therefore, Searle argues that by creating institutional reality, we increase human power because we increase human capacity for action.⁹

⁹ As a philosopher of language, Searle argues that the form of the collective acceptance has to be in the broadest sense linguistic or symbolic, because there is nothing else there to mark the level of status function. The symbolization has to carry the deontic powers, because there is nothing in the sheer physical facts that carries the deontology by itself. The crucial function of language is the recognition of the institution as such. In order for status functions to be recognized, there typically have to be some sorts of status indicators, since the status is only there by collective acceptance or recognition. But collective recognition is not enough, there has to be official recognition by some agency, itself supported by collective recognition, and there have to be status indicators issued by the official agency. Therefore language units are just markers, but ineluctable/unavoidable markers, for the amount of deontic power that institutions have. *Ibid.*, 15-16.

CHAPTER I

SETTING THE STAGE: FROM MUSEUMS TO DIRECTOR-CURATOR SPACES

In light of these discussions, we can now turn to what seems to dominate current attitudes towards art institutions, which are often perceived as traditional and conservative. Museums and art academies, in particular, bear most of the “burden,” as they are often trapped in a vicious circle of identifying with outdated protocols while perceiving themselves as victims of a hostile external system.

Historical analyses of such institutions tend toward generalization in their exposition of the structures, mechanisms, and functions, as well as the contextual and ideological conditions of institutions. Illustrative of this approach is sociologist Tony Bennett’s seminal study *The Birth of the Museum* (1995), in which he summarizes the museum landscape with the phrase “exhibitionary complex”; he describes museums as “vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the message of power (but of a different type) throughout society.”¹⁰ However, often-times little theoretical ground is brought to the argument as to what an institution, a social institution at large and an art institution in particular, is and therefore should be. The reasons for the highly divergent evaluations of the current situation and approach to it lie within the hybrid constellations that have become part of the everyday reality of all kinds of art institutions. They are hybrid not only in relation to funding bodies and financing models (eg. public-private partnerships) but also more basically with regard to the way different institutions conceive of themselves and their respective roles in society.

¹⁰ Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, eds. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (London/New York: Routledge, 1996), 82. Also see Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” in *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics, Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995).

The marketization and instrumentalization of art and art institutions in the course of neoliberal politics, a process Mark Fisher has called “capitalist realism,”¹¹ have radically shaken the foundations of culture institutions. Today, hardly any aspect of institutional operation can organize outside the logic and invasive influence of the art market growing exponentially since the 1980s. A forced and ever increasing adaptation to its spreading logic, including large-scale privatization and deregulation, in addition to recent political developments have significantly factored into the destabilization of institutional bonds such as authority, trust, social capital, and capacity. As early as 1990, in her essay “The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum,” Rosalind Krauss noted that museums have been transformed from being bastions of elite culture in the 19th century, to their present form as populist centers for leisure and entertainment.¹²

As neoliberalism has rapidly contracted the public sphere, enforcing the hegemony of the “economization of creativity,” public support for art and culture has eventually been shrinking.¹³ Art institutions have been forced to demonstrate profitability and accountability above all, and ultimately have found themselves in competition with each other. Such a pragmatic, economically driven model of analysis is derived from the New Public Management approach, both in terms of time and methodology. While this approach was tailored and relevant for profit-oriented objectives and business, art institutions were and still are forced to adapt to this type of language, bureaucratization, complicated and unstable conditionality of cultural subsidies, erosive managerial language, and operational grammar.

¹¹ Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2009).

¹² Rosalind Krauss, “The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum,” *October* 54 (1990): 3–17.

¹³ See Nina Möntmann, “Art and its Institutions,” in *Art and its Institutions. Current Conflicts, Critique and Collaborations*, ed. Nina Möntmann (London: BlackDog, 2005) and Beatrice von Bismarck, “In Stellung bringen,” in *Kritik der Kreativität*, eds. Gerald Raunig and Uld Wuggenig (Vienna: Turia + Kant, 2007).

With fundamental shifts towards “new economies” and the heyday of the branding phenomenon central to corporate globalization, for the art institutions in the 2000s the pressure to develop a market-oriented profile increased substantially.¹⁴ The normative educational role of museums has shifted to edutainment and consumerism. The “experience economy” fostered the urge towards orchestrating memorable events for “consumers,” which in context of art took the form of so-called blockbuster shows.¹⁵ The normalization of neoliberal strategies and managerialism have taken over the art field in its entirety, and as Anthony Davies summarized, “cultural institutions . . . are on the frontline of an all-out assault on the way that we think, the way in which we have come to internalize and accept the ‘reality’ of market forces as somehow inevitable, desirable even.”¹⁶

The term New Institutionalism was appropriated from the social sciences and introduced to debates over arts institutions and their role by Norwegian curator Jonas Ekeberg in the eponymously named first issue of the publication-series *Verksted*, published by the Office for Contemporary Art Norway in 2003.¹⁷ It reflected a tendency among a number of medium-sized (predominantly non-collecting) art institutions concentrated on a social democratic axis

¹⁴ Among spectacular examples of this would be monumental and signature architecture meant to stimulate cultural tourism across territories and economies, like Guggenheim Bilbao, Louvre Lens, and the two museum-brands now present in Abu Dhabi. On the smaller scale but pervasively the number of commercialized spaces within institutions, i.e. gift and design shops, visitor centers and services suggested by them also increased significantly; as well as the expansion of embedded restaurants and cafes infrastructure and their visibility as a necessary marketable part of the museum’s identity.

¹⁵ “At GMB [Guggenheim Museum Bilbao] 70 percent of operating costs must be covered by museum revenue and 30 percent by the local government. As a consequence, fulfilling the budgetary predictions implies a commitment to attracting the highest number of visitors possible, normally through special exhibitions.” Beatriz Plaza and Silke N. Haarich, “The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao: Between Regional Embeddedness and Global Networking,” *European Planning Studies* 23, no. 8 (2015): 9.

¹⁶ Anthony Davies, “Lost in Normalisation,” in *Under Construction: On Institutional Practice*, eds. Vanessa Joan Müller and Nikolaus Schafhausen (Cologne: Walther König, 2007), 121.

¹⁷ At that time Ekerberg was the first curator at the Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA), founded in 2002. He worked together with the director Ute Meta Bauer and co-curator Christiane Erharter on establishing the OCA as a new kind of cultural-exchange institution, one that was not geared towards promotion in its economical valence, but towards investing in current artistic and societal discourses. The publication thus reflected the endeavour of the curatorial team, i.e. self-interrogation and attempts to redefine what the OCA itself was and could be. The publication included essays by Julia Bryan-Wilson, Eivind Furnesvik, and Rebecca Gordon Nesbitt. See Jonas Ekeberg, ed., *New Institutionalism. Verksted # 1* (Oslo: Office for Contemporary Art Norway, 2003).

in northwestern Europe: the Nordic countries, the Netherlands, and Germany. As independent curators gradually gained an increasingly prominent role¹⁸ in the late 1990s and early 2000s, they also began to acquire management positions in art institutions.¹⁹ Hal Foster has labeled these practitioners “director-curators,” a term that implies a particular combination of the managerial functions and curatorial practice within an art institution.²⁰ Vested with strategic, operational, and budgetary authority, they were performing a critical role from inside the institution. Their approach was to identify mainstream institutional practices (particularly those of museums) and processes (blockbuster shows, increasing demand for outstanding visitor numbers and edutainment), and then develop alternative forms, defining the critical strategies they would employ.²¹

¹⁸ Paul O’Neill labelled it the *curatorial turn*, the shift in contemporary art wherein the curator increasingly played a “creative and active part within the production of art itself.” O’Neill, “The Curatorial Turn: From Practice to Discourse,” in *Issues in Curating Contemporary Art and Performance*, ed. Judith Rugg (Chicago: Intellect, 2007), 15. O’Neill writes that curators are “willing themselves to be the key subject and producer of this discourse” when they ask and answer questions like “Is the curator an artist who pulls together work from others to produce an exhibition?”, “Is the emphasis of such an exhibition on the exhibition itself, the artist(s), or the curator?”, and “Do curators help bring art to the public eye, or merely assist in its merchandising?” O’Neill, “The Curatorial Turn: From Practice to Discourse,” 26.

The Swiss curator Harald Szeemann impacted the evolution of contemporary curating significantly. His *When Attitudes Become Form* in Kunsthalle Bern in 1969 and *Documenta 5* in Kassel in 1972 are perfect examples of how both the curator’s vision and identity take on a visibly heightened presence. But more importantly (in this context), in 1969 Szeemann founded a single-man institution, The Agentur für geistige Gastarbeit, that manifested him as an independent curator and an institution simultaneously in contrast to the rigid traditional art institution burdened by bureaucracy.

¹⁹ Jens Hoffmann, “Curating Left and Right,” *Parkett*, no. 84 (2008), 184.

²⁰ Hal Foster, “The Artist as Ethnographer,” in *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*, October Books (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 198.

²¹ Particularly in his role of the director of the Landesmuseum in Hannover in the 1920s, Alexander Dorner was a precursor to the distinctive director-curator identity. Dorner claimed, “The new type of art institute cannot merely be an art museum as it has been until now, but no museum at all. The new type will be more like a power station, a producer of new energy.” See Samuel Cauman, *The Living Museum: Experiences of an Art Historian and Museum Director, Alexander Dorner* (New York: New York University Press, 1958), 147. Dorner began to restructure the collections and gallery spaces of the Provinzialmuseum in 1923 to achieve “an active museum practice.” Working directly with artists and acquiring avant-garde works for the collection, Dorner challenged the notion of the museum as a neutral space or a repository of universal knowledge, instead restructuring it to become a *Kraftwerk* (power station). He anticipated approaches that would reappear only later, like the museum in permanent transformation, the multi-identity museum, the museum as a laboratory, and the museum as a source of relative truths. For more information see Sandra Karina Löschke, “Material Aesthetics and Agency: Alexander Dorner and the Stage-Managed Museum,” *Interstices 14: “Immaterial Materialities”* (2013), 25–37; Rebecca K. Uchill, “Developing Experience: Alexander Dorner’s Exhibitions, from Weimar Republic Germany to the Cold War United States,” (PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015); Monika Flacke, *Museumskonzeptionen in der Weimarer Republik: die Tätigkeit Alexander Dorners im Provinzialmuseum Hannover*

The evolution of such approaches was significantly affected by the “articulation theory” developed by Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau.²² As a framework, it explains that by bringing together certain elements (people, objects, words) in a specific way the meaning of social institutions is produced. Therefore it is a continuous constituent process understood as always formed through “moments” of articulation. As the term “moment” indicates, the meaning of elements is only ever fixed temporarily and can be transformed through a process of disarticulation and rearticulation. It is always possible to disband a hegemonic discourse and pull apart its constitutive moments, which then can be reconsidered and assembled differently.

This horizon of new “moments” was crucial for New Institutionalism as a discourse and phenomenon re-approaching the role and function of the art institution from the perspective of curatorial practice. The modes of production and programing acquired and elaborated within practices affiliated with New Institutionalism promoted the transformation of reception from an individual viewer’s inaudible monologue or silent contemplation, to a dialogic and participatory process. Production was understood as not necessarily happening prior to and remote from presentation. Genealogically such approaches to programing were connected to the radical shifts in artistic practices of the preceding decades.

The mutual learning systems that artists and curators developed in some “new institutions” can be read as connected to the anti-psychiatry movement of the 1960s associated with the work of R. D. Laing and Félix Guattari, or to artistic practices such as Lygia Clark’s. The

(Marburg: Jonas, 1985); and Monika Flacke, “Alexander Dorner,” in *Avantgarde und Publikum: zur Rezeption avantgardistischer Kunst in Deutschland, 1905–1933*, ed. Henricke Junge (Vienna: Böhrer, 1992), 51–58.

²² Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985).

Mouffe explains hegemonic practices as “articulatory practices through which a certain order is established and the meaning of social institutions fixed.” Counter-hegemonic practices, therefore, are “practices which attempt to disarticulate the existing order so as to install another form of hegemony.” See: Chantal Mouffe, “Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces,” *Art and Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*, 1, no. 2 (summer 2007), accessed November 29, 2018, <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/mouffe.html>.

post-studio, feminist, and politically engaged practices developed in the 1970s set forth new conditions and demands for artistic production and display. The rigidity of formal institutions towards these changes induced artists to consolidate their efforts and found spaces where they could experiment with forms and formats of public engagement.²³ At the end of the 1980s a “post-reflexive turn” of museology fostered significant re-considerations of internal structures, formal procedures and functioning of the museum as the flagship institution of art, reclaiming it for a more diversified, multi-voiced, and shared practice.²⁴ So-called “project-based exhibitions” and “non-exhibition-based curatorial activities” became crucial sites for curatorial experimentation and fostered new forms of reception for art, now both inside and outside of art institutions.²⁵ Such openly political and experimental modes of exhibition-making outside of the museum nurtured the ground for the research platforms that proliferated in late 1990s and later for the development of New Institutionalism in the early 2000s.²⁶

Mouffe’s ideas about the social necessity of antagonism and her approach to institutions as an agonistic public space have become the crucial framework for the institutional directors

²³ See Steven Rand and Heather Kouris, eds., *Playing by the Rules: Alternative Thinking, Alternative Spaces* (New York: Apexart, 2010); Julie Ault, *Alternative Art: New York, 1965–1985* (New York: Drawing Center, 2009); Gabriele Detterer and Maurizio Nannucci, eds., *Artist-Run Spaces: Non-Profit Collective Organizations in the 1960s and 1970s* (Zurich: JRP/Ringier, 2012); Lauren Rosati Lauren and Mary Anne Staniszewski, *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces, 1960–2010* (London: MIT Press, 2012); Jeff Khonsary and Kristina Lee Podessa, eds., *Institutions by Artists* (Vancouver: Filip Editions, 2012); Stine Herbert and Ann Szefer Karlsen, eds., *Self-Organized* (London: Open Editions, 2013); Francesco Spampinato, *Can You Hear Me? Music Labels by Visual Artists* (Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2015); Geoff Cox and Jacob Lund, eds., *Artist-Run Europe: Practice/Projects/Spaces* (Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2016); and Melissa Rachleff and Lynn Gumpert, eds., *Inventing Downtown: Artist-Run Galleries in New York City, 1952–1965* (New York: Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 2017);

²⁴ See Peter Vergo, ed., *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion Books, 1989) and Zsófia Frazon, “New Museology,” in *Curatorial Dictionary*, ed. Eszter Szakács, curator (tranzit.hu), accessed August 8, 2018 <http://tranzit.org/curatorialdictionary/index.php/dictionary/new-museology>.

²⁵ Illustrative are Group Material’s early exhibition projects in public space, *DA ZI BAOS* (1982), *M5* (1982), and *Subculture* (1983), as well as curator Mary Jane Jacobs’s site-specific exhibition projects *Places with a Past* (1991) and *Culture in Action* (1992–1993). See Paul O’Neill, “The Curatorial Turn” and Nora Sternfeld, “Kuratorische Ansätze,” in *Handbuch Ausstellungstheorie und Praxis*, ed. schnittpunkt ARGE (Vienna: Böhlau, 2013).

²⁶ Here it is worth mentioning Catherine David’s *100 Days—100 Guests* developed for *Documenta X* (1997) as an example of a discursive format outside the exhibition space. *Documenta XI* (2002) by Okwui Enwezor continued and expanded upon the idea via *Platforms*—format that encompassed five symposia taking place globally.

and curators to conceptualize, talk about, and carry out their practice within existing institutions.²⁷ Given Mouffe's continued engagement with the curatorial field, her viewing exhibition as a hegemonic and didactic form that cannot produce the discourses necessary to stimulate political change affected the emergence and development of new forms of practice. As a result, exhibition making within New Institutionalism gradually turned into a reduced part of art institutional practice giving over its visual and spatial properties to discourse. As Jens Hoffman commented,

while larger museums have used non-exhibition-centered programming to attract bigger and more diverse audiences, smaller institutions that are less audience-focused and more intellectually and politically minded have discovered that these non-exhibition-based curatorial efforts offer ways to move beyond the traditional concept of exhibitions as displays of artworks in a white cube.²⁸

Mouffe's writings also significantly fueled the opposition to the idea of "exodus" or abandoning institutions.²⁹ She argues the latter prevents people from recognizing the potential for transforming public institutions into counter-hegemonic apparatuses. Despite the fact that the normative educational role of museums has shifted under neoliberal capitalism to education and consumerism, Mouffe argues that through the implementation of counter-

²⁷ Mouffe is deeply embedded in the contemporary art circuit and the rotation of her public talks and texts is truly extraordinary. Articles published in art journals and magazines are too numerous to list in full, but see "Museum as Agonistic Spaces," *Artforum International* 48, no. 10 (summer 2010): 326–330; "Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces," *Art and Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods* 1, no. 2 (summer 2007), accessed September 23, 2018, <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/mouffe.html>; and "Cultural workers as Organic Intellectuals," in *The Artist as Public Intellectual?*, eds. Stephan Schmidt-Wulffen and Sabeth Buchmann (Vienna: Schlebrügge, 2008).

²⁸ Jens Hoffmann, "A Plea for Exhibitions," *Mousse Magazine*, no. 24 (June 2009), accessed August 2, 2018, <http://moussemagazine.it/jens-hoffmann-plea-for-exhibitions-2010>.

²⁹ Mouffe articulates the main differences between her "counter-hegemonic critique from within" and the autonomist's "exodus" or "withdrawal from institutions" in an article for *eipcp* (The European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies). See "Critique as Counter-Hegemonic Intervention," *transversal. The Art of Critique* (April 2008), accessed August 8, 2018, <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0808/mouffe/en>.

hegemonic strategies, the museum, “far from being an institution to be deserted posthaste— becomes a crucial site of political contestation.”³⁰

Indeed, New Institutionalism’s scrutiny of the social, economic, and physical structure of institutional milieu and particular identities is closely related to practices identified with institutional critique that were developed in several waves from the early 1970s to the 1990s.³¹ From a schematic perspective, the “first wave” of institutional critique sought distance from the institution, the “second” addressed the inevitable involvement in the institution. But whereas within institutional critique the artist tended to act against the institution— oftentimes (but not necessarily) on commission and on a temporary basis, thus confined to exhibition parameters and catalogues—directors-curators affiliated with New Institutionalism absorbed this mode of inquiry and transformed it into a continuous reflexive practice from within the boundaries of the institution.³² As James Voorhies pointedly remarks, artistic institutional critique from its very beginnings was aimed at destabilizing the institution, regardless of its subsequent inclusion in the canonical debates of art history and the resulting factual disempowerment of its critical intentions.³³ To most artists of the 1970s, the idea of an institutional critique being practiced by institutions themselves would have been oxymoronic: insti-

³⁰ Chantal Mouffe, “Democratic Politics in the Age of Post-Fordism,” in *Open. The Art Biennial as a Global Phenomenon: Strategies in Neo-Political Times*, ed. Jorinde Seijdel (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2009), 40.

³¹ For a useful overview of institutional critique, see the reader *Institutional Critique and After*, edited by John C. Welchman. In his introduction Welchman beautifully points out that the discussions surrounding institutional critique often disregard recent developments in the institutional landscape of the time. Christian Kravagna suggests a collection of “writings on institutional critique by artists” in his publication *Das Museum als Arena*. See Christian Kravagna, ed. *Das Museum als Arena: institutionskritische Texte von KünstlerInnen* [The museum as arena: artists on institutional critique] (Cologne: Walther König, 2001). Also see Jerlyn Marie Jareunpoon-Phillipset, et al., *Giant Step: Essays on Institutional Critique* (Bari: Vessel Art Projects, 2013).

³² In *Cultures of Curating and Curating of Culture(s)*, Paul O’Neill traces the impact of the institutional critique mounted by certain artists since the 1970s on curators as they absorbed many of its lessons into their practice. See Paul O’Neill, *Cultures of Curating and Curating of Culture(s)* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012). Terry Smith supports this observation in “Artists as Curators/Curators as Artists,” the third chapter of his *Thinking Contemporary Curating* book. See Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York, NY: Independent Curators International, 2012).

³³ James Timothy Voorhies, *Beyond Objecthood: The Exhibition as a Critical Form Since 1968* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2017), 72.

tutional critique, by definition, was something conducted from the outside.³⁴ And yet arguably it is precisely these artistic practices that turned art institutions into negotiable entities, and its diverse interventions often refused to conceptualize the institution as a powerful and static adversary, instead extracting from it transparency, flexibility, or openness—extracting possibilities to act.

Within the discourse of New Institutionalism, the director-curator was seen and empowered as the primary agent of change, capable of transforming institution's identity, subverting hegemonic practice, and reinventing its social role. Curator Jens Hoffman, while working on the project *Institution²* at the Helsinki-based KIASMA Museum of Contemporary Art in 2003, outlined an interrogative framework that is relevant to the endeavors of New Institutionalism at large: What possibilities does an institution have for shaping an understanding of culture, art, and politics? What is its impact on the local community? What does the public expect from an art institution? Why should anybody care?³⁵ Mouffe argues that innovative forms of institutional practice foster a new radical democratic model, an alternative to the deliberative democracy (advanced by Jürgen Habermas), which, in her view, is instrumental for sustaining the absolute hegemony of neoliberal capitalism.³⁶ Mouffe suggests the concept of “agonism”—a form of conflict based on a great respect for both one's opponents and the process of struggle itself. In her model of “agonistic pluralism,” the point of democratic politics is not to eradicate antagonism, but instead to provide a common symbolic ground that allows people to fully express their different, conflicting positions in an atmos-

³⁴ Quite literally artists often physically closed galleries, wrapped them, plastered paper over their façades, and so on. See Brian O'Doherty, “The Gallery as a Gesture,” in *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Santa Monica: Lapis Press, 1986), 87-109.

³⁵ Jonas Ekeberg, ed., *New Institutionalism: Verksted #1* (Oslo: Office for Contemporary Art Norway, 2003), 2.

³⁶ Mouffe articulates the task of democratic theorists as “envisag[ing] the creation of a vibrant ‘agonistic’ public sphere of contestation where different hegemonic political projects can be confronted.” Mouffe, *On the Political* (London: Routledge, 2005) 3.

phere of mutual respect.³⁷ In consonance with Mouffe's ideas, the director-curator Charles Esche wrote that within the New Institutionalism of the early 2000s there was a micro-political drive to redefine the social role of the institution by engaging with local community groups and providing spaces for the public display of their interests. However, this was only a part of a wider macro-political aim of resisting the "totality of global capitalism" to "install other forms of democracy than the ones we had."³⁸

Situating New Institutionalism

It is like a nickname; it came from other people's thoughts and opinions.

Maria Lind³⁹

The New Institutionalist discourse began to acquire and outline its domain first and foremost in publications. Early examples are Anna Harding's *Curating: The Contemporary Art Museum and Beyond*, The Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art's (NIFCA) *Stopping the Process*, a seminar and subsequently a publication; the conference *Process and Participation: Art, Artist and Audience* at Ikon and the following publication *Out of Here: Creative Collaborations Beyond the Gallery*.⁴⁰

³⁷ She criticizes the consensus-oriented approach because, if personal convictions are set aside from political decision-making, it deprives subjects from the possibility to think and interact politically. When personal ethical and moral values are distanced from moments of considering political issues, political questions risk becoming reduced to "mere technical issues to be solved by experts." See Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*.

³⁸ Charles Esche, "We Were Learning by Doing: An Interview with Charles Esche," *OnCurating* 21 (New)Institution(alism) (January 2014): 24, accessed August 14, 2018, <http://www.on-curating.org/issue-21.html#.XBKEmRMzZ24>.

³⁹ Maria Lind, "We Want to Become an Institution," *OnCurating* 21 (January 2014): 29, accessed August 14, 2018, <http://www.on-curating.org/issue-21.html#.XBKEmRMzZ24>.

⁴⁰ Anna Harding, *Curating: The Contemporary Art Museum and Beyond* (London: Art & Design Profile, 1997); Mika Hannula, ed., *Stopping the Process? Contemporary Views on Art and Exhibitions* (Helsinki: NIFCA, 1998); and Claire Doherty, *Out of Here: Creative Collaborations Beyond the Gallery* (Birmingham: Ikon Gallery 1998). *Process and Participation: Art, Artist, and Audience* took place in November 1997 in Birmingham.

Importantly, Nicolas Bourriaud's influential book *Esthétique relationnelle* was published in French in 1998, just a year after his landmark exhibition *Traffic* at the CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain in Bordeaux.⁴¹ Bourriaud defines Relational art as one that takes “as its theoretical horizon the sphere of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an autonomous and private symbolic space.”⁴² It is of great consequence that the critically reflexive activity of New Institutionalism emerged alongside the relational art concept promoted by Bourriaud, striving to redefine the contemporary art institution and its role in shaping art and culture through expanded notions of the exhibition, social engagement, and alternative approaches to institutional agenda.

As noted above, the term New Institutionalism was formally introduced into contemporary art by Jonas Ekeberg in 2003. *New Institutionalism: Verksted #1* is a relatively small compilation of observational essays that examine case studies of institutions, exhibitions, and biennials, historicizing them through the lenses of Conceptual Art and Institutional Critique, imposing on them the term “new institutionalism.”⁴³

Ekeberg defines New Institutionalism along the lines of relational aesthetics, straightforwardly enough referencing Bourriaud as ideologist of the decade (i.e. the 1990s). However he remarks that Bourriaud in his *Relational Aesthetics*, published in English in 2002, was more concerned with the work of art rather than the institution of art. Still, the field of New

⁴¹ In the catalog for the exhibition *Traffic*, Bourriaud mentions his concept of “relational aesthetics” (where artworks are a vehicle for creating encounters between the artist and the viewers, the latter of which is ideally involved as an active participant) for the first time. The exhibition turned on notions such as the significance of the “social” experience, blurring the boundaries between real life and high art, lived experience, and expanded definitions of what contemporary art might entail. Among participating artists were Rirkrit Tiravanija, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Lothar Hempel, Henrik Plenge Jakobsen, Liam Gillick, Jason Rhoades, etc. See Nicolas Bourriaud, *Traffic* (Bordeaux: capc Musée d'art contemporain, 1996). The introductory essay is available online: <http://www.mayrevue.com/en/traffic-espaces-temps-de-lechange>. For the critique see Carl Freedman, “Traffic,” *Frieze Magazine* 28 (1996), accessed September 25, 2018, <https://frieze-com.proxy.wexler.hunter.cuny.edu/article/traffic>.

⁴² Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les Presses Du Réel, 2002).

⁴³ Ekeberg, *New Institutionalism. Verksted # 1*, 2003.

Institutionalism fitted Bourriaud's description for Ekeberg perfectly: ". . . it is no longer possible to consider the contemporary work as a space to be walked through . . . it is henceforth presented as a period of time to be lived through, like an opening of unlimited discussion."⁴⁴ Ekeberg's introduction to the *New Institutionalism: Verksted #1* brings to the foreground the self-reflexive activity taking place at the art institutions, which

seemed at last ready to let go not only the limited discourse of the work of art as a mere object, but also the whole institutional framework that went with it, a framework that the "extended" field of contemporary art had simply inherited from high modernism, along with its white cube, its top down attitude of curators and directors, its links to certain (insider) audiences, and so on and so forth.⁴⁵

The "social imaginary," concept promoted by the philosopher Charles Taylor was a common leitmotif in the practice of experimental institutions of the 2000s whose programs enabled people to see themselves as part of the larger social structure, imagine social relationships and expectations from them otherwise, as well as acknowledge normative pressure these relationships would be subject to.⁴⁶ Thus, curator Charles Esche, upon taking over the direction of the Rooseum in Malmö, Sweden in 2000, stated that "an art center, perhaps as opposed to a museum, should create a space for artists, creative groups, and individuals to give social change some form of expression that allows for reflection and discussion."⁴⁷

In selecting his topic and cases supporting it, Ekeberg largely relied on Esche's practice at the Rooseum and the institutional program he developed as its director-curator. Esche relaunched the Malmö institution in 2001 suggesting,

⁴⁴ Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 16.

⁴⁵ Ekeberg, *New Institutionalism*, 9.

⁴⁶ Charles Taylor's concept of the "social imaginary": "I am thinking rather of the ways in which people imagine the whole of their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met and the deeper normative notions that underlie these expectations." Charles Taylor, "Modern Social Imaginaries," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 [36] (2002): 92.

⁴⁷ Charles Esche in conversation with Mats Stjernstedt, "Rooseum Director Charles Esche on the Art Center of the 21st Century," *Artforum* (2001), accessed August 18, 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120215163103/www.artforum.com/index.php?pn=interview&id=1331>.

Now, the term “art” might be starting to describe that space in society for experimentation, questioning, and discovery that religion, science, and philosophy have occupied sporadically in former times. It has become an active space rather than one of passive observation. Therefore the institutions to foster it have to be part-community center, part-laboratory, and part-academy, with less need for the established showroom function.⁴⁸

Esche’s words echo those of Brian Holmes, an art critic and activist who has written extensively on the emergence of the museum as “proactive laboratory of social evolution” within a context of the decline of the welfare state.⁴⁹ The position from within was an enabling tool to explore the key question: “can art be a useful democratic device . . . to install other forms of democracy than the ones we had?”⁵⁰

Ekeberg’s publication was not the only endeavor around this time to approach and somehow map the recent changes in the institutional milieu and the specific role a curator plays in it. But it became a landmark for New Institutionalism within the art world. In her essay “New Institutionalism Revisited” for the publication *Giant Step*, curator Nina Möntmann distills a sort of a formula of New Institutionalism, condensed and somewhat idealized:

the institution was to become a flatly hierarchical, interactive, and versatile production site at all levels, incorporating curatorial criticality and multifunctional rooms adapted to a flexible, interdisciplinary program. **It should produce a public rather than reach an audience**; integrate the process of artistic production into institutional activities with residencies, workshops, and studio space; initiate a discourse, or at least admit critical debate into institutional practice at various levels, rather than reactively depicting and commenting on

⁴⁸ Esche openly declared his position. See, for example, the title of his first exhibition at the Rooseum in 2001—*There is gonna be some trouble, a whole house will need rebuilding*—titled after a Morrissey quote. Charles Esche, “What’s the Point of Art Centres Anyway?—Possibility, Art and Democratic Deviance,” *Republicart. Institution* (April 2004), accessed August 14, 2018, http://www.republicart.net/disc/institution/esche01_en.htm.

⁴⁹ Brian Holmes, “A Rising Tide of Contradiction. Museums in the Age of the Expanding Workfare State,” *Republicart. Institution* (April 2004), accessed September 09, 2018, http://www.republicart.net/disc/institution/holmes03_en.htm.

⁵⁰ Katharina Stenbeck, ed., *There’s Gonna Be Some Trouble: The Five Year Rooseum Book 2001–2006* (Malmö: Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art, 2007) and Charles Esche, “We Were Learning by Doing,” *OnCurating* 21 (January 2014): 29, accessed August 14, 2018, <http://www.on-curating.org/issue-21.html#.XBKEmRMzZ24>.

what is happening in the world; and the viewer was to be relieved of his passivity and become an active participant in a creative and discursive process. Un-bureaucratic organizational transparency and participative openness in program-planning are thus fundamental factors in the functioning of the *new institutions*.⁵¹

A number of institutional directorships from the 1990s have been retrospectively designated as early instances of what would be later sketched out as New Institutionalism: Ute Meta Bauer (1990–1994)⁵² and then Nicolaus Schafhausen (1995–1998)⁵³ at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart; Kestutis Kuizinas, along with Deimantas Narkevičius and Raimundas Malašauskas, at Contemporary Art Center (CAC) in Vilnius (1992–present); and Ursula Biemann (1995–1998), soon joined by Marion von Osten (1996–1998), at Shedhalle⁵⁴ in Zurich. It should be noted that later research and publications on New Institutionalism began to broaden the term's horizon, both chronologically and geographically.

From 1999 to 2002 the list increased significantly as Schafhausen took over Kunstverein Frankfurt (1999–2005), Maria Hlavajova founded and took charge of the basis *voor actuele kunst* (BAK) in Utrecht (2000–present),⁵⁵ Nicolas Bourriaud and Jérôme Sans became the founding directors of Palais de Tokyo (1999–2006), and Vasif Kortun founded Platform Garanti Contemporary Art in Istanbul in 2001 (until 2010). Worth particular mention are the directorships of Catherine David in Witte de With in Rotterdam (2002–2004), Charles Esche

⁵¹ Emphasis added. Nina Möntmann, “New Institutionalism Revisited,” in *Giant Step: Essays on Institutional Critique*, eds. Jareunpoon-Phillips, et al. (Bari: Vessel Art Projects, 2013), 105.

⁵² Bauer served as Founding Director of the Office For Contemporary Art Norway (OCA) from 2002 to 2005.

⁵³ Schafhausen was director of Künstlerhaus Stuttgart during the 1990s. Between 1999 and 2005, he was director of Kunstverein Frankfurt. From 2006 to 2011, he was the director of Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam and since 2012 he has been the strategic advisor of Fogo Island Arts. The Umbau Raum was a project and service by Nicolaus Schafhausen, running in 1996–1998 at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart. Operating without a fixed timeline and only partially defined in use, it was a space with furnishings and objects by artists that served as a library, workspace, living room, and hangout.

⁵⁴ Shedhalle as an institution deserves much more attention in terms of curatorial strategies and experiments beyond this particular directorship and relevance to the matters of New Institutionalism. A brief history, as well as the sequence of their curators, is available on their official page: <http://archiv2017.shedhalle.ch/en/72/HISTORY>.

⁵⁵ Hlavajova has been the general and Artistic Director of BAK (basis voor actuele kunst) in Utrecht (since 2000), and Artistic Director of FORMER WEST (since 2008), which she initiated and developed as an international research, education, publication, and exhibition undertaking.

at the Rooseum in Malmö, (2000–2004) and Maria Lind at the Kunstverein München (2002–2004).⁵⁶

Alongside curating, most of these practitioners had also carved out distinctive positions as critics and educators, articulating and mediating the expanded field of exhibitions particularly within the growing number of curatorial studies programs. For instance Alex Farquharson insists on factoring in these curators' freelance work in the 1990s into the development of New Institutionalism, be it curating Manifesta (Lind and Hlavajova) or the Istanbul Biennial (Kortun in 1993), co-founding an idiosyncratic art space (particularly in the UK, what Lind did at Salon 3, and Esche at The Modern Institute), establishing a critical journal (Bourriaud's *Documents sur l'Art*), or a critical and curatorial studies program (Esche's project *Protoacademy* in Edinburgh).⁵⁷

New Institutionalism developed its visibility discursively through manifold research initiatives, conferences, and symposiums, oftentimes resulting in publications that incorporated not only essays by interconnected practitioners, critics, and theoreticians, but also contributions and/or projects by artists commissioned on the occasion. In 2003 Farquharson published two articles in *Art Monthly*, "I Curate You Curate We Curate" and "Curator and the Artist" touching upon issues that would become central to the development of the discourse, but, importantly not yet labelling these practices.

In 2003, Jens Hoffmann organized *Institution*², an exhibition and seminar at the Museum of Contemporary Art KIASMA in Helsinki, Finland looking into the practice of ten experimental European art institutions "that manifest a flexible and progressive approach to a criti-

⁵⁶ Institutions like Bergen Kunsthalle, Bergen; Museet for samtidskunst, Oslo; Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Taidehalli, Helsinki; Siuolaikiniö meno centros, Vilnius and x-room, Copenhagen are also examined retrospectively in context of institutional experiments within Europe, with or without falling under the label of New Institutionalism.

⁵⁷ Alex Farquharson, "Bureaux de Change," *Frieze*, no. 101 (September 2006): 156–159. Also available online, accessed October 2, 2018, <https://frieze.com/article/bureaux-de-change>.

cal engagement with art and the exchange with the public.”⁵⁸ The declared aim was to explore a variety of institutional models, precisely illuminating the differences between possible strategies and perspectives. That same year Hoffmann produced the project *The Next Documenta Should Be Curated by an Artist*, a critical response to Documenta XI (2002) curated by Okwui Enwezor, which resulted in a book and online publication by e-flux.⁵⁹ The author tellingly marked the shifting role of the artist-curator relationship and engrossing institutionalization of both practices. That year Maria Lind and Liam Gillick organized the exhibition and symposium *Telling Histories: An Archive and Three Case Studies with Contributions by Maybe Bethônico and Liam Gillick* at the Kunstverein München. In 2005 it was followed by a publication *Curating with Light Luggage* by the same artist-curator tandem stemming from the symposium (of the same title) dedicated to new approaches in curating.

The Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art (NIFCA) became a particularly important actor during the curatorship of Nina Möntmann from 2003 to 2006. The impact of the earlier two NIFCA conferences from the late 1990s —*Stopping the Process?* (1998)⁶⁰ and *Changing the System*⁶¹—cannot be underestimated as they allowed meaningful connections between practitioners who will later form the core of what today we refer to as New Institutionalism to be established. Shaping NIFCA’s curatorial strategy, Möntmann explored the theme of the current changes in contemporary art institutions in a series of exhibitions, panel discussions,

⁵⁸ An exhibition and seminar were held from December 3, 2003 to January 5, 2004 as part of the larger project by Kiasma, *The Process*. Hoffmann curated the exhibition, whereas the framework was organized by two partnering institutions—NIFCA, the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art, and KIASMA, the Museum of Contemporary Art. Contributing institutions were BAK, Utrecht; the Contemporary Art Center, Vilnius; the Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw; Index, Stockholm; Kunstverein Frankfurt, Frankfurt; Oslo Kunsthall, Oslo; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center, Istanbul; Rooseum, Malmö; and Witte de With, Rotterdam. See <http://www.wdw.nl/event/kiasma-institution-2/>.

⁵⁹ Jens Hoffmann, *The Next Documenta Should Be Curated by an Artist* (Frankfurt [am Main]: Revolver/New York: e-flux, 2004).

⁶⁰ Mika Hannula, *Stopping the Process?: Contemporary Views on Art and Exhibitions* (Helsinki: Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art, 1998).

⁶¹ Åsa Nacking, *Changing the system?* (Helsinki: Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art, 1999).

workshops, and meetings. She insisted on the necessity of discussing and experimentally applying new models of institutional collaborations—both utopian as well as realistic.⁶² The project *Opacity. Current Considerations on Art Institutions and the Economy of Desire* (2005) represented a platform for an experimental institutional model, based on research and analysis. Institutions were participating (NIFCA in Helsinki, INDEX in Stockholm, UKS in Oslo and the Secession in Vienna) alongside artists (Kajsa Dahlberg, Danger Museum, Markus Degerman, Stephan Dillemath, Gardar Eide Einarsson, and Sofie Thorsen). The other project *Spaces of Conflict, an audio-visual, research-based essay on institutional spaces* (2005) by the Swedish artists Mike Bode and Staffan Schmidt, was based upon a series of interviews carried out in twelve locations: six exhibiting institutions and six educational institutions in Berlin, Oslo, Copenhagen, Vilnius, Malmö, and Helsinki in 2004.⁶³ Almost all the institutions included by Bode and Schmidt soon underwent serious and symptomatic transformations, from significant restructuring through personnel decisions and radical budget reductions of some, all the way to the complete closure of the others.⁶⁴ As a sort of conclusion

⁶² See Nina Möntmann, “The Enterprise of the Art Institution in Late Capitalism,” *transversal. Do You Remember Institutional Critique?* (01 2006), accessed August 26, 2018, <http://transform.eicpc.net/transversal/0106/moentmann/en#redir> and “The Rise and Fall of New Institutionalism. Perspectives on a Possible Future,” *transversal. Progressive Institutions* (August 2007), accessed August 28, 2018, <http://eicpc.net/transversal/0407/moentmann/en/>.

⁶³ The institutions were the National Museum for Art, the x-room, and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, Denmark; Kunsthalle Helsinki, the Academy of Fine Arts, and The Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art in Helsinki, Finland; Kunst-Werke and Berlin University of the Arts in Berlin, Germany; the Contemporary Art Centre and the Vilnius Art Academy in Vilnius, Lithuania; the National Museum for Contemporary Art and the National Academy of Fine Art in Oslo, Norway; and the Rooseum and the Malmö Art Academy in Malmö, Sweden. Three questions were posed to the curators and directors of the art institutions and art students enrolled in academies in the same cities: a) “In what way(s) does an art space *contribute* to a/the community/city/society?”, b) “Are there any *expectations* that an art institution has to negotiate and/or have to live up to?”, and c) “Are there any actual spatial *alterations* that could improve the way that institutions work and communicate?” For a more detailed description of the project see Möntmann, “The Rise and Fall of New Institutionalism.”

⁶⁴ The Rooseum has been absorbed by the expanding Moderna Museet in Stockholm similarly to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Oslo, which merged with other national museums in Oslo under the umbrella of the National Museum for Contemporary Art, Architecture and Design. Vilnius suffered from severe budget cuts, which resulted in team and program cuts. In most of the institutions curators and directors were replaced, which had a direct impact on the programmatic approach and further course of action. NIFCA has been closed down. As Möntmann puts it bitterly, “Most of the institutions seem to have been put in their place like insubordinate teenagers.” Möntmann, “The Rise and Fall of New Institutionalism.”

or summary of the processes undertaken under Möntmann's directorship, the compilation of essays *Art and its Institutions: Current Conflicts, Critique and Collaborations* was published under her editorship in 2006.⁶⁵ The publication also marked the closure of NIFCA, a tendency symptomatic and indicative of the New Institutionalism's sustainability.

Developing experimental approaches from within the institutions was not particular to northern Europe exclusively, for the issues at stake were unfortunately growing common all over Europe where public funding for the arts was once the norm. With private sponsorship commercial demands and market driven expectations increased.⁶⁶ During the mid-2000s, like-minded practitioners began to unite efforts and establish joint platforms in order to gain wider outreach, activate available resources and audiences through critical debate, and foster a wider context for art making. These platforms were typically set up as cross-institutional networks.

A prominent example is the European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (eipcp) in Vienna, which began as an independent, transnational research hub and publishing program focused on interventionist and activist practices.⁶⁷ In early 2004, eipcp organized the conference *Public Art Policies. Progressive Art Institutions in the Age of Dissolving Welfare States*

⁶⁵ Nina Möntmann, "Art and its Institutions," 8–16. Beatrice von Bismarck, "In Stellung bringen," 237–243.

⁶⁶ Claire Doherty argues that New Institutionalism and similarly challenging programs and approaches also flourished in non-profit non-collecting art spaces in the UK, such as Whitechapel Gallery, FACT, and the BAL-TIC Center for Contemporary Art. See Claire Doherty, "The Institution is Dead! Long Live the Institution. Contemporary Art and New Institutionalism," in *Special Issue. Art of Encounter, Engage 15* (2004): 6–13, accessed October 15, 2018, <https://www.engage.org/seebook.aspx?id=697>; Möntmann, "The Rise and Fall of New Institutionalism," and Lucie Kolb and Gabriel Fluckiger, eds., *OnCurating 21* (January 2014), accessed August 14, 2018, <http://www.on-curating.org/issue-21.html#.XBKEmRMzZ24>. Although never explicitly labeled or referenced as New Institutionalism, I would also like to mention Jacob Fabricius practice at Kunsthall Charlottenborg; Marta Kuzma's directorship at the OCA Norway and her particularly nuanced interrogation of the role of the cultural exchange institution and its relation to the local scene; Will Bradley's leadership at Kunsthall Oslo which reinhabited the violent environment of commercially driven real estate development project; Tone Hansen's curatorship at the Henie Onstad Art Centre; and Solveig Øvstebø at Bergen Kunsthall.

⁶⁷ <http://republicart.net>

in the context of its project *republicart* at the Kunsthalle Exnergasse in Vienna.⁶⁸ Invited to reflect on the social function of state-subsidized institutions in central and northern Europe and their relation to structures of financing, the participants contributed a number of texts seminal for the discourse of New Institutionalism. In 2000, eipcp founded the online journal *transversal*, bringing together critical voices from all over Europe to reflect on the most urgent political issues.⁶⁹ Their issues *Institution* (2004), *Artists as Producers* (2004), *Critique* (2006), *Instituent Practices* (2007), *Progressive Institutions* (2007), and *The Art of Critique* (2008) mobilized artists, critics, and curators to reflect on the drastically changing conditions of art production in Europe and attempt to affect policies.

The years 2004 to 2006 witnessed a rotational shift, as Bourriaud's and Sans's and Lind's contracts expired in Paris and Munich respectively, Schafhausen began as the director of the Witte de With (Rotterdam), and Esche took charge of Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. The latter case is distinctive because of the larger scale of this institution, which allowed Esche to approach and affect the museum with its far larger public, more rigid operational machinery, and heavier systems of accountability. Esche's directorship at Van Abbemuseum deserves comparison with another prominent example of a director-curator strategy—Manuel Borja-Villel's tenure at MACBA (Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona) from 1998 to 2008.

While the director of MACBA, Borja-Villel sought to reinvent the whole institution's ethos, social role, and working practices in order to incarnate New Institutionalism based on Mouffe's theory. Mouffe was invited to deliver a lecture as part of a seminar *Globalization and Cultural Differentiation* at MACBA in 1999, right at the beginning of Borja-Villel's ten-

⁶⁸ http://www.republicart.net/conf2004/policies_concept01_en.htm

⁶⁹ <http://eipcp.net/transversal>

ure.⁷⁰ It becomes clear from “Experiments in New Institutionalilty,” a detailed analysis by Jorge Ribalta, MACBA’s Head of Public Programs, just how central Mouffe’s ideas were to the formation and theorization of their institutional practice:

Our starting point is an understanding of social life as being constituted by different publics, with differing interests. . . . It is precisely this potential and this openness that guarantee the existence of a democratic public sphere, a space that does not have to be unitary to be democratic, as Chantal Mouffe has theorised. . . . The idea is to give “publics” agency, to foster their capacity for action and look beyond the limitations of traditional divisions between actor and spectator, and between producer and consumer.⁷¹

Ribalta outlines how each project that they formulated in MACBA was part of an overall plan to rearticulate the museum as a space for “agonistic pluralism.”

The longevity and intensity of the experimental programs at MACBA under Borja-Villel’s direction indicated a continuing authenticity of vision that went beyond the norms of displaying objects and aligning the museum with the hollow demands of tourism. Villel founded the Independent Study Program (PEI), invested in the systematic organization of conferences and developed a sustainable relationship with the *eipcp*. In terms of its contribution to discourses on New Institutionalism, MACBA was arguably one of the most active institutions in the field, alongside Van Abbemuseum upon Esche’s arrival in 2004. Together with his team, Borja-Villel showed what other critical museological approaches are possible and significantly contributed to the discourse on re-functioned institutions, labelled “radical

⁷⁰ Chantal Mouffe, “For A Politics of Democratic Identity,” delivered as part of the *Globalization and Cultural Differentiation* seminar. March 19–20, 1999, MACBA-CCCB. The content of this lecture was reprinted in *Antagonisms: Case Studies* (A newspaper produced as part of the exhibition of the same name which was held at MACBA from July 26 to October 14, 2001). This text is available online at: http://www.macba.es/antagonismos/english/09_04.html (accessed August 12, 2018).

⁷¹ Jorge Ribalta, “Experiments in a New Institutionalilty,” in *Relational Objects: MACBA Collection, 2002–2007*, eds. Jorge Ribalta and Manuel Borja-Villel (Barcelona: MACBA Publications, 2010), 229 Available online, accessed August 8, 2018, http://www.macba.cat/PDFs/jorge_ribalta_colleccio_eng.pdf. Ribalta describes agonistic pluralism as a counter-model that “constitutes a singular understanding of the museum as a space for debate and conflict, and a critical re-reading of the modern tradition, that brings together artistic methods, social knowledge, and action in the public sphere,” *Ibid.*, 226. Mouffe also cites Ribalta’s description of the MACBA’s practice as the embodiment of her theoretical proposition in the footnotes to her article for *Art Forum*. See Mouffe, “Museum as Agonistic Spaces,” 329.

museology” by Claire Bishop.⁷² Villeda obviously did not change the way in which other museums operated, but he provoked a discussion on alternative models and provided a viable example.

Upon leaving Kunstverein München in 2004, Lind took charge of Iaspis in Stockholm. Søren Gramel and Katharina Schlieben, Lind’s former co-curators in Munich, departed earlier and relocated to Kunstverein Graz and Shedhalle in Zurich, respectively. In 2003 Solveig Øvstebø was appointed the director of Bergen Kunsthall (Norway) where she served until 2013. A compilation of essays and case studies, *The New Administration of Aesthetics* was published in 2007 after a 2006 conference held in Oslo. The publication features an interview between Alex Farquharson and Maria Lind, “Integrative Institutionalism: A Reconsideration,” a critical reflection on the work of “new institutions” and the context they find themselves embedded in. In the interview, Lind also reflects and comments on her experience while at the Kunstverein München.

To understand Lind’s career trajectory and her ideas about New Institutionalism formulated over ten years, it is worth beginning by briefly reflecting on her background before her arrival at the Kunstverein München.

Maria Lind, The Enabler

Maria Lind was and still is a prolific writer and frequent public speaker.⁷³ As a practitioner, she declares the starting point of her curatorial work to be art and works of art them-

⁷² See Claire Bishop, *Radical Museology or What’s Contemporary in Museums of Contemporary Art?* (London: Koenig Books, 2013) and Terry Smith in conversation with Claire Bishop, “Museum Models, Radical Spectatorship,” in *Talking Contemporary Curating*, ed. Terry Smith (New York: Independent Curators International, 2015), 139–161.

⁷³ In addition to numerous conferences and public talks, since the 1990s Lind has been regularly teaching in art schools such as the Akademie München, the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm, the Academy of Fine Arts in Oslo, and from 2008 to 2010 she was the director of the graduate program of the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College. She edited *Abstraction* as part of MIT’s and Whitechapel Gallery’s series *Documents on Contem-*

selves: “I am keen to be an enabler, to create the best possible circumstances for the artists. I prefer to take the art itself as my point of departure for speculation and reasoning, rather than start at the other end, with theory or politics, or with an academic approach that seeks the smallest common denominator.”⁷⁴

Lind is interested in how works relate to a particular situation, be it institutional or sociopolitical. She tries to go beyond the display in her curatorial work, as traditionally regarded “the moment of art” in an institution. Before and after are as at least as important, if not even more so than the moment of display: “I think in my case, it’s also a materialist, pragmatist position, being concerned with conditions and means of production, and with the fact that things don’t only come about before they enter the institution, they also come about from scratch within the institution.”⁷⁵

Prior to her appointment at the Kunstverein München, Lind was a curator at the Moderna Museet (1997–2001) in Stockholm, where she developed the Moderna Museet Projekt (MMP), an off-space belonging to the main venue. Formulating her program for the kunstverein, Lind drew on her institutional experiences, particularly projects such as *What If: Art on the Verge of Architecture and Design*,⁷⁶ (2000), a tripartite exhibition-seminar-publication project, peculiar in its approach to working relations between curators and artists. It evolved out of the integrative and collaborative process transpiring in both private and public spaces over a number of months between Lind, Liam Gillick (whom she invited to collaborate on

porary Art. She is also the 2009 recipient of the Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement. In the fall of 2010, *Selected Maria Lind Writing* was published by Sternberg Press. See Maria Lind, *Selected Maria Lind Writing*, ed. Brian Kuan Wood (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010).

⁷⁴ Maria Lind, “Selected Nodes in a Network of Thoughts on Curating,” in *Selected Maria Lind Writing*, ed. Brian Kuan Wood (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010), 29.

⁷⁵ Maria Lind and Paul O’Neill, “Going Beyond Display—The Munich Kunstverein Years. Maria Lind in an interview with Paul O’Neill,” in *OnCurating* 09 (September 2011): 43, accessed August 14, 2018, <http://www.on-curating.org/issue-9.html#.XBvCeRMzZ24>.

⁷⁶ *What If: Art on the Verge of Architecture and Design*, May 5–September 3, 2000, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden.

structuring the project as a co-curator and exhibition designer), other participating artists, and the public. Lind suggested a prism of design as an interpreter of social fabric and cultural realities, a “filter and indices” in her own words. In the summer of 1999, a year before the actual exhibition, Lind and Gillick held a pre-exhibition workshop with eight artists who work intensively in the field of design and built environment: Miriam Backstrom, Jason Dodge, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Jorge Pardo, Tobias Rehberger, Apolonija Šušteršič, and Rirkrit Tiravanija. In *What If*, the museum was re-functioned “as a production site . . . a distribution channel, and as a venue for conversation.”⁷⁷ *What If* also comprised a series of seminars, which Lind labelled “listen-ins,” organized in collaboration with the architect Ulrika Karlsson and held inside the gallery among the artworks.⁷⁸ This production of knowledge in concert with the visiting public was interwoven into the exhibition environment.⁷⁹

Indeed some may say that Lind outsourced her curatorial responsibility. However this is an oversimplification given the preceding collaborative activity and discussion around *What If* with extended dialogues between the Lind-Gillick tandem and artists, and the following long-term and diversified collaboration and negotiation that continued to resonate thoughtfully in her and Gillick’s practices. The resulting staging of the exhibition stood in contrast to a di-

⁷⁷ Maria Lind, “Learning from Art and Artists,” in *Selected Maria Lind Writing*, ed. Brian Kuan Wood (Berlin; Sternberg Press, 2010), 257.

⁷⁸ The seminars were entitled “Shifting places, Shifting Scales,” “Is everything a Product?,” and “Urban Situation” and engaged a selection of participating artists, invited speakers, and the visiting public in questions surrounding dissolving boundaries between disciplines, the current influence of branding and technology on culture and the widespread use of graphic and product design to manifest social relations.

⁷⁹ The scope of this research does not allow for an in-depth description or analysis of this particular exhibition, however I find it crucial to include Farquharson’s comment on *What If*: “These two gestures [lighting and arrangement] would have come across as an abuse of power had the curator done them. As an artist operating in the grey area between art and curating, however, Gillick had a special kind of license.” Alex Farquharson, “Curator and Artist,” *Art Monthly*, no. 270 (October 2003): 15. Also available online, accessed November 27, 2018, <https://www.artmonthly.co.uk/magazine/site/article/curator-and-artist-by-alex-farquharson-october-2003>.

dactic, top-down exhibition model that would explain the way art, architecture, and design unite to create a culture industry with capitalist marketing strategies.⁸⁰

Lind's curatorship of the second edition of Manifesta was another exercise in challenging the institutional format. Manifesta, The European Biennial of Contemporary Art, was founded in 1996,⁸¹ after the fall of the Berlin wall in an attempt to formulate a format more adequate for and relevant to the conditions of the post-wall Europe than the historically overburdened Documenta and Venice Biennials. It was also partly in response to the cessation of the Biennial of Paris in 1985.⁸² Manifesta's search of format and identity was strongly fueled by the ambition to challenge the already established institution of a biennial and canons of exhibition-making. Manifesta thus provided a platform for emerging artists, but also launched the careers of emerging curators and offered a testing grounds for daring curatorial models.⁸³

In 1998 Lind became a part of the curatorial team of Manifesta 2, together with Robert Fleck (from Austria) and Barbara Vandelinden (from Belgium). "Art after Communism" can be traced as the unofficial theme of this edition of the biennial, ultimately becoming a catchphrase in related texts. Responding to the initial wave of interest in the art of Eastern Europe

⁸⁰ James Voorhies writes, "Such an institutional performativity created an enveloping aesthetic experience, an atmosphere not unlike those which capitalism offers, giving the consumer immersive environments. The immersive scenario that Lind and Gillick created with *What If* turned the museum into a reflection on these issues, connected to mainstream institutional approaches to the exhibition. Here the experience economy, connected to the centuries-old form of the flaneur, was co-opted in a choreographed spatial situation that played on spectator's comfort and familiarity with shopping and desire of things." See James Timothy Voorhies, *Beyond Objecthood: The Exhibition as a Critical Form Since 1968* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), 120. We should also not forget that Lind's curatorial endeavour resonates with the then active discussion arguably condensed in Hal Foster's 2002 book *Design and Crime (and Other Diatribes)*.

⁸¹ Manifesta is a nomadic international art exhibition, which was supported by the Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands. Every two years it seeks a new location and curatorial lead and therefore ends up with a new format for every edition.

⁸² The Biennial of Paris was discontinued in 1985 and the Lyon Biennial of Contemporary Art was launched. However in 2004 the Biennial of Paris was resumed by a decision made by the French Ministry of Culture and with their support. See Hedwig Fijen, "How a European Biennial of Contemporary Art Began," in *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-Wall Europe*, eds. Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 221.

⁸³ It is worth mentioning that among the curators of the first editions of the Manifesta biennial were Hans Ulrich Obrist, Viktor Misiano, Maria Lind, Kathrin Rhomberg, Maria Hlavajova, Francesco Bonami, Massimiliano Gioni, and Marta Kuzma among others.

following the fall of the Berlin Wall, Manifesta 2, hosted by Luxemburg, was envisioned as a thorough, unifying platform for art from all European countries. The curatorial team designed the core of the endeavour as *Info Lab*, a multi-functional research facility, office, library, and semi-public space that welcomed debate and discussion and hosted workshops and seminars.⁸⁴ *Info Lab* transformed curatorial work into a process more open and exposed to the general public.

The curatorial team also relinquished the singular curatorial voice, instead working as a committee of curators-organizers.⁸⁵ From Manifesta 2 onwards, Lind's particular curatorial handwriting can be defined as a commitment to dialogue-based artistic commissions and a strong self-reflexive interest in the role and impact of the institutional production, distribution, and reception of art.

In her 2001 essay "Selected Nodes in a Network of Thoughts on Curating," Lind writes, "Art is very suitable for testing ideas and thoughts, for questioning and challenging the condition of things, but also for galvanizing words, for moving to act," a line of thought consonant with Searle's understanding of institution.⁸⁶ The combination of Lind's strivings and challenges within the institutional milieu motivated her to devise and promote the concept of a "curatorial" framework that accommodates her practice and interrogations and moves beyond

⁸⁴ The library made available numerous catalogs, personal notes, press materials, brochures, maps, and folders on all artists, art academies, exhibitions, and institutions the curators had visited over their two-year exploratory exhibition research, which included hundreds of studio visits in thirty-five countries. *Info Lab* was strategically located inside the galleries of the *Casino Luxembourg—Forum d'art contemporain*, the main hub of the biennial, rather than in a more formal and restrained setting of an office or a classroom.

⁸⁵ See Robert Fleck, Maria Lind, and Barbara Vanderlinden, "Introduction," in *Manifesta 2* (Luxembourg: International Foundation Manifesta, 1998), 6. Available online at https://zs.thulb.uni-jena.de/rsc/viewer/jportal_derivate_00232762/Manifesta_mani2_250054922_0141.TIF. For a critical response to the given edition of Manifesta, see Camel van Winkle, "The Rhetorics of Manifesta," in *Manifesta Decade*, 224.

⁸⁶ Lind, "Selected Nodes in a Network of Thoughts on Curating," 29.

the rigid protocol ascribed to institutionalised practices.⁸⁷ Given that Lind is also an active lecturer and committed contributor to programs of formal training for artists and curators, “curatorial” has become an optics and methodology of Lind’s approach.

Lind writes, that “the curatorial” operates in parallel with Chantal Mouffe’s notion of “the political.” Drawing on Carl Schmitt, Mouffe argues for “the political” as an ever-present potential that cannot be located precisely, yet grows out of the antagonistic bond between friends and enemies. The political is an aspect of life that cannot be distinguished from divergence and dissent—the antithesis of consensus. For Mouffe, politics is the formal side of practices that reproduce certain orders. Lind suggests an analogous reading, where curating would be the technical modality—which we know from art institutions and independent projects—and the curatorial, a more viral presence consisting of signification processes and relationships between objects, people, places, ideas, and so forth, a presence that strives to create friction and push new ideas.”⁸⁸

Kunstsverein München provided a perfect opportunity for Lind to put her ideas into practice. In 2002, Lind was appointed the director and curator at the Kunstverein München (hereafter K.M.). She was aware of the richness of Munich’s artistic panorama, the multiplicity of museums and art venues, and kunstverein’s particular position among them. As an independent membership organization, the Kunstverein München was less subject to representative obligations or to having to legitimize itself as a tourist venue. Lind intended to take advantage of the K.M.’s relative independence for the purposes of curatorial experimentation.

⁸⁷ See Maria Lind, “Active Cultures: Maria Lind on The Curatorial,” *Artforum* 47, no. 2 (October): 103; and Lind, ed., *Performing the Curatorial* (New York: Sternberg Press, 2012).

⁸⁸ Maria Lind, “The Curatorial,” in *Selected Maria Lind Writing*, ed. Brian Kuan Wood (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010), 64.

The curatorial statement, “Editorial. In Place of a Manifesto,”⁸⁹ declares the intention to undermine the usual approach adopted by previous directors of the institution, who, according to the authors, had focused on the exhibition as the primary means of expressing curatorial positions. Lind understood Kunstverein München as occupying “a market niche without a market,” something that she intended to employ “for the purposes of experimenting with the potential activities of the institution.”⁹⁰

Kunstvereins have an impressive and long history. Their relation to the art market and larger culture landscape is more profound than has been acknowledged.

⁸⁹ Søren Grammel, Maria Lind, and Katharina Schlieben, “Editorial. In Ersatz eines Manifests/In Place of a Manifesto,” in *Gesammelte Drucksachen – Collected Newsletters, Spring 02 – Fall 04*, eds. Maria Lind et al. (Frankfurt [am Main]: Revolver, 2004), 19–23.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF A KUNSTVEREIN

*With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land, 1922*

In general, *kunstverein*, which means “public art association,” is an institutional format that originated in Germany in the middle of the 19th century. Currently there are more than 300 *kunstvereine* of varying sizes, profiles, and expertise throughout Germany with more than 100,000 members overall.⁹¹ Nevertheless, comparatively few studies have been published on its evolution, even less in English.⁹²

According to §2 of the law governing *vereine*, or public associations, a *verein* in Germany is, “irrespective of its legal form, any association which a majority of private or legal subjects who have voluntarily joined for the common purpose and willingly submitted to an organized decision-making process.”⁹³ According to Article 9(1) of the Bürgerliches Ge-

⁹¹ “Kunstvereine,” Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Kunstvereine (ADKV), accessed December 12, 2018, <https://kunstvereine.de/en/kunstvereine>. webpage Founded in 1980, ADKV member network boasts nearly 300 Kunstvereine

⁹² *Tatort Kunstverein: Eine kritische Überprüfung eines Vermittlungsmodells* (2001) by Bernd Milla and Heike Munder provides the most substantial overview of the development of *kunstverein* as an institutional type in the second half of the twentieth century. Peter Gerlach’s *Vom realen Nutzen idealer Bilder: Kunstmarkt und Kunstvereine* (1994) suggests a historical overview of the 19th century and is the product of a 1989 colloquium. *O Kunstverein, where art thou?* (2013) by Beate Anspach and Florian Waldvogel suggests a more recent analysis of the *kunstverein* formation order to contextualize the institutional and curatorial approach at the Kunstverein Hamburg. Publications by Walter Grasskamp are interesting and relevant to the investigation of the particular case of Kunstverein München, particularly Grasskamp, “Die schwierige Öffentlichkeit. Die westdeutschen Kunstvereine nach 194,” in *1945–1985 Kunst in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed. Dominik Bartmann, (Berlin: Nationalgalerie Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1985), 662–667; Grasskamp, “Konkurrenten und Partner. Kunstverein und Kunstakademie in München,” in *Gesammelte Drucksachen – Collected Newsletters, Spring 02 – Fall 04*, eds. Maria Lind et al. (Frankfurt [am Main]: Revolver, 2004), 36–51. In 1974 the Kunstverein München itself also issued a jubilee publication.

⁹³ §2 des Gesetzes zur Regelung des öffentlichen Vereinsrechts (Vereinsgesetz): “. . . ohne Rücksicht auf die Rechtsform jede Vereinigung, zu der sich eine Mehrheit natürlicher oder juristischer Personen für längere Zeit zu einem gemeinsamen Zweck freiwillig zusammengeschlossen und einer organisierten Willensbildung unterworfen hat.”

setzbuch (BGB), all German citizens have the right to form associations and societies. The BGB considers two bodies to be obligatory therein: the Board and the General Assembly. According to §32 BGB, the member meeting is the “highest decision-making body of an association.”⁹⁴ Vereins are thus seen as a democratic organizational model. The legal definition allows a lot of operational freedom, which explains why the institutional format of kunstverein is resistant to a single strict reading and has grown into occupy a diversified landscape throughout Germany.

The shift in understanding of matters of art as a public was decisive for the emergence of *kunstvereins*, i.e. vereins specifically focused on the matters of art. Alongside historically established state-court and ecclesiastical influences, the new culturally affluent strata of the bourgeoisie emerged as a public.⁹⁵

The foundation and expansion of kunstvereins within German-speaking countries coincides with the popularity of art clubs and societies throughout Europe in the early 19th century. Genteel initiatives in England, such as The Society of Virtuosi, founded in England in 1689; the Society of Dilettanti, an elite art club of former Grand Tourists founded in 1732⁹⁶; the British Institution, an even more influential club founded in 1806⁹⁷; the Paris-based Société des Amis et des Arts, founded in 1789 and re-established in 1815⁹⁸ all gradually increased

⁹⁴ §32 BGB das “oberste Willensbildungsorgan des Vereins.”

⁹⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1962), 60–156.

⁹⁶ One shall not forget that although an informal club, the latter in fact had a hand in founding the Royal Academy of Arts in 1768.

⁹⁷ Importantly, it went beyond the scope of a mere elite society and began to initiate exhibitions of its own, thus challenging the monopoly of the Royal Academy and opening space for discord within the artistic community. See Thomas Schmitz, “*Die deutschen Kunstvereine im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur Kultur-, Konsum- und Sozialgeschichte der bildenden Kunst im bürgerlichen Zeitalter*” (PhD diss., Universität Düsseldorf, 2002), 30.

⁹⁸ The *Deutsches Kunst-Blatt* of 1824 described and praised the membership structure and annually held sales exhibitions of the *Société des Amis et des Arts*. Those two features in particular would become the structural backbone of the kunstverein institutional structure. Quoted in Schmitz, *Die deutschen Kunstvereine im 19. und*

the desire for such a society in Germany. Züricher Gesellschaft der Künstler und Kunstfreunde (The Zurich Society of Artists and Art Lovers), founded in 1787, set an example by establishing the principle of shareholding and annual exhibitions of art, which were open for public from 1801 onwards.⁹⁹

Alongside foreign examples, the growing diversity of educational societies within Germany, particularly patriotic societies, fostered the involvement of the bourgeoisie in the life of the city and respective development of new forms active citizenship:

The academies developed within the court-governed state . . . , Freemasons and patriots self-organized alongside the state . . . , so in 1775/80 new forms of unification (*Vereinigungsformen*) were formed by educated citizens who wanted to liberate themselves from the state and its tutelage, to create independently and outside of the absolutist order, or even in opposition to it, an enlightenment-reformist free space, in which all citizens would find equal social recognition.¹⁰⁰

The first German kunstvereins were born during the revolutionary era of social and economic transformation. The progressive separation of the modern state from the persona of the prince or king, the social advancement of the educated and wealthy bourgeoisie,¹⁰¹ and the

frühen 20. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur Kultur-, Konsum- und Sozialgeschichte der bildenden Kunst im bürgerlichen Zeitalter, 31.

⁹⁹ Shareholders, however, were not yet members of the association, which was to be the distinctive peculiarity of the kunstverein structure. See York Langenstein, "*Der Münchner Kunstverein im 19. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklung des Kunstmarkts und des Ausstellungswesens*" (PhD diss., München: Kommissionsverlag UNI-Druck, 1983), 19 and 32.

¹⁰⁰ "Entwickelten sich die gelehrten Akademien noch im Rahmen des höfisch-obrigkeitlichen Staates . . . , organisierten sich Freimaurer und Patrioten neben dem Staat . . . , so bildeten sich in den neuen Gesellschaften nach 1775/80 erstmals Vereinigungsformen von gebildeten Bürgern aus, die sich vom Staat und seiner Bevormundung befreien wollten, um selbsttätig außerhalb der absolutistischen Ordnung einen tendenziell sogar gegen sie gerichteten aufklärerisch-reformistischen Freiraum zu schaffen, in dem alle Bürger gleiche soziale Anerkennung fänden," Richard van Dülmen, quoted in Schmitz 2001, 37. To do justice to the local foundations of the kunstvereins, we have also to acknowledge the influence of various German forms of self-organization and associations, such as *Zusammenkünfte* (private gatherings), *Zusammenschlüsse von Künstlern* (associations of artists), and *Stiftungen von Adligen* (foundations for nobility).

¹⁰¹ Here I employ the word bourgeoisie, however the historical and German-specific term for this particular social class is *Bürgertum*, which is an idealized type of middle class that necessarily has property, education, and respective social status. There is general consensus that the Bürgertum played a dominant role in the sociopolitical transformations of Germany in the beginning of the 19th century. See Joachim Fischer, "Wie Sich Das Bürgertum in Form Hält. Moderne Bildende Kunst Als Herrschaftsmedium." *Sociologia Internationalis* 50, no. 1-2 (2012): 185-207; and Schmitz 2001, 81-87.

gradual shift to modern industrial and class society shaped the way kunstvereins defined themselves ideologically and structurally onwards.

Kunstvereins thus distinguished themselves from guilds, entities of compulsory membership character and professional endorsement, but also from the informality of the salon. Thomas Nipperdey stresses that the individualistic principle of vereins' structuring was the peculiar feature that distinguished it from already existing social structures.¹⁰² They replaced public administrative organs in the field of art and carried out charitable tasks, thus securing a respectful place amid prestigious and well-educated public life.¹⁰³

The Case Of The Kunstverein München

Kunstverein München was established in 1823. At that time, Munich was a city of some 50,000 inhabitants and it was home to an advanced academy - Akademie der Bildenden Künste, (Academy of Fine Arts, Munich). After Bavaria acquired the status of a kingdom in 1806, social conditions within the capital underwent a fundamental change. The gradual change of social beliefs and the development of vereins that were gaining momentum liberated the public domain from the aegis of patriotic societies and gradually raised the significance of sociability outside court and beyond one's own family.¹⁰⁴

The application addressed to King Maximilian I Joseph in 1823 seeking royal approval for the foundation of the K.M. demonstrates the tendency towards the more precise specialization of vereins:

¹⁰² Thomas Nipperdey, *Gesellschaft, Kultur, Theorie: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur neueren Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1976), 204.

¹⁰³ The club-like organizations gained such popularity that their total number in Germany reached about 14,000 by the mid-19th century. No wonder such a rapid ascent was soon (from the 1850s on) followed by symmetrically intense cultural skepticism and criticism of "Verein-fever." See Schmitz 2001, 26–29.

¹⁰⁴ In the course of political changes, a large administrative apparatus was set up and the civil servants now working in these institutions, as well as officers stationed in Munich, formed a new layer of Munich intelligence. Although the court continued to play an important role in the cultural life, the educated bourgeois was gaining more significance and influence. See Langenstein, "Der Münchner Kunstverein im 19. Jahrhundert," 95–96.

Your Majesty has handled those matters that demanded care and support with nationwide paternal care, and established magnificently designed state institutions. And wherever a gap in managing practical matters appeared, [Your Majesty] approved for the foundation of special vereins and their most generous support.¹⁰⁵

Munich lured artists with the growing status and prestige of the Academy of Fine Arts, which had become one of the most important educational institutions in Germany, and with the prospect of working at court. But soon enough there were far more artists than available opportunities.¹⁰⁶ Maximilian I Joseph's authorization for the foundation of the kunstverein noted that the founding of the academy in 1808 had given "the artists and art lovers a shared point of union,"¹⁰⁷ but at the same time, neither the academy nor the museum in Munich offered artists regular exhibition opportunities.

Also telling, the four founders of the kunstverein were the veduta painter Domenico Quaglio (1786–1837), the genre painter Peter Hess (1792–1871), the portraitist Josef Karl Stieler (1781–1858), and the architect Friedrich Gärtner (1792–1847). These artists represented those genres of the arts that found little prestige or support at the academy.¹⁰⁸ Still it should be made clear, the foundation of the kunstverein is not to be understood as a rebellion against the academy. Royal approval was granted, but conceived in a deliberately preventative manner. The activity of the Kunstverein München was initially calibrated and limited to areas not yet covered by the academy.¹⁰⁹ As a private entity (Privatgesellschaft), its involvement in the

¹⁰⁵ "Für das, was . . . Pflege und Erziehung vermag, haben Euer Majestät durch großsinnig gestaltete Staatseinrichtungen landesväterliche Vorsorge getroffen und da, wo irgend eine Lücke im praktischen Leben sich vorfand, durch Genehmigung besonderer Vereine und den ihnen gewährten großmüthigsten Schutz wirksam aufgeholfen" *Grundsätze zur Errichtung eines Vereins der Künstler und Kunstfreunde im Königreiche*, Akte Kunstverein München 1823, no. 11.

¹⁰⁶ The secularization of the church diminished its role as an influential and sustainable commissioner and the Bavarian king was more concerned with urban expansion and development of governmental infrastructure, rather than art. The increasing dependence of artists on private contracts has thus become one of the primary concerns of the Kunstverein, even though this was not directly outlined in the 1823 mission statement of its founders.

¹⁰⁷ Schreiben Max I. Joseph vom 31.12.1823, Akte Kunstverein München 1823, Nr. 21.

¹⁰⁸ Langenstein, "Der Münchner Kunstverein im 19. Jahrhundert," 45–50.

¹⁰⁹ Schreiben Max I. Joseph vom 31.12.1823, Akte Kunstverein München 1823, Nr. 21.

public sphere was also deliberately limited and geographically constrained to the city of Munich. Moreover, despite the tendency to read the kunstverein as a pure product of the new bourgeoisie, aristocratic and court-related forces still played a role in securing royal permission.¹¹⁰ One of the reasons the kunstverein's application was approved was the involvement of a number of artists close to the court.

At the November 26, 1823 inaugural meeting, held in the apartment of State Council lithographer Raphael Wintter (1784–1855), 42 artists and art friends agreed to combine their passion and commitment. A provisional committee representing various art genres was appointed and agreed upon a guiding principle of giving equal say to all genres.¹¹¹ The statute outlined Kunstverein München as “a voluntary association of educated men to receive and promote the various branches of fine arts in the capital.”¹¹² Only men were included. The admission of women as extraordinary members without voting rights was decided only in 1829. It was outlined that the governing body of the verein, the committee, should consist of eleven artist members of various genres and five “art lovers”.¹¹³ The 1823 draft statute already reveals the double function of the association as an exhibition organ (the domain of artists) and art society (the domain of art friends). On the one hand, artist members received the opportunity to exhibit their works; the other half of the K.M. members were offered educational and social entertainment.

¹¹⁰ We have to do justice to the roles played in the Kunstverein's founding: the already mentioned painter Stieler was the court portraitist, whereas Hess and Quaglio maintained sustainable relations to the court and royal family. The involvement of Gärtner, a professor of architecture at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts, also made it unlikely that the academy would be targeted as a rival.

¹¹¹ According to York Langenstein, it was precisely this principle that significantly distinguished the newly formed verein from the academy. Langenstein argues that the contours of what was to become the formal entity of the Kunstverein, as well as the self-image of the emerging society, were largely determined at this inaugural meeting. Langenstein, “Der Münchner Kunstverein im 19. Jahrhundert,” 60.

¹¹² “Eine freiwillige Verbindung von gebildeten Männern zur Aufnahme und Beförderung der verschiedenen Zweige der bildenden Künste in der Hauptstadt.” Ibid., 61.

¹¹³ Erste Satzung Kunstverein München von 1824, quoted in Langenstein, “Der Münchner Kunstverein im 19. Jahrhundert,” 25.

The official and formal constitution of the Kunstverein München took place on February 16, 1824, the day of the 25th anniversary of the reign of Maximilian I. Joseph. The arrangements of the location were handled by a member, the royal architect Johann Ulrich Himbsel, and on May 19, 1824 the kunstverein began occupying the premises near Maximilian Square.¹¹⁴ As early as August 1824, the K.M. was granted a protectorate by the king.¹¹⁵

With their move to the new venue and the first issue of the newly founded official *Gazette* in 1825, the number of members increased enormously. Sales exhibitions began to be held on a weekly basis,¹¹⁶ more faculty members of the academy joined the kunstverein,¹¹⁷ and in February 1825, even the Crown Prince Ludwig joined the kunstverein as a full member.¹¹⁸ That same year, the K.M. was granted permission to extend its activity all over Bavaria.¹¹⁹

The frequently held exhibitions, the raffle, and the annual graphic gifts represented the three pillars that formed the Kunstverein München as a particular form of public society. Although by then the domain of respectful public entertainment in the capital had significantly expanded, the kunstverein managed to occupy a central role in the social life of the city in the first half of the 19th century.¹²⁰ In addition to *Gazette*, transparent annual reports were implemented and distributed to the members. Nowadays these are invaluable sources of infor-

¹¹⁴ Langenstein, "Der Münchner Kunstverein im 19. Jahrhundert," 78. See also the catalog Fritz L. Bayerthal and Kunstverein München, eds., *150 Jahre Kunstverein München. Dokumentation zur Frühgeschichte des Kunstvereins. Jahresgaben des Kunstvereins 1825 bis 1973/74. Künstler – Kunstwerk – Kommunikation – Kunstverein. Zur Kunst in München heute* (München: Herbert Hösl, 1974), 74–78.

¹¹⁵ Akte Kunstverein München 1824, Nr. 65.

¹¹⁶ The registers of the Kunstverein point unambiguously that both the artists and the the circle of art lovers were primarily concerned with showing or being offered works for purchase. Langenstein, "Der Münchner Kunstverein im 19. Jahrhundert," 76.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹¹⁸ Akte Kunstverein München 1825, no. 18.

¹¹⁹ Langenstein, "Der Münchner Kunstverein im 19. Jahrhundert," 78–80.

¹²⁰ The Kunstverein visit had become a medium of social self-expression and cultural self-stylization in bourgeois life. "It was common practice to attend High Mass in one of the churches in the city center on Sunday mornings, then to go to the Odeonsplatz to watch the military parade, and then to visit the Kunstverein am Hofgarten and see the latest exhibits there," *Ibid.*, 89.

mation about the growing community of members, works of art both purchased and raffled off, as well as summaries of the financial year. But since they are devoid of self-critical statements, artistic endeavors, or programmatic challenges, they also offer a strictly practical self-portrait of the kunstverein.

The two years under the protectorate of Maximilian I. Joseph were enough for the Kunstverein München to fully develop the structural elements that became characteristic of its further activity and establish its status as a prototype for other kunstvereins.¹²¹

On November 22, 1826 the kunstverein moved again and opened its new prestigious premises on the northwest corner of the Hofgarten. And by 1830 the institution's scope of activities had shifted, affecting the inner legitimacy of the kunstverein among its members. Langenstein comments that the focus on exhibitions and sales as the financial backbone of the verein began to dominate, arguably as an attempt by the artists to regain more say in purchases, representation, and annual donations.¹²²

As the network of similar organisations and clubs was becoming denser, the preoccupation with glamorous external representation began to gradually increase in tandem with the level of conservatism. Starting in 1829, the procedure of acquiring membership changed. Applicants now had to be recommended by a member in order to be approved for admission.¹²³ The kunstverein began to formalize its capacity and relations with foreign and local kunstvereins, accepting onwards members of other vereins as its members from the 1830s.¹²⁴ Howev-

¹²¹ Ibid., 98.

¹²² Ibid., 87.

¹²³ Satzung Kunstverein München von 1829, §6. It remained in effect up to 1837 when it was finally abolished.

¹²⁴ By the turn of the century, Kunstverein München shares had been bought by vereins of Bamberg, Würzburg, Fürth, Bayreuth, Stuttgart, Heilbronn, and Darmstadt. Arguably this tendency was favored by the centralist policy under King Ludwig I, underpinning Munich's leading position among German art associations and considerably increasing the impact of Munich painting. Langenstein, "Der Münchner Kunstverein im 19. Jahrhundert," 123–149

er, rather than stimulating the exchange of ideas and accomplishments, goal was to win over members, expand, and thereby expand the budget.¹²⁵

The Kunstverein München was always mindful of its autonomy and did not enter into any close cooperation or exhibition cartels. However, it strategically invested into trade relations and connections to touring cycles, as the city of Munich did not participate in traveling exhibitions.¹²⁶ Its extensive and, in terms of sales, successful activity propelled the development of the art market. The economic factor was decisive in the operation of the verein and artists' dependency on the results of the sales grew. Over the course of a relatively short time, the marginalization of particular genres and financial insecurity from which the artists should have been liberated turned into a new dependency—on those members of the verein who made purchases. While there were active art dealers in the region, they dealt mainly in print reproductions; thus the K.M. had gained an unrivaled supremacy in terms of sales of works of art.¹²⁷ As Langenstein writes, “the flourishing of the Kunstverein München in the 20s and 30s of the nineteenth century was essentially due to the fact that it had no rivals within the arts and succeeded to maintain its dominating position in the art trade.”¹²⁸

¹²⁵ The principle of equality was emphasized by all vereins in their statutes. However, closer investigation of the statutes reveals a discrepancy between the idea and its realization. The Kunstverein oversaw the acquisition of shares, which also means voting shares, as a corporation. The general meetings were therefore also shareholder meetings, rather than the democratic organs that had been beautifully thought up. Due to the Kunstverein's structure, a gap between the board members' ideals board members and the members' artistic taste developed rather soon and quickly became apparent. Originally intended to be open to anyone who was interested, the Kunstverein München actually evolved to a large extent among the upper social circles of the bourgeoisie and the liberalized nobility. The member lists boast no craftsmen or representatives of the working class, but included strong representation by the members of the aristocracy, as well as civil servants and militants. Regardless of the proclaimed social openness of the vereins, particularly kunstvereins, great care was taken by the members to restrict them to their peers. The high annual membership contribution for the Kunstverein München implied a certain financial status and thus functioned as a filter.

¹²⁶ Günter Meissner quoted in Manuela Vergoossen, *Kunstvereinskunst. Ökonomie und Ästhetik bürgerlicher Bilder im 19. Jahrhundert* (Weimar: VDG, 2011), 8.

¹²⁷ The undeniable economic success of the Kunstverein München is evident in the stability of its membership growth. Whereas in 1824 there were 272 regular members, the registers of 1845 already show 3,117 official members. Langenstein, “Der Münchner Kunstverein im 19. Jahrhundert,” 36, 316.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 158.

Their approach to exhibition programs demands a closer investigation to better understand the gradual change of the kunstverein's position. Walter Grasskamp mentions that the Academy of Fine Arts did organize exhibitions of its own; however, the so-called annual exhibitions were held only once every three years,¹²⁹ and featured works exclusively by their own professors and advanced students. Historical painting had dominated the academy since its foundation and was largely determined by the taste of the principal clientele—the court. Suffice it to say that the chair of landscape painting was abandoned in 1824 and remained empty until the very turn of the century.¹³⁰ As a result, the sociocultural monopoly of the academy was put into a perspective and gradually diminished, both commercially and aesthetically. The kunstverein provided much needed exhibition opportunities and, therefore, a point of entry and support for artists outside the academy.

But what was on offer—portraits, still lifes, genre scenes and landscapes—also met the growing interest of a bourgeois clientele and was economically beneficial. Moreover, early British and Scandinavian cultural tourists also significantly factored in. So great was the role that tourism played, that the Bavarian folk culture flourished in response to the demands of foreign visitors, the development indicative of how long-distance tourism can bring about cultural regionalization.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Except the period between 1838 and 1845, when the academy organized no exhibitions at all.

¹³⁰ In the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich a single painting genre dominated as could be seen in the number of registered students, 67 of whom studied historical painting in 1809, while only 2 studied landscape. The interest in historical painting was largely determined by the court, which had a great influence on academy proceedings as a patron. Moreover, in 1824 the Bavarian royal house lured the head of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Peter von Cornelius, a strict promoter of religious and historical themes and of monumental wall painting, to take up the directorship at the Munich academy. The Munich chair for landscape painting was left empty after its only founding professor, Wilhelm von Kobell, retired in 1824 and it was not filled again until the end of the century. This was the wrong decision to further the development of landscape painting in the 19th century. See Grasskamp, "Konkurrenten und Partner. Kunstverein und Kunstakademie in München," 36–51.

¹³¹ Robin Lenman, "Art and Tourism in Southern Germany 1850–1930," in *The Arts, Literature and Society*, ed. Arthur Marwick (London: Routledge, 2002), 163–180 and Robin Lenman, *Die Kunst, die Macht und das Geld. Zur Kulturgeschichte des kaiserlichen Deutschland 1871–1918* (Frankfurt [am Main]: Campus Verlag, 1994).

The supremacy of the Kunstverein München, however, did not last long. In 1845 the academy occupied the new exhibition building on Königsplatz erected by Georg Friedrich Ziebland (1800–1873). Space had been made for genre painting alongside historical painting within the academy’s exhibitions, which gradually loosened the artists’ dependency on the kunstverein as an exhibition venue. The Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstgenossenschaft (General German Art Cooperative) was founded in 1856. In 1858 on the occasion of the academy’s 50th anniversary, the academy joined forces with the cooperative to organize a highly acclaimed and financially successful exhibition on Königsplatz.¹³² In addition, in 1851, Kunstgewerbeverein (the Arts and Crafts Association) was founded and successfully lured away a fraction of Kunstverein München members.¹³³ The “glass palace” was opened in Munich in 1854 and offered a spectacular new state-sponsored exhibition venue.¹³⁴ The kunstverein moved into its newly constructed separate building at the end of the Hofgarten arcade in 1866, the academy moved into the Schwabing Kunsts Schloss in 1886, and the Munich Secession, founded in 1882 moved into its own exhibition hall the next year.¹³⁵ The monopoly position of the Kunstverein München was now broken: its exhibition and sales activity as well as its position as a verein joining interests and commitments had been put into perspective.¹³⁶ By

¹³² Grasskamp, “Konkurrenten und Partner. Kunstverein und Kunstakademie in München,” 18.

¹³³ See Bayerthal and Kunstverein München, eds., *150 Jahre Kunstverein München*, 8.

¹³⁴ In contrast to the Kunstverein, Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstgenossenschaft was regarded as a semi-public institution and therefore funded by the state. It held annual exhibitions of its own in the Glaspalast from 1889 up to 1931. Starting in 1863 it also took over the academy’s annual exhibition.

¹³⁵ Three of these architectural specimens have since disappeared: the Secession building, the Glaspalast, which burned down in 1931, and the Kunstverein that was destroyed in the bombing of World War II. The antiquities collection is housed today in the Königsplatz exhibition hall, rebuilt after its destruction in the war.

¹³⁶ Even though it also moved into a new building at the end of the prestigious Hofgartenarkade, the rooms were numerous but comparatively small, without modern skylights, and thus failing to compete with other public exhibition buildings. The reconstruction undertaken in 1890 could hardly change that. See Langenstein, *Der Münchner Kunstverein*, 189–191, 195, also Bayerthal and Kunstverein München, eds., *150 Jahre Kunstverein München*, 7.

the 1890s, the kunstverein's principle of exhibiting all works submitted, regardless of their quality, was no longer tenable at the time of juried exhibitions.¹³⁷

Munich's political and aesthetic provincialism at the end of the 19th century and the regionalization of Bavarian art corroborated the rejection of new tendencies and developments by both the academy and the kunstverein. According to Grasskamp, neither Impressionism nor Jugendstil was admitted onto their premises. Even if they were profitable from the perspective of the art market, new tendencies were ignored or, at best, received with significant delay. At the end of the century, the Kunstverein München was no longer able to take on any tasks in the art scene.¹³⁸ The public dissatisfaction with the operation of the institution increased to such an extent that in 1901, the art critic Eduard Engel demanded that a new kunstverein be set up in Munich.¹³⁹

Although the Kunstverein München's program in the 19th century did not advance the aesthetic development of art, it developed an organizational structure that was largely preparatory to the twentieth century: "kunstvereins were therefore not only corporations, corporations in the legal sense with defined statute goals, but also forms of active community action, the dynamics of which far exceeded the secular purpose of the verein."¹⁴⁰

But it should not be overlooked that in the course of the 19th century, the perception of art fundamentally changed with the matter of acquisition coming to the fore. Christoph Behnke notes that the symbolic capital of the promotion of art was not initially accessible to

¹³⁷ Langenstein, "Der Münchner Kunstverein im 19. Jahrhundert," 211, 213.

¹³⁸ Grasskamp, "Konkurrenten und Partner. Kunstverein und Kunstakademie in München," 19.

¹³⁹ Schmitz, 2002, 421.

¹⁴⁰ "Kunstvereins waren deshalb nicht nur Korporationen, Körperschaften im juristischen Sinn mit definierten Satzungszielen, sondern auch Formen aktiven Gemeinschaftshandelns, deren Dynamik weit über den profanen Vereinszweck hinausreichte." Manuel Frey, "Vom Gemeinwohl zum Gemeinsinn. Das Beispiel der Stifter und Mäzene im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," in *Vom Gemeinwohl zum Gemeinsinn. Historische Semantiken politischer Leitbegriffe*, eds. Herfried Münkler and Harald Bluhm (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 286.

the bourgeoisie, and had to be developed and promoted first.¹⁴¹ Grasskamp in turn emphasizes the role kunstvereins played in enlarging the market and stabilizing it, referring to them as “cooperative consumer organizations” (“Genossenschaften von Konsumenten”). According to him, “the greatest significance of the art associations for contemporary art was the creation of a sales market. In doing so they formed an economic paradox, because they were something like a cooperative of customers.”¹⁴² The decline of courtly art cannot be equated with the beginning of artists’ autonomy. Artists were bound to a market that was significantly influenced by kunstvereins in the early days of its development in Germany.¹⁴³ In its particular context, the Kunstverein München played a significant role in increasing visibility, accessibility, and demand for non-academic art and its commodification, thus becoming a determinant in Germany’s early 19th-century art market. It also enabled the expansion and emancipation of exhibition production. Unfortunately, with the stabilization of market and advent of new venues, the Kunstverein München remained locked in the 19th century, losing relevance and significance.

The new century for the kunstverein was marked by a structural intervention—in 1906 the position of full-time managing director was introduced along with a continuous exhibition program.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, given the First World War and the severe inflation that followed, Kunstverein München was facing a severe decline in membership, economic deficit, and was overall a marginalized and largely conservative place in decline. In 1930, reorganization was

¹⁴¹ Christoph Behnke, “Zur Gründungsgeschichte deutscher Kunstvereine,” in *Tatort Kunstverein – Eine kritische Überprüfung eines Vermittlungsmodells*, eds. Bernd Milla and Heike Munder (Nürnberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2001), 15–17.

¹⁴² “Die größte Bedeutung der kunstvereins für die damals zeitgenössische Kunst lag jedenfalls in der Schaffung eines Absatzmarktes. Dabei bildeten sie ein ökonomisches Paradox, weil sie nämlich so etwas wie eine Genossenschaft von Abnehmern darstellten.” Grasskamp, “Die Einbürgerung der Kunst,” 107.

¹⁴³ Behnke, 2001, 17.

¹⁴⁴ Schmitz, 2001, 262.

inevitable and a forced measure. Transformed into a non-profit association the kunstverein's existence as an independent private society came to an end.¹⁴⁵

By 1933 the *Gleichschaltung* (cooptation) under the National Socialists could not be escaped despite all the efforts to maintain political neutrality. The Kunstverein München's building in the Hofgarten was destroyed during the bombing raids of the Second World War. Grasskamp emphasizes that the estrangement between the audience and modern art was not created by the National Socialist iconoclasm, but that the National Socialists "profited from an alienation that had long since become . . . recognizable and effective—especially within kunstvereins."¹⁴⁶

After the Second World War, the Kunstverein München was denied permission to operate, as were all vereins in Germany. It was not until April 19, 1947, that the renewed assembly took place for the first time to face the loss of the verein's premises in the Galeriestraße, as well as its disastrous financial and membership states of affairs. With financial support from the Staatshauptkasse München (DM 4 000), the exhibition activities of the Kunstverein München resumed. This "new start" was only formal, as contemporary Munich painting was beyond the sphere of kunstverein's interests at the time.¹⁴⁷

According to Wolfgang Jean Stock, it "remained in the area of supraregional insignificance until the end of the sixties,"¹⁴⁸ or more precisely, until 1968 when it merged with an-

¹⁴⁵ Langenstein, "Der Münchner Kunstverein im 19. Jahrhundert," 216, 220.

¹⁴⁶ Grasskamp, "Die schwierige Öffentlichkeit," 664.

¹⁴⁷ A letter from the Kulturreferat, the Department of Culture, describes traditional Munich art viewed as endangered and therefore the conservatively inclined priorities of the Kunstverein's program were supported: "Munich's private art galleries show a preference for modern and abstract art, while the renown Munich art is barely able to speak. Already this designates Kunstverein's indispensability." Schreiben des Referats 28 zu Nr. VII 483 from 10.1.49, BHStA MK 51575, quoted in Anette Doms, "Neue Wege. Über die Situation und Rezeption moderner Malerei in der Münchner Nachkriegszeit," (PhD diss., Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich München, 2004), 150.

¹⁴⁸ Wolfgang Jean Stock quoted in Grasskamp, "Konkurrenten und Partner. Kunstverein und Kunstakademie in München," 20.

other Munich association, Freunden junger Kunst (Friends of Young Art), founded in 1952. The reorientation was largely rooted in strengthening the authority and mandate of the director at the helm and transforming the institutional self-understanding. Grasskamp characterizes the ongoing reapproaching of institution's profile and program as "a revitalization of the kunstverein, because the exhibition program is now justified in public debate instead of internal coterie and respectively the lost political publicity was regained."¹⁴⁹

From 1968 And Into The New Times

The new director Reiner Kallhardt provoked a resonant and fierce debate around the Kunstverein München. The irony is that it came out of cooperation with the Academy of Fine Arts, the rampart of traditionalism and propriety. In 1968, student protests at the academy escalated to the point where it was even temporarily closed on January 20, 1969 by the Ministry of Culture. The conflict emerged from arguments over the academy's past under National Socialism and how it dealt with it.¹⁵⁰ After the closure of the academy, the following year student protest developed into the exhibition-intervention titled *Die herrschende Ästhetik ist die Ästhetik der Herrschenden* (The Ruling Aesthetics is the Aesthetics of the Ruling) mounted in the kunstverein (Figure 2 and 3). Upon Kallhardt's invitation it was developed as a contribution to the exhibition *Poetry must be made by all! Transform the world!* (Figure 4). The Ministry of Culture's reaction was fierce and immediate. All public subsidies to the kunstverein were cancelled and the exhibition was demanded to be closed. Neither kunstverein mem-

¹⁴⁹ Grasskamp, *Die unbewältigte Moderne*, 130.

¹⁵⁰ For example, Hermann Kaspar, who organized marches in celebration of the Day of German Art from 1937 to 1939, remained a professor at the academy in Munich until his retirement in 1972. In 1968, the General Students Committee organized the exhibition *Der Fall Hermann Kaspar* (The Case of Hermann Kaspar) in the academy.

bers, nor the donors contributing to the kunstverein showed any enthusiasm or support and conclusively Kallhardt had to resign.¹⁵¹

In the early seventies, kunstvereins in other German cities also became sites of political controversy. In the postwar period they saw their purpose more in the re-evaluation of a Modernism that had previously been condemned as “degenerate.” Emerging art historians began to be hired to run them, as the acknowledgement of the demands of quality and consistency of exhibition programs arised. Many institutions were called into question and even some new ones into being by this wave of politicalization and discontent.¹⁵²

In light of the political upheaval, Kunstverein München finally managed to establish a new membership structure and approach to its programming. Upon becoming the managing director, Haimo Liebich, the former assistant to Kallhardt, pushed forward political, challenging exhibitions and implemented new approaches to mediation.¹⁵³

Hans Grollmann, appointed in 1975, turned his focus as a director back to regional artists, which, although it aligned with the founding idea of the kunstverein, also meant a step backwards from the orientation towards international Western art. Moreover, such a course of action was ideologically discordant with new initiatives and venues that were emerging in München, such as Aktionsraum A1 (1969–1970), the Modern Art Museum (1967–1972), and, above all, the Kunstraum München (1973).¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Grasskamp, “Konkurrenten und Partner. Kunstverein und Kunstakademie in München,” 20.

¹⁵² The Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst (NGBK), which was then, along with the Kunstverein München, a pioneer in the new mediation of art, was founded in Berlin. Ibid.

¹⁵³ Worth mentioning are the solo exhibitions of Eduardo Arroyo (1971) and Renato Guttuso (1972), as well as the early group exhibition of Arte Povera (1971). The didactic-thematic exhibition on Albrecht Altdorfer’s “Alexanderschlacht” of 1529 (1974), the first media conference and exhibition on computer art to be held at the K.M., also testify to the influence of Liebich and the changed membership structure.

¹⁵⁴ The *Kunstraum München* that Hermann Kern and Michael Tacke called into being in 1973, almost instantaneously established itself as one of the internationally most important private initiatives in the field of contemporary art.

Only with Wolfgang Jean Stock's appointment in 1978 did the Kunstverein München manage to set itself on track to be what could be called experimental institution. Stock promoted international positions as well as young art in Munich and expanded cooperation with the Art Academy. His approach gained approval and support, and delivered larger visibility to the kunstverein amidst institutional landscape of Munich. Stock also managed to secure more subsidies from the city administration and receive grants from the Ministry of Culture. The corporation Philip Morris made a donation to support institutional development, an extraordinary event for Germany at that time.¹⁵⁵

Stock was followed by Zdenek Felix, who served from 1985 to 1991. Felix came from the Folkwang Museum in Essen and was focused primarily on contemporary developments in painting. Under his directorship a major renovation was undertaken and a truly ambitious international exhibition program was put in place.¹⁵⁶ His successor Helmut Draxler was at the helm from 1992 to 1995, and was followed by Dirk Snauwaert from 1996 to 2001. Maria Lind led the institution from 2002 to 2004.¹⁵⁷

With the creation of the distinct position of the director, the operational grammar of the kunstverein changed significantly. It became primarily dependent on subsidies, external

¹⁵⁵ Grasskamp, "Konkurrenten und Partner. Kunstverein und Kunstakademie in München," 21.

¹⁵⁶ Felix curated group exhibitions on the New York scene and organized solo shows for Dan Graham, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Arte Povera, and Anselm Kiefer.

¹⁵⁷ Lind was followed by Stefan Kalmár from 2005 to 2009, and then Bart van der Heide from 2010 to 2015. Chris Fitzpatrick is the current director at the Kunstverein München. I personally consider van der Heide's directorship extremely interesting for investigation given the optics of New Institutionalism. The focus of Bart van der Heide's curatorial work at K.M. lay in the production of historical and interdisciplinary references to the artistic positions of young and largely unknown artists. Van der Heide's curatorial approach can also be examined by the two positions he occupied bracketing his tenure at the Kunstverein München with at Witte de With in Rotterdam and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam respectively. He gained an international reputation through the curation of various solo exhibitions and debut exhibitions of artists such as Trisha Baga, Keren Cytter, Harun Farocki, Rebecca Warren, Tobias Madison, and Haegue Yang. However, this goes far beyond the remit of this paper. Heide emphasizes that the artist is always at the center of his curatorial activity and that he wants to hold back in his work. In his exhibitions he often brings established artistic positions into contact with unknown ones, displaying disregard for the institutional expectations of art history. In cultural institutions, Bart van der Heide still sees a need for institutional critique and attempts to break down the hierarchies there through his work. In his curatorial practice, he incorporates the specific identity of each institution, while his exhibitions show an increased interest in visual research within art and conceptual issues.

grants, and donors. The institution still retained support from the bundesland Bavaria, a foundational (although far from ample) source of democratically legitimate, tax-funded support for a non-profit organization. With drastic changes to the structural and conceptual envelope of the institution, the importance of the individual member was also affected and significantly reduced. As much as the members have lost influence, the burden of it was delegated to the Director.

Finally, before approaching Maria Lind's tenure at the Kunstverein München, particularly through the prism of New Institutionalism, I find it necessary to take a look at the directorship of Helmut Draxler. Lind herself referenced Draxler on a number of occasions and invited his contribution to her program.

When Draxler became director, he took over the program of the kunstverein and invited the Austrian curator Hedwig Saxenhuber to join the curatorial team (1992–1996). Draxler outlines his approach as a curator and the director of the Kunstverein München as aimed at a conceptual break with the “found” conditions: instead of creating aesthetically charged intimate worlds, Draxler focused on the problematization of the existing institutional situation, conditions of cultural production and the reception of social history in art history. He writes, “Theory, film, and video programs, later urban and political events were as important as exhibitions. . . . It was about a specific use of the spatial and institutional conditions that we no longer wanted to give to a bourgeois audience for representational purposes.”¹⁵⁸ Over the course of the following years, he and Saxenhuber designed different offerings aimed at different audiences and openly experimented with contrasts and contradictions emerging between the rebooted program and K.M.'s structure. Within the experimental framework of the project

¹⁵⁸ Helmut Draxler and Hedwig Saxenhuber, “(Re-)Politisierung und kuratorische Produktion,” in eds. Bernd Milla and Heike Munder, *Tatort Kunstverein: Eine kritische Überprüfung eines Vermittlungsmodells* (Nürnberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2001), 39–40

Summer Academy, groups were invited from the academies in Düsseldorf, Berlin, Vienna, and Munich to discuss the educational situations they find themselves in, approach and re-articulate the categories of audience and producers, and imagine the concept of the academy emancipated from its institutional constraints.¹⁵⁹

In his pursuit to challenge the K.M.'s internal structure, Draxler invited Andrea Fraser to contribute to the program. The artist developed and realised the project *Der Kunstverein. Eine Gesellschaft des Geschmacks* (The Kunstverein. A Society of Taste) in 1993 (Figure 5). The project, as expected, gave rise to a complex, multilayered interrogation and debate, largely within the kunstverein and its community of members, about the meaning, function, and achievements of the institution.¹⁶⁰

Many members of the kunstverein criticized Draxler's approach as inappropriate. His viewing of art as a place of reflection not only on artistic practices, but also on social and political issues seemed strange and even hostile, particularly when the members' role in the institutional fabric was under interrogation. In addition, Draxler's expanded concept of exposition was not exactly tailored for a universalist art audience, but rather invited active participation in the projects. At large, Draxler's work was strongly influenced by Pierre Bourdieu and can arguably be subsumed under the concept of institutional critique. Individual actors in the environment of the kunstverein were confronted with their roles and ideas while the possibilities and limitations of the institution were continuously being challenged.

Draxler's relationship with the organization's board was marked by tensions and push-and-pull offensives. Whose side won is a relative question, but it was exactly Draxler's intention to question which sides were in action on the terrain of the kunstverein and who had the

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 43.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 41

right to partake. His reference to a notion of culture that can not be separated from social and political fields got him accused of doing sociology rather than showing art.

As a director he also assiduously strengthened the relationship with the academy, the relationship that had been there even before the Kunstverein München was granted royal permission to officially exist. That relationship had been under interrogation ever since.

CHAPTER III

MARIA LIND AT THE KUNSTVEREIN MÜNCHEN

Every art institution is more than just a place of display. . . . It is a place of production, a meeting place for discussion and sometimes it serves as a kind of distribution centre for art projects, which then use other channels and spaces. The art institution is the sum of all its activities. Whether these activities take place within or beyond its walls, whether they manifest themselves in objects and pictures or are experienced through action and discourse, is incidental. Our intention is to create a dynamic Kunstverein for the art, the artists and our visitors, rather than a parking slot for objects. We intend to break the typical relationship between the exhibition itself and the program of the institution, reconfiguring the relationship between the curator and the artist.

Søren Grammel, Maria Lind, Katharina Schlieben¹⁶¹

The historical review that precedes this section dedicated to Maria Lind as director-curator at K.M. does not pretend to be exhaustive, but is offered as a backdrop to ground the analysis of Lind's curatorial and discursive approach, to interrogate the vocabulary Lind is employing and the perspective she suggests as historically given. All the directors who guided kunstverein over the course of previous decades have weighed in in their own ways on the institution's past and the substantial but inconsistent historical profile of the kunstverein, in order to inhabit the institution's present and imagine a possible future. Yet, the institution's past was interpreted differently and necessarily transformed by each director.

The deontic capital of programming¹⁶² in non-collecting institutions was and to large extent is the change of program and approach with the advent of a new director. The comparatively short period of time, in terms of the institution's overall history, allows for challenging (in multiple ways) experimental programs to be suggested, developed, and imple-

¹⁶¹ Grammel, Lind, and Schlieben, "Editorial. In Ersatz eines Manifests/In Place of a Manifesto," 19.

¹⁶² As deontology is understood in Searle's work "What is an Institution?", i.e. enabling structures of power relationships and status acquisition.

mented. But what it does not promise, or rather is not capable of in a given format and changing conditions, is to guarantee the sustainability of those new approaches once the post is vacated. On the contrary, the constant state of flux and possibility for re-imagination is enabled at the cost of sustainability of particular formats.

Taking the lead at the Kunstverein München in 2002, Lind invited two curators to join the curatorial team, Søren Grammel and Katharina Schlieben (Figure 6). The distilled program that was developed by Lind and the curatorial team would be: exhibition projects, *Sputniks*, temporally ambitious and formally hybrid solo shows, workshops, an ongoing program of monthly film screenings, an annual video festival, an ongoing publishing program, and diversified formats of shared knowledge production (such as conferences and symposia). All projects stemmed from the ambition to rethink the relationship between artists and the institution.¹⁶³

In an interview Lind explains, “I want to go beyond display, and if you look at the program at Kunstverein Munich, you can see that the *pre* and the *post* is often as important, if not more important, than what we traditionally see as the *moment* of art in an institution, which is the display moment.” Lind understands and manifests her approach as sensitive and sensible to the “internal logic” of artworks. aiming to “combine the modalities of a particular institutional situation” with “the surprise, the questioning, the contemplation, and the problematization of contemporary art.”¹⁶⁴ To a large extent, her concern was the hegemony of the exhibi-

¹⁶³ Lind, “We want to become an institution,” 2014. Also see the publication concluding Lind’s tenure at the Kunstverein München, Maria Lind et al., *Gesammelte Drucksachen – Collected Newsletters, Spring 02 – Fall 04* (Frankfurt [am Main]: Revolver, 2004).

¹⁶⁴ Lind and O’Neill, “Going Beyond Display: The Munich Kunstverein Years. Maria Lind in an Interview with Paul O’Neill,” 41.

tion medium, which according to her curatorial approach can be seen as just one of many possible ways an institution can frame artistic work.¹⁶⁵

As I approach Lind's practice at K.M. in regards to New Institutionalism, I will focus on two large-scale and extended projects: *Sputniks*, a platform that evolved over the course of Lind's tenure (2002–2004) and *Telling Histories: An Archive and Three Case Studies with Contributions by Mabe Bethônico and Liam Gillick* (2003).

Telling Histories

Lind was interested in reconnecting the K.M. with the bursts of radicality in its recent history. To provide rationale for this approach, she commissioned an essay by the art historian Walter Grasskamp, who described the ongoing traditionalism of the K.M. and the aesthetic provincialism of the city of Munich in "Konkurrenten und Partner. Kunstverein und Kunstakademie in München."¹⁶⁶ Grasskamp maintained that Kunstverein München had already overlooked a significant number of important art historical movements, rejecting Impressionist and Jugendstil artworks and ignoring abstraction, as it was introduced by the Zen group, and Situationism, pioneered by the Spur collective. Grasskamp repeated the earlier diagnosis from the art historian and former director of the kunstverein Wolfgang Jean Stock: right up until the end of the sixties, the K.M. "continued to operate in a field of super-regional insignificance."¹⁶⁷

The project entitled *Telling Histories: An Archive and Three Case Studies with Contributions by Mabe Bethônico and Liam Gillick* (2003) was initiated in early 2003 and was on display at the Kunstverein München from October 11 to November 3, 2003, with the major

¹⁶⁵ Maria Lind, "Learning from Art and Artists," in *Selected Maria Lind Writing*, ed. Brian Kuan Wood (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010), 235–257.

¹⁶⁶ Grasskamp, "Konkurrenten und Partner. Kunstverein und Kunstakademie in München," 36–51.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

support of Allianz Kulturstiftung (Figure 7). The curators Ana Paula Cohen, Søren Grammel, and Maria Lind developed the project together as a collective process, commissioning artists Mabe Bethénico (Belo Horizonte)¹⁶⁸ and Liam Gillick (London/New York) “whose stubborn style of working productively confused and opened [the project’s] concept.”¹⁶⁹

Telling Histories marked the 180th anniversary of the Kunstverein München, while at the same time allowing for a look back at the 50 years of the K.M.’s presence and operation in the gallery building at Hofgarten.¹⁷⁰ As the collective curatorial statement suggests,

Telling Histories was inspired by the view that an institution should address its history so as to project considered perspectives for the future. Through this project we intended to investigate the conditions which the art institution develops when mediating work, to find new possibilities and space for maneuvering in collaboration with artists.¹⁷¹

Telling Histories looked at three resonant exhibitions from the kunstverein’s recent history: the 1970 traveling exhibition *Poetry Must Be Made by All! Transform the World!*, Gerhard Merz’s 1986 *Dove Sta Memoria* (Where is Memory), and Andrea Fraser’s 1993 *Eine Gesellschaft des Geschmacks* (A Society of Taste). Since 1823 when a group of artists, architects, and connoisseurs brought the kunstverein into being, its exhibitions have not always found the approval of the Munich public, but have often been occasions for serious debate. All three exhibitions triggered engaged debates about how the effect of art and its relation to

¹⁶⁸ Bethénico’s artistic practice addresses the way we structure, organize, and present material and how fragments of real materials are bound together, often by fictional structures. She has devoted much of her practice to archives and collections.

¹⁶⁹ Maria Lind, “Telling Histories: Archive/Spatial Situation/Case-Studies/Talk-Shows/Symposium,” in Liam Gillick and Maria Lind, eds. *Curating with Light Luggage: Reflections, Discussions, and Revisions* (Frankfurt [am Main]: Revolver/Archiv für Aktuelle Kunst, 2005), 99.

¹⁷⁰ For the early history of K.M., see Langenstein, “Der Münchner Kunstverein im 19. Jahrhundert,” and the catalogue Bayerthal and Kunstverein München, eds, *150 Jahre Kunstverein München. Dokumentation zur Frühgeschichte des Kunstvereins. Jahrgaben des Kunstvereins 1825 bis 1973/74. Künstler – Kunstwerk – Kommunikation – Kunstverein. Zur Kunst in München heute.*

¹⁷¹ Ana Paula Cohen, Søren Grammel and Maria Lind, “Telling Histories: Archive - Exhibition - Case Studies - Talk Shows - Symposium,” in *Gesammelte Drucksachen – Collected Newsletters, Spring 02 – Fall 04*, eds. Maria Lind et al. (Frankfurt [am Main]: Revolver, 2004), 198. Also see “Documentation” edited by Maria Lind, “Telling Histories: An Archive and Three Case Studies with Contributions by Mabe Bethénico and Liam Gillick,” in *Gesammelte Drucksachen – Collected Newsletters, Spring 02 – Fall 04*, 292–300.

society is shaped by the institutional framework and established expectations. Since from its inception the Kunstverein München has been interrogating en route the parameters of institutional work, thus the quote by Kallhardt from 1971 was a tempting point (both discursively and historically) to push against: “Institutions arise when habit, habituation, or consensus fixes definite forms of behavior for definite situations. This fixation serves the orientation of action.”¹⁷² The curatorial team appears interested in moments of controversy and dissent with conventional taste and established values, deeply rooted in the explicitly conservative society of Munich.

The *Telling Histories* project evolved in three stages. First, the archival materials—curatorial concepts, installation shots, and press reports—were displayed as an installation at the entrance to the exhibition in display cases and light boxes. Second, a series of “talk shows”, as labeled by Grammel who organized them, were filmed, reproduced on DVD and VHS, and integrated into the exhibition on video monitors (Figure 8). The third stage was a symposium entitled “Curating with Light Luggage” (2003). It extended the debate on critical curatorial practices and the role of experimental institutions beyond the confines of the K.M. (Figure 9).

The structural backbone of the *Telling Histories* project was the reconstruction of the K.M.’s archive. Most of the archive had been destroyed during the Second World War, so when Lind assumed the directorship, she has recounted there were pieces stored at the Staatsarchiv München and no formal archive owned or preserved by or in the institution itself. The choice of exhibition case studies for the *Telling Histories* project was largely determined

¹⁷² Rainer Kallhardt, “Poesie Muss von Allen Gemacht Werden! oder Die Grenzen Institutioneller Kunstvermittlung [Poetry must be made by all! Transform the world! Or: the Limits of the Institutional Mediation of Art],” *Magazin Kunst* 11, no. 43 (1971), 2388.

by the controversy they had provoked at the time and the mediation practices engaged in the recent past.

The team had to start at the level of collecting, identifying and (re)structuring the historical material. The artists were invited as “applied” artists, i.e. involved in specialized tasks. Alongside being general discussion partners, Mabe Bethénico was asked to investigate archival materials and Liam Gillick was approached to provide the project with a pragmatic user surface. Thus *Telling Histories* turned into an endeavor that encompassed the accumulation, processing, and reorganizing of the institution’s historical material into an archive, as well as a spatial set-up which framed and hosted the archive and debates around it.

I suggest looking more closely at the three exhibition cases selected from the K.M.’s history in the chronological order. It would offer some ground to assume why they in particular were selected, but more importantly, it triggers an understanding of an institution as a tool, a situation, and a context.

Poetry Must Be Made by All! Transform the World! was a documentary exhibition initiated by curator Ronald Hunt at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. As a historical survey of artistic activities from Russian Constructivism, Dadaism, and Surrealism to the events of May 1968, the show was to be exhibited at five European venues. From July 8 to August 16, 1970 it was supposed to be on display in the Kunstverein München, but was closed prematurely on August 8. The events surrounding the controversial exhibition provoked a broad range of comments and dissent. In 1970 Laszlo Glozer wrote of a revealing of the “hidden power—political networks”¹⁷³ of the Munich art scene, stressing the political effect of the project, whereas Juliane Roh in 1972 interpreted it as “terroristic means” at work, through which

¹⁷³ Laszlo Glozer, “Die Verhinderte Aufklärung,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 6, 1970.

“venerable” kunstvereins were “put to the use” of minorities, and concluded that “the task of the kunstverein is now no longer to inform the public about contemporary art.”¹⁷⁴

In consonance with the title of the exhibition, which in itself is an amalgamated quote of Lautréamont and Marx, the exhibition agitated to work “revolutionarily and creatively,” thus positioning artistic production as a tool for societal change. Structurally the exhibition consisted of five parts. The main element comprised of enlarged photographs displayed on 24 steel panels and free-standing objects (reconstructions and models). The show was accompanied by an illustrated catalogue and a “Book Café”—a public program of seminars, discussions, and film screenings (Figure 10). However, of greatest importance in regards to its incarnation at the Kunstverein München was the “Fourth Wall”—an interface for free communication, commentary, and other forms of response, a kind of “open mike” (Figure 11). Rainer Kallhardt, then the director and curator of the kunstverein, invited the students of the Munich Academy of Fine Arts to participate and delegated the Fourth Wall operation to them (Figure 12).¹⁷⁵

As was mentioned earlier, in 1968–1969 students were in open conflict with the academy’s faculty and the Bavarian Ministry of Education and Culture, and had occupied the academy building.¹⁷⁶ Kallhardt traced an organic link between the ongoing student protests as an act of civil dissent and the historical engagements of art with politics examined within Ronald Hunt’s exhibition. Kallhardt invited students to transfer their local revolutionary artistic praxis to the premises of the kunstverein. As the documentary photos by Branko Senior reveal, students “inhabited” the environment of the exhibition with posters, slogans, wall texts, and

¹⁷⁴ Juliane Roh, “Kritisches zur Krisensituation eines Kunstvereins,” *Das Kunstwerk* 25, no. 1 (1972), 18.

¹⁷⁵ See Reiner Kallhardt, “‘Poesie muss von allen gemacht werden!’ oder: Die Grenzen institutioneller Kunstvermittlung,” in *Magazin Kunst* 11, no. 43 (1971), 2386–2404.

¹⁷⁶ The reaction of the press and society was resonant and almost univocal. See Peter Raschner’s report in *Bild*, the leading German tabloid, Peter Raschner, “Münchens Akademie in einen Schweinestall Verwandelt!” [Munich’s Academy Turned into Pigsty!], *Bild* (Berlin), Feb. 21, 1969.

paintings, artefacts of the protest and its documentation as well as a compilation of revolutionary literature on a bookshelf.

Many of the important kunstverein members were little amused by the quite unusual manifestation, which “was consciously conceived as provocative,” and its slogans—“carry the revolution into the kunstverein” read one of the graffiti, “destroy art in order to notice life” another—offended the kunstverein’s donors from the political and the business world. The exhibition was closed prematurely.¹⁷⁷

There was an attempt of pushback—a protest against the Board of Directors and a national campaign in support of Kallhardt was initiated by colleagues such as Karl Ruhrberg, Eberhard Roters, and Uwe M. Schneede (Figure 13). But eventually Kallhardt had to resign. Lind commented that the “provocative power” of the student actions lay in the “artistic-political posture of a collective,” which aroused considerable annoyance among the K.M.’s trustees who insisted that Kallhardt evict the students.¹⁷⁸ In light of the evolving situation and “dialogue” between the kunstverein and the larger and more influential state apparatuses, the Moderna Museet, as the initiator of the exhibition, insisted on closing the entire exhibition while Swedish newspapers eagerly spread word of intolerable censorship in Germany.

Poetry Must Be Made by All! Transform the World! was an example of how an institution could (and arguably should) become a platform for the articulation of political viewpoints. It exposed divisions of opinion between those supporting the program and those who saw the function of kunstvereins as to provide opportunities for “noncommittal aesthetics without political implications.”¹⁷⁹ Lind’s point in revisiting this exhibition was consonant

¹⁷⁷ Grasskamp, “Konkurrenten und Partner. Kunstverein und Kunstakademie in München,” 36–51.

¹⁷⁸ Maria Lind, “Telling Histories: Archive / Spatial Situation / Case Studies / Talk Shows / Symposium,” in *Selected Maria Lind Writing* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010), 312.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 313.

with her vision of the kunstverein as a place for the articulation of controversial points of view, a public discussion forum, a space beyond merely passive contemplation. Her intention was to show that the kunstverein was neither a neutral space, nor a space of deliberated silent consent; it had a role to play in the creation of art history, and the traces of its memory were still relevant today.

The second exhibition in the *Telling Histories* project was *Dove Sta Memoria* (Where is Memory) (September 19–October 26, 1986)¹⁸⁰ created by the artist Gerhard Merz. It was perhaps the most provocative of the selected exhibitions and resonant in terms of responses; it was a “historically, aesthetically, and architecturally conceived exhibition” designed to explore Germany’s Nazi past.¹⁸¹ As the artists raised questions of the limits of historical reconstruction in matters of fascist iconography, cultural heritage and memory, it gained the attention of the leading newspapers in Germany. Described on the one hand as a “legendary event in the history of art in Munich”¹⁸² and “of shockingly strong impressiveness,”¹⁸³ it was dismissed on the other hand as “in every sense dubious exhibition.”¹⁸⁴ Despite multiple readings of and critical responses to the exhibition, Merz himself insisted that he worked exclusively in the aesthetic sphere and was not making a political statement.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ See Zdenek Felix, *Gerhard Merz: Dove Sta Memoria* (Munich: Fertigsatz GmbH, 1986) and Martina Fuchs, “Gerhard Merz: Ausgewählte Räume der Achtziger Jahre” [Gerhard Merz: Selected Rooms of the 1980s] PhD. diss., Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, 1999.

¹⁸¹ Lind, “Telling Histories: Archive / Spatial Situation / Case Studies / Talk Shows / Symposium,” 314.

¹⁸² Ingrid Rein, “Nachdenken, ausagieren, empfinden. Zu Sechs neuen Ausstellungen” [Reflection, acting out, feeling. On six new exhibitions], *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, October 2, 1986, 50.

¹⁸³ Laszlo Glozer, “Halle der Erinnerung: Wie der Maler Gerhard Merz die Räume des Münchener Kunstvereins in eine Gedenkstätte Verwandelt” [Hall of Memory: How the painter Gerhard Merz transformed the rooms of the Munich Kunstverein into a Memorial], *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, September 26, 1986.

¹⁸⁴ “Martyrer-Ehrung in der Risikozone” (Martyr’s Honors in the risk zone), *Der Spiegel*, no. 41 1986, 228.

<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13519689.html>

¹⁸⁵ See Gerhard Merz, “An einer Ästhetik der Macht bin ich nicht Interessiert. Ein Gespräch mit Sara Rogenhöfer und Florian Rotzer” [I am not interested in an aesthetic of power. A conversation with Sara Rogenhöfer and Florian Rotzer] *Kunstforum International*, vol. 92 (December 1987/January 1988), 182.

Merz's exhibition invoked the ties between the history of the K.M.'s architecture and its functioning as an exhibition venue. The artist transformed the gallery space with large-scale wall paintings in mars violet (caput mortuum) and turquoise, thus appealing to classical aesthetics (Figure 14 and 15).¹⁸⁶ For the title Merz pulled the quote from Ezra Pound's *Pisan Cantos*, written after his imprisonment for anti-American propaganda in 1945. Merz created a minefield of symbols and artefacts, bringing together a centrally placed monochrome silk-screen print of *Saint Sebastian* by Giovanni Battista Cima da Conegliano (c. 1500) placed as an altar panel (Figure 16); a pillar with a sacrificial bowl on top invoking the Nazi death cult and the aesthetics of events organized by the Third Reich; the flame, that glorious symbol of the Olympic Games; and a monochrome silk-screen print of Otto Freundlich's sculpture *Der Neue Mensch* (The New Man). Merz's appropriation of Freundlich's work was particularly evocative. The work had been featured on the cover of the catalogue for the Nazi exhibition *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art).¹⁸⁷ Freundlich, a German-Jewish artist, was murdered in a concentration camp six years after his work was shown at the intentionally defamatory exhibition. Most probably as an allusion to the latter, at the back of the stairs, Merz placed a monochrome silkscreen print of human bones photographed in the Capuchin Crypt in Rome.

In November 1987, the Munich Academy of Fine Arts held a symposium titled *Kunst und Faschismus* (Art and Fascism) where the work of Gerhard Merz, including this exhibi-

¹⁸⁶ The building was designed in 1789–1781 by Karl Albert von Lespilliez for the Elector Karl Theodor of Bavaria to host the art collection of the House of Wittelsbach. The gallery was renovated, or better say “white-washed” in accordance with standards of the white cube, by the architect Peter Strassl in 1985, a year before Merz's exhibition.

¹⁸⁷ The exhibition *Entartete Kunst* [Degenerate Art] was organized by Adolf Ziegler and the Nazi Party in the Institute of Archeology in the Hofgarten from July 19 to November 30, 1937. The exhibition presented 650 paintings, sculptures, and prints by 112 artists confiscated from German museums, and was staged as a counter to the concurrent Great German Art Exhibition. Degenerate art was defined as works that “insult German feeling, or destroy or confuse natural form, or simply reveal an absence of adequate manual and artistic skill.” 2,009,899 visitors attended. To this day researchers debate whether the 1937 exhibition *Entartete Kunst* took place in the galleries of the kunstverein or in a nearby part of the building which now houses the Theater Museum. According to an unpublished report by Birgit Jooss, after WWII the partly damaged galleries were renovated and divided between Kunstverein München and Deutsche Theater Museum. According to Jooss, half of the available texts on *Entartete Kunst* refer to the kunstverein spaces as the location, whereas the other half argues for the the Theater Museum.

tion, was discussed at length, bringing the program of the kunstverein to the epicenter of public debate.

Lind continually stressed that the kunstverein was not a neutral container for art, as its ideological and even architectural framework was deeply embedded in the region's history, including the still avoided (if not taboo in "polite" society) history of the Third Reich. By revisiting an exhibition recalling Munich's Nazi past, the curatorial team reminded everyone of the *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) (1937) exhibition and the fact that it had taken place in direct proximity to the institution. Peeling back the layers of the Kunstverein München's exhibition histories, *Telling Histories* was a reminder that the institution and all its dimensions were permeated by memories and loaded with meaning.

The third case study was Andrea Fraser's exhibition *Eine Gesellschaft des Geschmacks* (A Society of Taste),¹⁸⁸ originally on display from January 20 to March 7, 1993. Of the three shows selected for the *Telling Histories*, it was the most tangible for the kunstverein's members and perhaps the least noticed by the public and press. Upon being invited by Helmut Draxler, Fraser approached the kunstverein as a sociotope and historical phenomenon, a litmus test for the structures of the bourgeois public.

The exhibition was structured around interviews undertaken with the nine members of the kunstverein Board of Directors. Fraser asked seemingly simple questions: When did you first become involved with art? Do you own art objects? What service do you think the kunstverein provides in Munich? Do you think the kunstverein is a location for a particular social group?¹⁸⁹ The resulting twenty-seven hours of originally documented dialogues were tran-

¹⁸⁸ See Andrea Fraser, *Andrea Fraser: Eine Gesellschaft des Geschmacks* (Munich: Kunstverein München, 1993), and "Andrea Fraser," K.M. (Kunstverein München), accessed August 13, 2018, <http://www.kunstverein-muenchen.de/en/program/exhibitions/archive/1993/andrea-fraser>.

¹⁸⁹ Lind, "Telling Histories: Archive / Spatial Situation / Case Studies / Talk Shows / Symposium," 317.

scribed and published in the catalogue without the names of the interviewees. Fraser selected a quote from one of the responses for her title: “We are all like members of a society of taste.”¹⁹⁰

Alongside the text and catalogue, Fraser invited the same interviewees into a studio to record themselves reading the interview transcripts. The artist then collaged the recordings into a one-and-a-half-hour sound installation, which was then displayed alongside a selection of twenty-five works of art from the personal collections of the members of the K.M. Board. These were displayed without any identification or names, either those of artists or of the artworks’ owners (Figure 17).

Fraser’s approach and resulting exhibition gained less attention from the press and audience. Among those critics who did address the exhibition, it was found lacking an aesthetic signature and some critics objected to the translation of documentary material into the format of an exhibition. On the other hand, her slipping into the gown of a sociologist was received positively by others. In his analysis Jochen Becker offers an interesting analogy, reading *Eine Gesellschaft des Geschmacks* as a kind of symbiosis: “The institution makes room, time, and money available to Fraser, and she, in a countermove, initiates a project that fulfills certain expectations and is of use to the institution.”¹⁹¹ Becker compares Fraser’s research to a sort of institutional dissection which brought the actual conditions of the kunstverein to light.¹⁹² Fraser’s approach brought the internal support structure of the kunstverein to the fore, opening up the social foundation of institution’s operation (in effect since its inception in 1823) for inquiry, and posing questions as to whom the kunstverein serves and in whose interest it exists.

¹⁹⁰ Fraser, *Andrea Fraser*, 44.

¹⁹¹ Jochen Becker, “Vorstädter Raus,” *taz*, March 3, 1993, 13.

¹⁹² In fact, one member of the Board of Directors felt she had been manipulated by the artist who lured her into the project and requested that her input be removed from the transcript published in the catalog. The request was not met.

Revisiting these three projects was an attempt to (re)construct the archive and ground the kunstverein of the 2000s in its past. Cohen, Grammel, and Lind chose these particular exhibitions not only as reflection on the work of the kunstverein or for their controversial reception, but also for the insight into different artistic and curatorial possibilities that they offered. The exhibitions were offered as telling examples of debate around the role of cultural institutions in action and the expectations of them that had been revolving in Germany since the 1970s.

Poetry Must Be Made by All! Transform the World! showed the “deliberate ‘alienation’ of an art institution from its traditional goals” in transforming itself into “a platform for political discussion and collective action.”¹⁹³ *Dove Sta Memoria* exposed an “unacceptable” subject aesthetically, reintroducing the “unspeakable” back into the public debate from within the place soaked with suppressed history and layered identity. *Eine Gesellschaft des Geschmacks* inquired at the brink of research and sociology the backbone of the K.M. and its special membership structures, rendering transparent the motivations of the trustees for being engaged with art and the kunstverein, connecting it to the influence within and of the institution in the formation of social, political, and even economic values.

With *Telling Histories*, the curatorial team was also interested in how the work of art institutions— especially given the history of kunstvereins in Germany— was closely bound up with so-called public education and the shaping of public opinion.¹⁹⁴ In developing the conceptual framework of *Telling Histories: An Archive and Three Case Studies with Contributions by Mabe Bethônico and Liam Gillick* (2003), the curatorial team had to find a solution as to what form of presentation could do justice to the material that could be read and understood anew with every examination.

¹⁹³ Lind, “Telling Histories: Archive/Spatial Situation/Case Studies/Talk Shows/Symposium,” 319.

¹⁹⁴ See Grasskamp, “Konkurrenten und Partner. Kunstverein und Kunstakademie in München,” 37–39.

The eventual form was tripartite. The first module was a spatial situation which organized and made available parts of the institution's archive in the exhibition rooms of the Kunstverein. Upon invitation from Lind, Bethônico conducted research as an almost archeological endeavor through the Kunstverein München assets hosted in the Staatsarchiv München. The artist incorporated the archive's growing structure into the display and made it partially available, unveiled "as a flexible 'memory' [that] receives, stores, and transforms information." Bethônico addressed the way we structure, organize, and present material, often by means of fictional structures. Lind writes, "Bethônico's goal for *Telling Histories* was a visualization that proceeds from the numerical surface of the facts and opens and extends a possible way of reading the archival material. The emerging 'knowledge' about the institution allows inferences of the social system of people who, in its organizational and communicative processes, justify its production."¹⁹⁵

As the second artist invited to contribute to the *Telling Histories*, Liam Gillick designed the setting for the entire project so that it was possible for a viewer "to intervene in the spatial arrangement of the project; so that the chief quality of the archives, their potentiality, was preserved instead of being fixed in a definite way of reading. It became a project immanent corrective."¹⁹⁶ The three tables in the first exhibition space (one table for each exhibition) offered photographic documentation, a short text about the exhibition in question and an original exhibition file (Figure 18). The latter included archival material edited by Mabe Bethônico in such a way that certain documents were "veiled" and only fragments could be read. In this way, Bethônico triggered associative rather than rational readings of letters, contracts, lists, and other documents extant today (Figure 19).

¹⁹⁵ Lind and Wood, "Telling Histories: Archive/Spatial Situation/Case Studies/Talk Shows/Symposium," 320.

¹⁹⁶ Lind, *Curating with Light Luggage: Reflections, Discussions, and Revisions*, 100.

A shelf that blocked the view into the main exhibition space contained files with further documents on other kunstverein exhibitions (but for the reasons of data privacy they were available only for scientific research). The space that opened behind it offered the photographic archive, all catalogues, and press clippings available at the kunstverein that were open to the public. The spatial framework also offered access to the computer database, which offered a virtual tour through the archive and assets available for review (assembled and filled by Bethônico) (Figure 20). Gillick, sourcing from Bethônico's database, designed wall texts with a list of all people who had contributed to the Kunstverein München program over the last three decades on one wall, and the other with notes and quotes from Bethônico's "archival journey." (Figure 21) The very far end of the room presented a blackboard installed so that it could serve as a guest book and be reminiscent of the *Fourth Wall* from the 1970s.

The second module of the project combined spatial and discursive envelopes. Liam Gillick's design positioned a stage in the main exhibition space, where three public talk shows¹⁹⁷ were held and filmed over the course of the exhibition (Figure 22). The documented talk shows and separately recorded interviews were edited and screened in the stage zone throughout the duration of the exposition, and also made available on DVD and VHS.

¹⁹⁷ The talk-show format was devised and labelled by Søren Grammel. According to the information provided on the DVD documentation, the talk shows were: "Poetry Must Be Made by All! Transform the World!" (October 14. Participants: Lydia Hartl, academic in cultural and media studies; Rainer Kallhardt, artist; Alfred Lachauer, member of the artist group PART; Haimo Liebich, culture and museum educator, member of the Munich city council; Ingrid Rein, art critic; and Bernhart Schwenk, museum curator at Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich.); "A Society of Taste" (October 18. Participants: Bazon Brock, professor of aesthetics; Gabriele Czoppan, art journalist and editor; Helmut Draxler, art historian/critic, professor of aesthetic theory at Merz Akademie, Stuttgart; Ingrid Rein, art critic; and Birgit Sonna, editor and lecturer); and "Dove Sta Memoria" (October 19. Participants: Klaus von Bruch, professor of media art at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Munich; Zdenek Felix, independent curator and author; Martina Fuchs, art historian and editor; Michaela Melian, publisher, musician, and artist; and Peter Strassl, independent architect.) Søren Grammel was the moderator of all three talk shows.

The third and final module was entirely discursive, comprising the symposium “Curating with Light Luggage” and the eponymous 2005 publication.¹⁹⁸ The symposium was another format suggested to approach the archival material and to imagine and enable discursive platforms within institutions as possible and effective, without making them into something formal with a permanent or rigid protocol.

¹⁹⁸ See Gillick and Lind, *Curating with Light Luggage: Reflections, Discussions, and Revisions*, 2005.

CHAPTER IV

SPUTNIKS

The “original Sputnik” circumnavigated Earth on October 4, 1957 in 96 minutes and at an altitude ranging between 227 and 945 kilometres. That Sputnik was a basketball-sized satellite fired into space by the Soviet Union for the purposes of researching the conditions of survival there. We, however, intend to have a somewhat more relaxed schedule and to allow ourselves more time to engage in a slower, more long-term program without the omnipresent production pressures all too common in the business of exhibition.

Sputniks. Wohin die Reise geht/ Whichever Way the Journey Goes¹⁹⁹

Lind adopted a self-reflexive approach in her position as director and curator at the Kunstverein München. This was manifested in her collective approach to curating through collaboration with Grammel and Schlieben. But Lind’s objective was also to establish close, long-term relationships with artists and to experiment with them on different models of cooperation. *Sputniks* was a framework developed and introduced to reflectively comment on and contribute to the program carried out by the in-house curatorial team of the Kunstverein München.

Taking its title from a Russian word *спутник*, with two primary meanings, a fellow traveller or a satellite (in the context of spaceflight and astronomy), the project united a group of sixteen artists, curators, and writers who were invited by the kunstverein’s curatorial team to contribute to a long-term dialogue and be involved in the institution’s planning and programming. The implied commitment was to reflect on the museum’s inner workings and respond to the institution free of the straightjacket of pre-defined expectations.

¹⁹⁹ Katharina Schlieben, “Sputniks. Wohin die Reise geht/Whichever Way the Journey Goes,” in *Gesammelte Drucksachen – Collected Newsletters, Spring 02 – Fall 04*, eds. Maria Lind et al. (Frankfurt [am Main]: Revolver, 2004), 24–25.

In her latest book, Janet Marstine analyzes the most constructive recent forms of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization as they appear in both alternative spaces and in museums:

Among the most significant new modes of instituting that have emerged over the last few years are: introducing sustainable platforms for artists to serve as critical friends; thinking and acting mindfully about what it means to build a public; generating novel ambitious models of a dispersed museum independent of any one site; and treating a permanent collection as a generative tool integral to the cultural commons.²⁰⁰

She goes on to conclude, “in all of these initiatives, an ethics of care frames the agonistic space that is produced by discourse.”²⁰¹ What Marstine writes about and what the format of *Sputniks* enables does not suggest overcoming or canceling out the institutional framework, but rather reinhabiting it and rewriting the protocol of collaboration and production. Moving away from one-way power dynamic, the action relocates towards a present-focused attempt of instituent practice, state of joint becoming. As Simon Sheikh suggested, “It is not only a question of changing institutions, but of changing how we institute—how subjectivity and imagination can be instituted in a different way, with inclusions and exclusions, representations, and de-representations.”²⁰²

As the curatorial statement explains, *Sputniks*— artists, curators, and critics—were

contributing to the shape and character of the Kunstverein with their questions, critiques, advice and ideas over the next three years. Any one of these relationships may develop into one or any number of additional projects. In these relationships, complete flexibility is of key importance with respect to the particular form any of these potential projects may take.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Janet Marstine, *Critical Practice: Artists Museums, Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2017), 169.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Simon Sheikh, “Burning from the Inside: New institutionalism Revisited,” in eds. Beatrice von Bismarck, Jorn Shaffaff, and Thomas Welski, *Cultures of the Curatorial* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 372.

²⁰³ Ibid.

Those invited to become sputniks were Liesbeth Bik & Jos van der Pol, Katrina Brown, Nathan Coley, Lynne Cooke, Liam Gillick, Ruth Kaaserer, Matts Leiderstam, Deimantas Narkevičius, Mats Stjernstedt, Apolonija Šušteršič, Jan Verwoert, Jun Yang, Carey Young, Dolores Zinny, and Juan Maidagan.

The Sputnik model was realized and activated through a number of consequent meetings where ideas, queries, needs and lacks were discussed. In February 2002 nearly all who had been invited to become sputniks to Maria Lind's three-year orbit at the Kunstverein München met for a weekend in Munich to get introduced to each other and the institution. There they got a glimpse of its local situation and participated in the first brainstorming (Figure 23). One of the central issues of the discussion was the role of the present-day kunstverein and how its program could be developed "so that its visitors are taken into account."²⁰⁴

James Voorhies writes that the objective was "to recommend interventions-as-artworks in response to how the institution functioned,"²⁰⁵ which is an accurate reading of the suggested concept. But this is not accurate in terms of the de facto form that *Sputniks* took upon realization. Sputniks were not obliged to necessarily tackle the very functioning of the institution, its structural elements, or protocol. While that was Lind's desire and intention, some of the sputniks did not follow the suggested path, and Lind did not force them to in keeping with her ethos to follow the artists and artworks first of all.²⁰⁶ She made her position clear:

It is not a question of showing something that has already been stated, either on the level of content or form, but about testing something that is at least partly new, about working towards outcomes that are not clear before they are realized. . . . Critique here is like salt, dissolving into whatever it is applied to, also giving a distinct taste. Don't just

²⁰⁴ Schlieben, "Sputniks. Wohin die Reise geht/Whichever Way the Journey Goes," 24–25.

²⁰⁵ Voorhies, *Beyond Objecthood*, 128.

²⁰⁶ Lind, "Going Beyond Display: the Munich Kunstverein Years," 39–42 and public talk by Maria Lind, "My Munich Years. Followed by a discussion with Chris Fitzpatrick & Joanna Warsza" held within PAM (Public Art Munich) 2018 / Game Changers at the Kunstverein München, June 9, 2018.

choose randomly from the readymade dishes on offer; recipes must be reformulated for every occasion.²⁰⁷

Resistance towards the concept proved no less productive, given the unease that it provoked at times. The conceptual beauty of the curatorial team's opening manifesto is their openness towards "failure," or what might be considered one: "It is a place in which failures are not only possible and tolerated, but are seen as necessary and understood to be part of a process dedicated to the search for new possibilities in the practice of working with art. For this purpose, it is of great advantage to be a member institution, to have a circle of people interested in art supporting the institution."²⁰⁸

The *Sputniks* framework, largely designed in alignment with Lind's previous curatorial experience, is an example of the critically reflexive work of New Institutionalism that seeks organic and relevant form over a longer period of time. It was Lind's intention to reconsider the rules of the curator-artist game and establish a sustainable collaboration along the extended temporal register, but without the straightjacket of pre-defined concepts or precisely measurable outcomes.

The intention, however, was not to blur the boundaries between artists and curators, but to jointly work out formats and methods that enable art.

The projects may literally become part of the existing structures and infrastructures of the Kunstverein, thereby exercising an influence on the design and form of the institution itself and contributing anything which might be considered lacking. We would also like to utilise the *Sputniks*' experience and ideas as a means of discovering how an institution can best operate for artists and for visitors.²⁰⁹

I will focus on two artists in detail, Carey Young and Apolonija Šušteršič, both of whom are of significance for Lind's curatorial career.

²⁰⁷ Lind, "Selected Nodes in a Network of Thoughts on Curating," 31.

²⁰⁸ Schlieben, "Sputniks. Wohin die Reise geht/Whichever Way the Journey Goes," 25.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

As a sputnik, the artist Carey Young conducted a sequence of projects for and with the K.M., collectively entitled *Viral Marketing* (2002–2004). Conscious that business often appropriates from art, she countered this by encouraging art institutions to mimic business practices. The artist adopted strategies and techniques from the commercial sector and introduced them for use in the cultural sector. Maria Lind describes Young’s artistic approach in the following way, “To what degree can you affect a system from an outside position? Very little, according to Carey Young. She behaves like a chameleon, moving swiftly between two worlds which are traditionally understood to best stay apart: art and business. . . . She has deep professional knowledge of the structures she appropriates for her less lucrative artwork.”²¹⁰

Young made a number of interventions into the communications structure of the K.M., mainly subverting the neoliberal techniques of branding and public relations in order to enhance operation of the Kunstverein München.²¹¹ *Win-Win* (2002) was Young’s first intervention, in which she provided a negotiation skills course for the team of the kunstverein. As is common for career enhancement programs in management and business development, a professional coach was hired to hold a practical workshop with the K.M. team to teach them how to represent their interests more efficiently, deal with conflicts, and improve external and internal communications. Young implemented the workshop as a readymade of a kind, a “found-process,” thus reminding us of Hans Haacke’s earlier appropriations of corporate strategies and their misplacement within art structures of various formats. However, Young scrutinizes the more advanced and pervasive forms of early 21st-century marketing from a

²¹⁰ Lind, “Alles von Innen/All Inside,” 33.

²¹¹ “To transmit information in the most efficient way is not only one of Carey Young’s bread-winning professional specialities. She also latches onto ready-made formats prevalent in corporate culture, such as communication skill courses and ready-made motivational posters, such as with the series entitled “When Attitudes Become Form.” At K.M. she is as one of the so-called sputniks engaging with the communication strategies of the institution. Her work will develop in several stages, the first involving the staff at K.M. as its raw material.” *Ibid.*, 34.

stance that corporate strategies are not necessarily problematic unless directed to oppressive ends. With regards to the kunstverein's nature, Young's intent was to enhance the team's communication and negotiation skills in dealing with sponsors, the board, members, bundesland authorities and municipalities, colleagues and artists, the professional as well as general public, and the local and international press. Since business approaches presuppose measurable outcomes and expectations, Young also approached the results a year later, attempting to assess whether the acquired skills have been utilized and proved themselves relevant and effective. She interviewed the staff of the kunstverein, which provided "a moment of reflection on the reflection of the communication structure in the institution."²¹²

Young stresses that, first and foremost, *Win-Win* is an artwork, "an immense, dematerialized, and highly formal process piece which has no site, no boundaries, and no defined end. . . . The piece is specified as 'existing' at any time when these skills are used during interactions with others." She adds, "with this quasi-real quality," *Win-Win* adopted "an uncanny quality, allowing the work to reside in the imagination of the viewer as something which has the potential to transform the institution."²¹³ In "Learning From Art and Artists," Lind defined "context sensitive art" as art that "does not abide by the status quo, but progressively interacts with it by using a slight twist—often with protests and challenges, albeit it procreative

²¹² Lind and O'Neill, "Going Beyond Display—The Munich Kunstverein Years. Maria Lind in an interview with Paul O'Neill," 41.

²¹³ Carey Young, artist's statement on *Win-Win*. Staatsarchiv München, Kunstverein München Sammlung, folder 188a-2, 2002.

In her curatorial essay Lind writes, "The question whether she is complicit with the global capitalist system is highly relevant. Is she, so to speak, 'doing their job for them?' At the same time that she is questioning classical institutional critique, she is referring to it while looking for a different critical position, which may not best be found within old binaries and black-and-white images. The massive growth in the power of the global capitalist system is a development many of us watch and participate in with discomfort and fear. But if art is understood as something that is intrinsically related to society in all its aspects, and business concerns and economic considerations permeate every corner of our existence today, then you have to take the issues Carey Young is raising very seriously." Lind, "Alles von Innen/All Inside," in *Gesammelte Drucksachen – Collected Newsletters, Spring 02 – Fall 04*, eds. Maria Lind et al. (Frankfurt [am Main]: Revolver, 2004), 34.

ones.”²¹⁴ She characterized the “context sensitive art” practice as “performative and participatory,” and coined the term “constructive institutional critique” to describe this approach.²¹⁵ Lind refers to “constructive institutional critique”²¹⁶ as a strategy relevant to the current state of affairs within cultural institutions. Young fits this suggested framework and description quite neatly.

Debit and Credit (2003) is another project that the artist developed for the K.M. over her three years as a sputnik. Young proposed co-opting a loyalty card system from the contemporary toolkit of marketing and introducing it in the place of the (defunct, in Young’s understanding) K.M. membership cards then in service. Young’s involvement as a sputnik allowed her to research the current state of affairs with members and memberships and thus detect what in her estimation was lacking. In her assessment she discovered that despite the existence of loyalty cards, repeated visits to the kunstverein de facto result in no extra rewards. Regardless of the frequency of attendance, the privileges would remain the same. “Instead of seeing the host institution as something to be opposed and directly criticized,” Young writes, “I have devised the cards here to try and increase visits to the institution.”²¹⁷ Proceeding from her observation, Young devised a loyalty scheme that actually added an incentive providing a reward, or a “credit”, as the title goes. Each visit was to be registered by the team member on the card by stamping the circles. Eight visits per year earned a reward—a copy of Ulrich Kluge’s *Die Deutsche Revolution* (1918–19).

Most loyalty programs structured as stocking systems introduce tools designed specifically to serve as portable advertisements and occasional reminders. For example, if a card is

²¹⁴ Lind, “Learning from Art and Artists,” 243.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 244.

²¹⁶ Maria Lind, “Models of Criticality,” in *Zusammenhänge herstellen: Zeitgenössische Kunst im Kontext*, eds. Yilmaz Dziewior and Katrin Sauerländer (Cologne: DuMont Literatur und Kunst Verlag, 2002), 150.

²¹⁷ Carey Young, artist’s statement for *Debit and Credit*. Staatsarchiv München, Kunstverein München Sammlung, folder 188a-2, 2002.

kept in a wallet it gets, either by chance or intention, occasionally pulled out. Kluge's reward book, in turn, was also intended to be a meaningful and context-specific reminder, insofar as it was the reminder of the uneasy history of the architecture the K.M. was currently inhabiting and the once destructive politics of Munich immediately after World War I.²¹⁸ Young's scheme thus aimed to subtly transform and add a new route for circuits of associations alongside practical ends, improve numbers for the K.M., and in terms of mediation and education, remind the members of alternative (left-wing) native political histories (though it is doubtful if this had anything other than symbolic value).

Young's practice is oftentimes aligned with those of institutional critique. Her concern with the peripheral mechanisms of the institution, its "Section Publicité" (to recall Marcel Broodthaers's work), rather than its physical structure, induces comparisons with artists like Louise Lawler²¹⁹ and Andrea Fraser.²²⁰ Fraser described Lawler's work as "a functional insert into a network of supports which is exterior to the gallery,"²²¹ which is relevant to the Young's *Debit and Credit*.

Within her practice, Young sometimes snatches an opportunity to reference specific precedents relevant to her ethos, particularly through titles. Illustrative of this is *The Revolution is Us!*, another of the sputnik works for the Kunstverein München. Named after Joseph Beuys's *La Rivoluzione siamo Noi* (1972), this work by Young is not however reminiscent of Beuys in its form. It is a digital video animation with repeated English translations of Beuys's

²¹⁸ The Nazis' 1937 *Entartete Kunst* exhibition is entailed. "Though there had been previous curatorial attempts to engage this memory, for some, this was a neglected history, a source of shame that deserved more attention. In any case the 1937 exhibition remained a persistent stain upon the image of the institution." Ibid.

²¹⁹ In 1983, Louise Lawler produced a "Gift Certificate" for the Leo Castelli gallery which she exhibited in a group show at the gallery.

²²⁰ For more information on the shift from the physical to the functional site, see James Meyer, "The Functional Site, or The Transformation of Site Specificity" in *Space, Site and Intervention*, ed. Erika Suderburg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 23-27.

²²¹ Andrea Fraser, "In and Out of Place," *Art in America*, June 1985, 124.

title and global brands designed for info-screens installed in the Munich subway system and also on display in the window case of the K.M. (Figure 24).

Getting Things Done When You're Not in Charge (2004), Young's next work, consisted of four multiples offered by the artist as freebies at the kunstverein: a pencil, a ruler, a lighter, and a yo-yo. Each object bore a printed statement, a political slogan, or an aphorism taken from a revolutionary figure. Marx's "Workers of the world, unite!" was printed on the pencils, the ruler held Che Guevara's mantra "It is not enough to change the world, it must be transformed," the lighter carried the Black Panthers' slogan "Power to the People," and the yo-yo demanded "Anarchy!" (Figure 25)

Young's approach to combining objects and inducing/ideologically charged texts is full of irony and paradox, if one bothers to bring the two into correlation. Young here again "adopts" a naturalized corporate form we come across on a daily basis. There is no lack of understanding that such "freebies" are not exactly free. They serve as advertising reminders deliberately chosen and calibrated to be a part of the white noise of daily routines, to be used again and again in everyday life. They deliver the "message" and fulfill the sticky marketing job. Young employs this strategy, but replaces corporate advertising with revolutionary calls to arms.²²² As Mark Godfrey writes,

The art institution, first of all, can no longer be thought of as autonomous. In fact it is increasingly implicated in the world of business through its reliance on sponsorship, advertising, etc. Strategies of presentation, negotiation, marketing, and advertising derived from the business world do not have to be considered as necessarily repressive.

²²² *Getting Things Done When You're Not in Charge* invokes the Brazilian artist whom Young has often referred to - Cildo Meireles. Meireles carried out several *Insertions Into Ideological Circuits* between 1968 and 1970, the most famous of which was the Coca-Cola Project in 1970. The artist took empty bottles and silkscreened political slogans onto them in the Coca-Cola font. When the already silkscreened empties were returned to the factories, the messages remained unnoticed. But as soon as the bottles were refilled, they reappeared as white figures against a dark coke ground. According to existing accounts, it remained largely unknown that the action was by Cildo Meireles, that it was an artwork at all. As the coke was consumed, the bottled returned into the cycle of production and consumption, thus enabling the circulation of the message.

Nonetheless, some of the ways businesses use marketing are ripe for critical attention. The art work might be a vehicle through which to direct this attention.²²³

In her practice in general, and in the Kunstverein München as a sputnik in particular, Young relies on the co-optation of devices and strategies from the commercial world transforming them into context-responsive artworks. Young contends, that “inside/outside binaries seem ever more out-moded,” moreover, “a singular stance does not seem credible anymore . . . in that whatever commercial process or system I expose or make projects within, I still reveal myself at the same time to be included within that mechanism. It is not oppositional in a traditional sense.”²²⁴ Young’s projects at the Kunstverein München emphasized her state of embeddedness, the openness of the K.M.’s curatorial teams to experiments, and was not lacking in implied criticism of hegemonic institutions of culture falling into the neoliberal quicksand.

A lot of Sputnik projects were not on the radar of the audience and were barely visible from the outside or hardly publicized specifically as the result of such institutional format and long-term collaboration with invited “critical-partners.” However one project in particular was hard to conceal or overlook, if one attended the kunstverein at least once during Lind’s directorship.

Søren Grammel opens his essay “Eintritt (Entrance). On the Reconstruction of the Foyer. A Sputnik Project by Apolonija Šušteršič” with the following description:

The foyer implies being at the forefront, an interface between the institution and those entering its premises, a messenger conveying the

²²³ Mark Godfrey, “Es funktioniert auch umgekehrt: Carey Young’s Sputnikprojekt für den Kunstverein München/Works Both Ways: Carey Young’s Projects for the Kunstverein München,” in *Gesammelte Drucksachen – Collected Newsletters, Spring 02 – Fall 04*, eds. Maria Lind, et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2004), 430–442.

²²⁴ Dorothee Richter and Rein Wolfs, “Institution as Medium, Curating as Institutional Critique” in *OnCurating* 8 (August 2011): 2, accessed August 25, 2018, http://www.on-curating.org/files/oc/dateiverwaltung/old%20Issues/ONCURATING_Issue8.pdf.

ideas and types of activities the institution is about to unveil, if one decides to advance. It seems but logical that to start anew the curatorial team took a decision to approach the foyer and handed-in the re-design to *an artist*.²²⁵

Taking into account the fact that Lind had already worked with artist and architect Apolonija Šušteršič at Manifesta 2²²⁶ and for the Moderna Museet,²²⁷ I can barely resist the temptation of changing Grammel's "*an artist*" to "*the artist*."

Šušteršič was invited by Lind to become a sputnik. An artist and architect, Apolonija Šušteršič was to reconsider the relationship between the Kunstverein München's location and the rituals and ideologies associated with it, and to respond to the curatorial agenda announced by the newly arrived curatorial team. Lind made a very daring decision at the beginning of her directorship. The kunstverein was closed for a couple of months while a serious renovation of its rooms was undertaken. Starting anew was, in this sense acquired, quite literal. This decision, definitely unpopular among the board members, gave Lind time to sharpen/callibrate and launch several well-targeted and considered lines of curatorial action within the institution. Šušteršič availed herself of the connection between the building's spatial struc-

²²⁵ I believe it is important to mention that Lind's decision to invite Grammel to join the curatorial team under her directorship as a co-curator was very well-considered and timely. Lind acknowledged Grammel's long-term curatorial interests and research congruent with her own, particularly his research in the institutional format of kunstverein in the German-speaking countries. Grammel largely substantiated the projects planned and held within the initial year of Lind's tenure. According to Lind, it was acknowledged by the two from the beginning on that Grammel will stay on board only for a limited amount of time.

Søren Grammel, "Eintritt (Entrance). On the Reconstruction of the Foyer. A Sputnik Project by Apolonija Šušteršič," in *Gesammelte Drucksachen – Collected Newsletters, Spring 02 – Fall 04*, eds. Maria Lind et al. (Frankfurt [am Main]: Revolver, 2004), 28.

²²⁶ For *Manifesta 2* Šušteršič realised *Bonnevoie? Juice Bar* (1998). The artist designed and operated a real juice bar in the newly launched *Center for Artistic Production and Creation*, located on the site of a former fruit and vegetable market. Šušteršič's project was site-specific and responsive to Manifesta's political agenda, reminding of the history of the place and the often unavowed relationships of the newly established fancy art centers and their surrounding neighbourhoods.

²²⁷ For the Moderna Museet Project in Stockholm she designed a fully functional light-therapy installation. Light therapy is a common method, a form of medical and psychological therapy in Northern countries exposed to light deprivation and seeking ways to combat the consequences. The light-therapy installation was a specially designed and equipped room in the museum, that was running full-time and could be used free of charge. It was even advertised in the local newspapers. Šušteršič conceived the installation to raise the question as to the function, use, and resulting status of art institutions in society.

ture, its functioning as a means of communication, and the conditions at hand, the state of transition and change.

Šušteršič's project is introduced in the curatorial team's opening curatorial statement:

The first Sputnik-proposal will be formulated and realised before the opening. . . . The Sputnik-project by Apolonija Šušteršič is the first one and exemplary of the kunstverein's relationship with the Sputniks; it is at once an artistic work and a practical intervention, which interpolates between the physical building and the structural mediation of the kunstverein.²²⁸

The most obvious aim of redesigning the foyer was to lend the space a new character and thus ascribe to it a different function within the institution. Formally and architecturally the foyer and its function are determined by the shape of the building; that is, all the rooms in the Kunstverein München mirror the shape of the wing on the north side of the Hofgarten with its signature ground floor arcades engirding the whole complex. While the entire width of the building can serve as exhibition space on the first floor, the arcades swallow a significant portion of space on the ground floor leaving a tunnel-like room, a space to pass through rather than stay.

In practical terms, Šušteršič redesigned the space and furniture so as to make it more welcoming, functional, and appropriate in relation to the forthcoming programming, largely based on discursive and time-based elements rather than merely exhibitions. The space was also to host additional information on the K.M. and the activities it undertakes. Therefore some walls were covered with shelves and cabinets for folders, publications, videos, and various printed matter. The other walls were covered in magnetic paint to allow information and announcements to be posted as necessary (Figure 26). A mobile television unit was introduced into the space to be used for public screenings or for individual use, eg. for browsing

²²⁸ Grammel, Lind, and Schlieben, "Editorial. In Ersatz eines Manifests/In Place of a Manifesto," 18–23.

through the K.M.'s video files. Given that screenings were to become a significant and permanent part of the newly announced program, this unit was of principal functionality. The concrete floor was covered with studded rubber flooring, material typically applied in public spaces like schools, sport centers, and public transportation vehicles. With the specificity of the Kunstverein's architecture and peculiar arrangement of the rooms, this material was useful for muffling the sounds of the expected increased activities, such as footsteps, sliding chairs, moving furniture rearranging for public events or group activities, etc. A mobile, foldable, and therefore multi-purpose bar was also added. Furthermore, the design of the space and the furniture were defined by a vibrant orange color (Figure 27).

Šušteršič also redefined the communication function of the lobby through the introduction of a work console designed to be similar to the bar. Intended to host rotating team members, the console established a closer connection to the audience and made the curatorial staff's work, which typically occurs behind the scenes, more visible. The approach was similar to the one employed for the *Manifesta 2 Info Lab*, although the context was different as well as the scale. The work console was an attempt to create a more direct link between the staff and the Kunstverein visitors.

The second phase of the renovations implied a deeper consideration of the institutional spatial and societal envelope. If lobby is an entry point, the entrance itself is of pivotal importance. Šušteršič suggested closing off the entrance at the far end of the foyer and shifting it to the side of the Hofgarten. This would break the tunnel-like structure, creating "pockets" for lingering: "the resulting area, some of whose walls will consist entirely of glass, will be transformed into a softly carpeted seating landscape—a room for reading and recreation. The mut-

ed neon lighting will shine through the glass at dusk, luring people walking in the Hofgarten into the Kunstverein.”²²⁹

The Kunstverein München is located in the historical center of the city facing the Hofgarten, a historical landmark and tourist attraction. Søren Grammel notes that

the decision to establish the kunstverein here after World War II also gives some indication of the expectations placed on the institution’s activities. In other words, from the very start, the location of this art institution within the city and its architectural “shell” have reflected and shaped its relationship to the entire social environment surrounding it. This also includes the question as to who the space can be intended for.²³⁰

Although Grammel hints at the attractions and the tourists possibly allured by them, from a historical perspective, I would argue that location was selected with an eye to members’ demographics and the proximity of major art institutions. It was beyond the scope of K.M.’s ambitions when it settled in at this location to lure in crowds of tourists. The aim was rather to lure in members.

But shifting the entrance was not destined to happen. Permission to alter the facade of the historical building was never granted (Figure 28). Also, the board provided no support for such a move, neither structural nor financial. Šušteršič’s work, despite being only partially realized, still managed to deliver more openness to the institution, projecting the invitation to come and stay. The redesigned lobby was not just another installation on view for a limited duration. It was an opening statement, conceptual and spatial, a strategic injection of long-term intention into particular modality.

In effect, the nature of the *Sputniks* framework relates to the nature of the Kunstverein München as a membership organization given its specific format and the history of the insti-

²²⁹ Grammel, “Eintritt (Entrance). On the Reconstruction of the Foyer. A Sputnik Project by Apolonija Šušteršič,” 30.

²³⁰ Ibid.

tution with its ups and downs. For example, in his analysis of Lind's curatorial approach in context of New Institutionalism James Voorhies, does not factor in the peculiarity of the institution's format, its sociopolitical, economic, and historical background. Voorhies refers to it as a museum, which the K.M. clearly is not.²³¹ I believe it is crucial to acknowledge the specificity of the vereins rather than submerge them under the conveniently broad domain of a museum.

Lind, in turn, is very much aware of the peculiarity of the kunstverein's institutional structure, not least because of Søren Grammel's initial interest and his extensive prior research on the format of the German kunstvereins. To a certain extent, *Sputniks* framework resembles the founding concept of the kunstverein, drawing together like-minded artists and "art lovers", allowing for structural changes brought about by various actors of with equal weight given to artists and those interested in art.

The semi-private nature of *Sputniks* (with the work of the sputniks often interwoven into the day-to-day operations of the institution) made it difficult for the visiting public to detect the initiative and thus elapsed quite unnoticed.²³² One of the challenges of *Sputniks* was definitely to question the long-standing roles assigned to artists and curators. Lind was playing with these boundaries without undermining them, both in relations to her curatorial team and artists she worked with. *Sputniks*' opening statement declared,

collaboration is a keyword for our various activities. We work as a curatorial team, discuss extensively, develop the program together, and divide the work as it comes. We look for close collaboration with the

²³¹ See the sub-section *Kunstverein München: Invisible Orbits with Visible Changes* in Chapter 2 *On New Institutionalism*, in Voorhies, *Beyond Objecthood: The Exhibition as a Critical Form since 1968*, 71-138.

²³² Voorhies writes, "Instruments such as research, periodic journals, radio programs, television stations, lectures, libraries, seminars and workshops, which usually take more auxiliary positions relative to the main means of ideas communication - exhibitions, are put on equal footings. Such discursive and overlapping artistic, intellectual and learning pursuits are adapted to expand the exhibition into a multiplicity of simultaneous activity. At times it is impossible to determine whether the source of the work is the artist or the institution, or identify what the work is." Voorhies, *Beyond Objecthood: The Exhibition as a Critical Form since 1968*, 130.

artists and other cultural producers, institutions and organizations within and outside Munich, as well as within and outside the art world.²³³

In interviews and public talks, Lind stressed that the curatorial structure nevertheless was not horizontal.²³⁴ In what concerns the artists, she wrote,

I've never been interested in blurring the boundaries between curators and artists. If it is part of the logic of the artwork then I can be on board, so to speak. My personal drive is . . . to use the potential that is in art by thinking about how it can exist in the best possible ways. "Best" in this case also means challenging and stimulating.²³⁵

The scale of the kunstverein and its structure allowed her to experiment with the institution's methodology in conversation with various actors, enabling artistic work outside the specifications of the art market. Lind was free to approach exhibitions as "no longer" dominating over other types of activity, letting the space for artistic maneuvers within the kunstverein to extend beyond the gallery space and exhibition schedule. She approached the division of labor as porous and flexible. Contributions like Gillick's and Šušteršič's are representative of the deeply integrated engagement among institutions and artists that eventually came to define critically reflexive work, a hallmark of New Institutionalism.

Still, it should be mentioned, that K.M. was neither the first nor the only institution to take such an approach. For example, in 1999 the Kunstverein Frankfurt invited Liam Gillick to design its logo and the colored suspended ceiling in its top floor gallery, as well as develop and design a mobile conference room. An earlier prominent example would be Alexander Dorner, who envisaged a room for film with László Moholy-Nagy and invited El Lissitzky to

²³³ Grammel, Lind, and Schlieben, "Editorial. In Ersatz eines Manifests/In Place of a Manifesto," 21.

²³⁴ For example at the public talk "My Munich Years. Maria Lind in conversation with Chris Fitzpatrick and Gürsoy Doğtaş" held at the Kunstverein München on 9 June 2018, as the part of Public Art Munich 2018, public program curated by Joanna Warsza and commissioned by the City of Munich.

²³⁵ Lind, "We Want to Become an Institution," 30.

design a modular and changeable room for abstract art in 1927–1928 for the Landesmuseum in Hannover.²³⁶

Lind developed an expanded understanding of art institutions early on in her practice as a curator. She viewed institutions beyond being just physical buildings, but as “the sum of its activities,” and regarded the curator’s function not as to “bind the projects to the museum’s new building, but rather to shadow the artists, to follow the art out of the museum’s walls.”²³⁷ She contended that art institutions needed to “become more flexible and heterogeneous,” as well as “capable of renewing and reinventing both their formats and their audiences on a regular basis.”²³⁸ Arguing in favour of flexibility and heterogeneity, she implied that administrative and bureaucratic impasses frequently beset institutions, and that it was not the curator’s function “to dutifully fill gallery space within the timeframes dictated by the institution.”²³⁹ During her tenure at the kunstverein Lind tailored and launched projects at a number of carefully calibrated temporal registers, or “speeds” to use the word directly from the editorial introduction to the kunstverein’s publication *Gesammelte Drucksachen – Collected Newsletters, Spring 02 – Fall 04*,

to be faster as well as slower than other institutions. The kunstverein as an instrument offers the possibility of allowing oneself as much time as the work so demands but also, where necessary, of reacting quickly. . . . The Kunstverein München should be a place in which ideas can be generated and tested. Only a small fraction of the work should be “exhibited.”²⁴⁰

Within the discourse of New Institutionalism it has often been argued that experimental and self-reflexive practice helped many institutions become more porous and more integrative

²³⁶ The *Abstract Cabinet* was destroyed in 1936 during the Third Reich.

²³⁷ Lind, “Learning from Art and Artists”, 247

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid., 252.

²⁴⁰ For example, the retrospective of work by Christine Borland unfolded over the course of the whole first year of Lind’s directorship in different spatial situations within and outside of the Kunstverein. Grammel, Lind, and Schlieben, “Editorial. In Ersatz eines Manifests/In Place of a Manifesto,” 21.

of artists' positions. But the question is whether the outcomes of such "experimentalism" is accessible to and penetrable by the audience. Or, to ask it differently, who is the audience in this case? I find Maria Hlavajova's comment on her approach as the director and curator of BAK to be thought provoking in this respect:

We cater primarily to artists, public intellectuals, and students. When we founded BAK, we said there were enough institutions that were oriented towards the general public and we wanted to take a particular position of producing knowledge, and that requires speaking with particular segments of the society. You can't pretend you can speak to everybody at the same time.²⁴¹

In her essay "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," Claire Bishop suggests a critique regarding the ease with which the "laboratory" formats are implemented and become marketable.²⁴² She primarily draws from the example of Nicolas Bourriaud, the co-director and curator of Palais de Tokyo in Paris, and his striving to reconceptualize the "white cube" model of displaying contemporary art as a studio or experimental "laboratory." In Bourriaud's own words, "to be a sort of interdisciplinary kunstverein—more laboratory than museum."²⁴³ Bishop argues that such a curatorial modus operandi was adopted by curators like Lind, Bourriaud, Charles Esche, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Barbara van der Linden, and Hou Hanru in response to the art produced in the 1990s, particularly practices affiliated with relational aesthetics. References to creative experimentation with exhibition conventions, metaphors like "laboratory," "construction site," and "art factory" were used in the early 2000s by venues to differentiate themselves from bureaucracy-burdened, collection-based museums and create a "buzz of creativity and the aura of being at the vanguard of contemporary production." Bishop explicitly criticizes such project-based works-in-progress and artists-in-residence as they

²⁴¹ Hlavajova in an unpublished 2012 interview with Janet Marstine. Quoted in Janet Marstine, *Critical Practice: Artists Museums, Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2017), 168.

²⁴² Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October*, no. 110 (2004): 51–80.

²⁴³ Quoted in Bennett Simpson, "PUBLIC RELATIONS.(Nicolas Bourriaud)(Interview)," *Artforum International* 39, no. 8 (2001): 47–48.

dovetail with an “experience economy,”²⁴⁴ while it remains unclear what the viewer is supposed to take away from such a creative “experience,” which “is rather an institutionalized studio activity.”²⁴⁵

In “Editorial. In Place of a Manifesto,” the opening curatorial statement of Grammel, Lind and Schlieben, the co-curators announce,

We are interested in the kind of art that goes beyond the limits of the institution . . . This is an art that **does not accept the status quo** and rejects the standard institutional demands for results, thereby preserving its experimental and discursive integrity and dynamism, in other words, an art which shares similar characteristics to research. This kind of art, by virtue of the way it functions, often represents a **challenge to the instruments that are available to us as curators in this particular type of institution.** Our ambition is to be sensitive to the logic of the art and the artists in order to give their critical, poetic, disturbing, and thought-provoking potential a reasonable chance to develop.²⁴⁶

The curators clearly articulate their desire to challenge the status quo, but fail to mention which one exactly, either the locally specific or the international, faced by institutions at large. Further on the instruments available at the Kunstverein München to be challenged are mentioned. It should be noted that none of the three curators had previously worked in a kunstverein, and therefore was not familiar with its specific format, possibilities, and limitations. Given the extensive history of the Kunstverein München in particular and the quite long period of its “supraregional insignificance” up to the end of sixties, to quote Wolfgang Jean Stock

²⁴⁴ Experience economy is the marketing strategy that seeks to replace goods and services with scripted and staged personal experiences. See Joseph Pine and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre and Every Business a Stage* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999).

²⁴⁵ Bishop, “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics,” 52.

²⁴⁶ Emphasis added. Grammel, Lind, and Schlieben, “Editorial. In Ersatz eines Manifests/In Place of a Manifesto,” 20.

again, it appears all too seductive to appeal to limitations without naming them, possibly even before encountering them.²⁴⁷

Moreover, when thinking of New Institutionalism, the nature of the term and its relevance for Lind's practice at the kunstverein, it strikes me that the type of art practices filtered through curatorial selection were acknowledged as non-compliant with the specificity of institutional format and its local context. They thus had to be compliant with some other logic and set of priorities. When considering what the *institution* within New *Institutionalism* is, and with Lind's particular case study in mind, I would argue that the institution being developed and invested in is rather Maria Lind herself, the curator-institution with an expandable mandate, rather than the Kunstverein München. The latter serves as a framework to be bent and resources to be applied and extracted.

The curators' statement continues,

for us it is especially important to not only use the characteristics of a kunstverein institution, but also to investigate them. . . . From the outset, the kunstvereins were places in which ideas about art would be exchanged and which, above all, were dedicated to the realization of new art projects. Initially, it was the reflective practice of art and its promotion, which was at the foreground of consideration, while the practice of exhibiting was of secondary importance.²⁴⁸

This passage appears inconsistent with the dominant picture in Lind's talks and interviews (particularly as time went on) of the Kunstverein München as an institution extremely dominated by conventional exhibition making, to which the new curatorial approach was designed in consciously and clearly articulated opposition. In particular, Maria's texts and public talks can be seen as speculating on the little-known history of the Kunstverein München, rather than just/equitable acknowledging the complexity and evolution of its structure. When

²⁴⁷ The curatorial approach and the outline of the program suggested by Lind for the period of her tenure, including hiring the extended curatorial team and invitation of artists as sputniks (i.e. able to intervene in the institution's operational grammar), was confirmed by the Board upon Lind's appointment as the director.

²⁴⁸ Grammel, Lind, and Schlieben, "Editorial. In Ersatz eines Manifests/In Place of a Manifesto," 21.

convenient, she bent and exposed the institutional form with its simplified conservative side and described a chronic predilection for formal exhibition production. Against this background, the experimentalism of the program under Lind's directorship appears truly innovative and groundbreaking. However when necessary, glimpses of history, particularly foundational moments from the late sixties and seventies, appear on the radar to support the argument of context-specificity of the curatorial approach, rooted in the history of the Kunstverein München and its structural envelope.

I do not intend to belittle Lind's practice or accomplishments as a curator for lack of vision, daring approach, sensitivity to artists and enabling potential as a director. With due respect to Lind, I am interrogating her director-curator approach and its positioning as seen through the lens of New Institutionalism. My point is that her practice in Kunstverein München has discursively not done justice to the institution itself, particularly given her/its declared commitment to context-sensitivity and an institution-centered approach. The formats that Lind and the curatorial team she invited at the beginning of her tenure to structure the institution's program introduced were daring, imaginative, and challenging. But I argue that the institution was conclusively not the principal beneficiary of the practice in question. Neither was the institution's past justly acknowledged, especially when juxtaposed with the newly established initiatives and strategic directions.

For example, the end of the hegemony of the exhibition was also manifested in the abandonment of catalogues. Since the journal format is not fixed to a particular exhibition or a constellation of works, but rather navigates fluid temporal registers of the multidirectional program, enabled the institution to communicate in a more relevant and encompassing way.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ "The Newsletter "Drucksache Spring", which is now available is an attempt to establish a format that has continuity and which is capable of accompanying the programme of the Kunstverein continuously from start to finish, and which enables us to develop a discussion which extends from edition to edition. The Newsletter

In the broader context of New Institutionalism,²⁵⁰ Kunstverein's *Gesammelte Drucksachen/Collected Newsletters 2002–2004* was among the earliest and most ambitious publishing endeavors, and fully due to Lind's will and vision. The publishing strategy implemented was also remarkable in terms of acknowledging the institution's membership structure. Except for the project-specific issues, almost every issue of the *Drucksachen* included an interview with a member of the institution. Yet, what is omitted and does not crop up anywhere, is the genealogical connection of the *Drucksachen* to the *Gazette*, the publication regularly distributed to the members and established two years after the foundation of the verein in 1825.

Despite the regular publication of the *Drucksachen*, the program of the kunstverein during Lind's tenure was barely noticed by the press. The Kunstverein München was of interest to the international community of like-minded curators and artists, but locally only a core group of visitors followed the program consistently. The vast majority of the Munich art public paid little or no attention. Lind explicitly commented,

We had a core group of locals who came to almost everything that we did, a bit like a fan club. The difficulty was the local art scene and the provincial critics in the Munich newspapers. Most of them thought that our program was neither relevant nor meaningful. One objection was that it was quite process-oriented and several program lines were running at the same time. We often heard things like, "It's too much, you can never grasp everything." As if that is the point, to be able to catch everything that is going on in an institution.²⁵¹

'Drucksachen' will be published twice a year, as is apparent from their names, in 'spring' and in 'fall'. You will notice that some of the articles can BE read as chapters, which will find their continuation in the following edition 'fall.'" quoted in Grammel, Lind, and Schlieben, "Editorial. In Ersatz eines Manifests/In Place of a Manifesto," 22.

²⁵⁰ A number of institutions that were labeled as adhering to New Institutionalism, shifted their publishing programs towards periodic journals, newspapers and readers, to accommodate and reflect the strands of expanded programmes, commission interviews and essays in relevance with the process and its fluid nature. Among the examples are Shedhalle's *Zeitung*, CAC Vilnius' *Interviu*, CAC Bretigny's *L'Ed*, Arteleku's *Zehar*, KIASMA's *Kiasma*, BAK's regularly published readers (such as *Concerning War 6* or *On Knowledge Production 7*) and launched by the Whitechapel Gallery (in collaboration with the MIT Press and specially invited editor for every new edition) *Documents of Contemporary Art* series.

²⁵¹ Lind, "We Want to Become an Institution," 31.

However, when one is working in a public institution, moreover in a membership-based one, I dare ask, what is the point then?! Looking at the 2002–2004 years at the Kunstverein München, the majority of attention is paid to the work of Maria Lind herself, occasionally to the artists, and even less to co-curators.

In his analysis of the *Sputniks* format, James Voorhies describes it as “an integrated collaborative framework intended to reshape the institutional functions of the museum.”²⁵² However, I would argue that rather than being concerned with the support structure and affecting the operational mechanisms of the institution Kunstverein München, Lind was invested in exploring and expanding her own curatorial mandate, as a way of bending institutional agendas and forms beyond a single commitment to any particular one. Investing into relationships and the deontic capital of trust, collaborative creativity, and a shared critical agenda, Lind was more concerned with developing sustainable relationships with a specific group of artists, critics, and peer-curators, connections that extended far beyond her Kunstverein München years as a sustainable deposit in the curator-institution. Tellingly, with her departure and relocation to the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College in New York as the Graduate Director, Lind took the section of the Kunstverein München’s archive dealing with *Taking the Matter into Common Hands* project—an archive, exhibition, symposium, and publication—with her.²⁵³ After all, keeping assets on hand is a convenient strategy.

²⁵² Voorhies, *Beyond Objecthood*, 132.

²⁵³ A two-step symposium and a research framework for consideration of collaboration, cooperation, and collective practices in contemporary art as a characteristically 1990s and early 2000s phenomenon. Lind wrote *The Collaborative Turn*, one of her landmark essays in context of the symposium and for the upcoming publication under the same title. See Maria Lind, “The Collaborative Turn,” in *Taking the Matter into Common Hands: on Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices*, eds. Maria Lind and Lars Nilsson (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2017), 15-31.

CONCLUSION

AFTERMATH

Looking back at the program that Lind directed is challenging for me, both inspiring and at least somewhat controversial. Lind carved out enough space to put forward an internationally ambitious and curatorially daring program. The other issue is the way it was and still is positioned discursively and how the label of New Institutionalism is to be understood.²⁵⁴ Given the outlined history of the Kunstverein München as the institution that enabled Lind's curatorial experiments and ambitions, it becomes clear that strategies enacted as New Institutionalism are not exactly always new, and the acknowledgement of historical precedents is simply omitted, by chance, ignorance, or intention. Much from a closer look at the forgotten or ignored old institution and institutionalism.

For example, in the late '70s Wolfgang Jean Stock undertook a major renovation of the building, which also marked the launch of the reconsidered incarnation of the kunstverein under a new director. In a similar vein, Lind made a daring decision to close the space at the very beginning of her tenure as the director-curator. Alongside renovation, Lind invested the time into the development of a more attuned and coherent rapport on curatorial strategy with her co-curators. Draxler's inviting curator Hedwig Saxenhuber to collaborate and jointly carry out the program is consonant with Lind's actually more ambitious, nuanced, and also far-reaching collaboration frameworks. Both Van der Heide's practice, which followed Lind's directorship, and Draxler's, which preceded it, were committed to interrogating the Kunstverein München's identity and role from within the very premises of the institution. The ambi-

²⁵⁴ Lind emphasizes that New Institutionalism as a label initially was external as in relation to the group of practitioners and practices it aimed to circumscribe. Moreover it attempted to describe the ongoing responsive practice as complete. See Lind, "We Want to Become and Institution," 27. Grammel also notes that this term has been used to canonise a flexible, scheming approach that in its nature and evolvment was avoiding approximations. See Flückiger and Kolb, "Editorial," 6.

tious and sustainable publishing of the *Drucksachen/Newsletters* reminds us of the *Gazette* that the kunstverein initiated in 1825 and was also freely distributed among the members. In a similar vein, Carey Young's appropriation of marketing strategies in *Getting Things Done When You're Not in Charge* and the freebies she distributed suggest a subtle historical allusion to the annual gifts distributed to the members of the kunstverein from its inception as a way to entice people into the membership. In general, Young's approach and instrumentalization of tools from the corporate arsenal is very much consonant with history of the kunstverein's legal envelope, i.e. Kunstverein Munchen was founded as a corporation.

In retrospect it is interesting to imbue the situation around Apolonija Šušteršič's project, which was to be seen as a conceptual and physical manifestation of the new start, with symbolic meaning. Literally and symbolically the door she suggested to the Munich community was never opened, as Lind did not manage to come to an understanding with the board, or to connect to the local context of the kunstverein. Ultimately, the conclusion of Grammel's text announcing Šušteršič's project is telling: "Until the entrance is actually moved, all of the other changes are only an initial, superficial attempt to redesign the function of the foyer as determined by its architecture."²⁵⁵ The kunstverein's new entrance—ideally imagined on the Hofgarten side—was never opened, as ultimately Lind's vision for a new Kunstverein München remained largely out of place in Munich.

On one hand, the discursive and theoretical field of New Institutionalism and Maria Lind's directorship at K.M. in particular present themselves as powerful cases, provoking and challenging curatorial thinking and the discourses generated around it. On the other, since they are primarily forms of institutional practice and therefore deal with and target institutions, we cannot detach an evaluation of them from the basic needs of these institutions, such

²⁵⁵ Grammel, "Eintritt (Entrance). On the Reconstruction of the Foyer. A Sputnik Project by Apolonija Šušteršič," 31

as their operational sustainability, social embeddedness, and support structure. When speaking about Lind, it is inspiring to look from the shore or the sea-level how the shiny ball-size sputnik is “ploughing” the outer space of discourses on institutional practice, but having looked into the details I had to disillusion myself significantly. Flexibility always comes at a cost, but experiments should not create deficits in institutional budgets, completed projects should be thoroughly documented beyond the words of the curator (even if on various occasions and in multiple formats). It is not only the discourse, moreover here manipulated, that the institution is to produce. Therefore I once again arrive at the question: What is the institution of New Institutionalism? And I dare say that my conclusion, at least in terms of the Kunstverein München, is that the curator Maria Lind is.²⁵⁶

In the follow-up interviews and questions concerning her Kunstverein München years, Lind often mentions that upon her departure her approach was discontinued.²⁵⁷

The approach that Lind’s tenure enabled and the formats tailored by the collaborative curatorial team continued to be in circulation outside Munich after Lind left the kunstverein. The knowledge produced was not bound to Munich and I speculate perhaps was even intended to be mobile deontic capital to be extracted upon necessity. To mention just one instance, Katharina Schlieben who made up the initial curatorial group together with Søren Grammel, continued principal lines of programming generated at the Kunstverein München at the Shedhalle in Zurich.²⁵⁸ There she developed an extended event-based program in parallel to politically charged exhibitions, mediation structure, and published a regular newspaper, the

²⁵⁶ In “The Curatorial Turn: From Practice to Discourse,” Paul O’Neill addresses the changing role of curating and the intensification of the debate on curatorial practice, stating: “Indicative of a shift in the primary role of curator is the changing perception of the curator as career to a curator who has a more creative and active part to play within the production of art itself”. See O’Neill, “The Curatorial Turn: From Practice to Discourse,” 15.

²⁵⁷ See for example Alex Farquharson and Maria Lind, “Integrative Institutionalism: a Reconsideration,” in *The New Aesthetics of Administration*, eds. Tone Hansen and Trude Iversen (Oslo: Torpedo Press, 2007), 108-127; Lind, “We Want to Become an Institution,” 2014; Lind, “Going Beyond Display - the Munich Kunstverein years,” 2011.

²⁵⁸ Schlieben was a curator in Shedhalle from 2004 to 2009.

Shedhalle Zeitung. The handwriting is distinctive and suggests an organic succession of the practice at Kunstverein München.

Although a majority of the experimentally active art institutions that were gathered under the term New Institutionalism have now been closed down or changed their orientation, thus implying that the phenomenon was bound up with a particular historical situation, its impact persists at small and large institutions and artist- and curator-run initiatives worldwide. As Möntmann concludes her article “New Institutionalism Revisited”:

Indeed, the way that interdisciplinary activities such as the above-mentioned seminars, symposia, programs, and workshops are offered as a matter of course, not only by the smaller art spaces but also by the big exhibition halls and museums, is an achievement of the era of New Institutionalism. Although film programs as such are in no way new, it is the weight that is laid on these educational events within the overall program, and their sweeping success in recent years, that has broken through the thick hide of the exhibition-fixated function of art institutions.²⁵⁹

The institutional approaches discussed in relation to New Institutionalism will always face the risk of becoming instrumentalized for the reproduction of the hegemonic logic of production they were aimed to critique, read as nothing more than a “flirtation”²⁶⁰ which was not able to fundamentally disturb the existing conditions. Alex Farquharson writes,

New institutionalism often conceives of the social agency of institutions in far wider terms than most conventional art institutions, and yet the actual take-up by these publics, imagined as pluralistic and agonistic, is often small and uniform in practice. There is the sense that New Institutionalism has a model-like quality that it is a prototype for a far larger kind of social production that may always remain deferred.²⁶¹

But, if we agree with Searle’s theory of language and instituting being interwoven, the act of generating new ways of speaking and thinking about the institutional organization of

²⁵⁹ Möntmann, “New institutionalism Revisited,” 109.

²⁶⁰ Mikkil Bolt Rasmussen, “The End Of Contemporary Art’s Bubble Economy,” in *Texte zur Kunst* no. 88, (2012), 86.

²⁶¹ Alex Farquharson, “Institutional Mores,” in *Institutional Attitudes*, ed. Pascal Gielen (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2013), 224.

the art field opens up new fields of action and enables us to engage with institutions as negotiable entities.²⁶²

But how to tie the ontology of the institution to its societal impact and be able to influence the immediate social environment in which art institutions operate? Farquharson acknowledges the experimental nature of New Institutionalism and its limits, but also sees the benefits and outcomes of the practices that comprise it:

Their [experimental institutions] scale allows them to be highly focused and uncompromising. . . . Their small scale and considerable autonomy enables them to work in critically and experimentally developed ways, uncompromised by the expectations of large, unknowing audiences and the scrutiny of political stakeholders. Other larger institutions, in turn, may benefit from their experimental and often far-reaching critical work. There should always be room in the infrastructure of public spaces for institutions able to work in laboratory and research center-like conditions.²⁶³

The risk-taking aspect is the most important role that smaller scale institutions contribute as a beacon and reservoir for experimentation and pushing new topics. “Deferred value” was a key concept introduced in Sarah Thelwall’s report *Size Matters*, a survey of small-scale institutions conducted in the UK clarifying the role of the small and medium-sized art institutions within the larger culture ecosystem.²⁶⁴ Small art organizations often serve as “premiere” platforms, i.e. with a mixture of risk-taking, field work, and experimentalism to detect and discover practices and launch artistic careers outside large-scale institutions’ field of vision.

²⁶² “LK & GF: Did the discourse around institutional practice have a legitimating or catalytic function? CE: Definitely, **if you speak about things they become real**. It was about what the institution could be—again, the experimental nature of it meant that the statements you were making were also speculative or aspirational. This is where we wanted to place ourselves, working with a form (the institution) in a place (Malmö, München, Rotterdam or wherever) and asking what it meant in 2000 to be doing this. We wanted the institution to become an active place and it felt like we could learn from other institutions while maintaining the traditional right to free space and experimentation that we inherited from the avant-garde and the Cold War. We looked at the community center, the library, the laboratory, even the church, as models to eat up and reuse. These institutions were part of that comfortable northern European ecology that needed reformulating, abandoning, reshaping.” Charles Esche, “We Were Learning By Doing,” 27.

²⁶³ Farquharson, “Institutional Mores,” 226.

²⁶⁴ Sarah Thelwall, *Size Matters* (London: OpenMute Press, 2011).

They provide the initial support and visibility that is later employed by international curators in search of “new names.” These are residency programs, international biennials, and eventually large-scale museums. It is seldom acknowledged that such small, understaffed, and risk-taking institutions invest their available resources available into such “discoveries”, whereas large institutions reap the fruits at the end of the day, particularly economic and reputational benefits.

Given that the reality of small and medium-scale institutions is often characterized by a lack of media coverage, lower attendance numbers, scarce funding, and precarity, while the outcomes of their operations fuel larger institutions, it appears that the demand for measurability, immediate statistics, and marketable numbers symptomatic (if not already chronic) within contemporary cultural discourse is neither adequate nor just for evaluating the work of smaller art institutions and their impact.²⁶⁵ It is therefore crucial to raise awareness of the complex and nuanced diversity of the art world as an ecology, and the necessity to sustain this diversity. To a large extent, what enables the capacity of medium-scale institution to conduct intense research and establish contact with local or specific communities (not necessarily only artistic) is their specificity, a clearer understanding of particular contexts, audiences, and their nuances and needs. Farquharson accurately remarks that with scale come all kinds of expectations and demands: from audiences, non-audiences, funders, tourism administrators, the local media, etc.: “What they might want from you might be quite different from your own motivations and ethics. What follows from this is a continuous process of turning necessity into desire, and this involves a continuous process of negotiation and transformation.”²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ Mikael Löfgren, *No Exceptions: Value Creation in Small and Mid-sized Galleries of Contemporary Art* (Stockholm: Klister, 2015).

²⁶⁶ Farquharson, “Institutional Mores,” 226.

Articulation and acknowledgement of the incompatible roles played by different agents of different scale and outreach within the institutional milieu—be it a museum, a kunstverein, or an artist-run space— is necessary to argue for their individual importance and organic co-existence, to sustain their support and nurture collaboration. I cannot agree with Farquharson more, and throughout all my practice keep coming back to Peter Mayo who, when writing about Antonio Gramsci and Paulo Freire, outlined a simple but principal question that always needs to be asked, but cannot always be answered: Which side are we on when we educate and teach, when we act?

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ILLUSTRATIONS

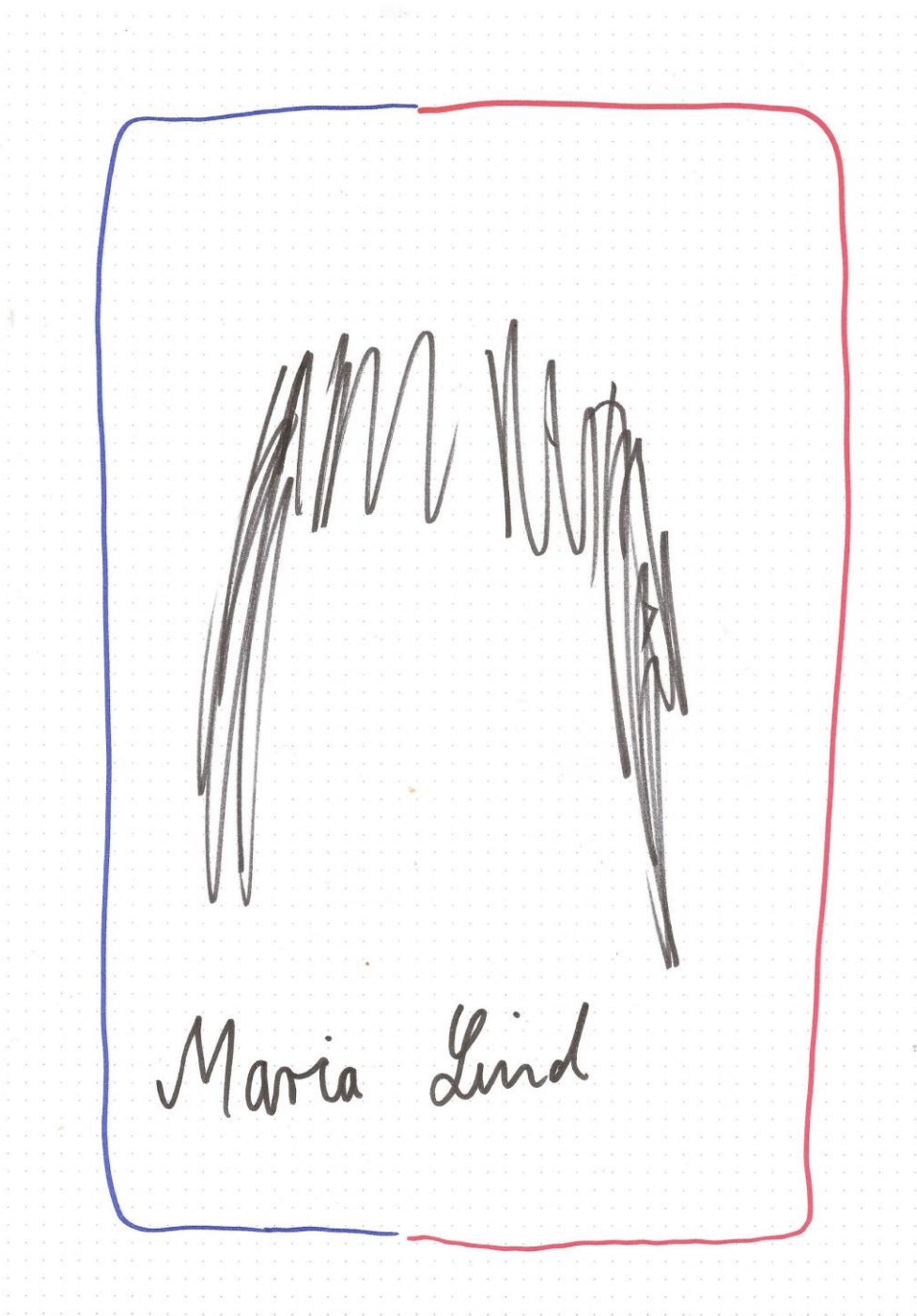


Figure 1.

Bernd Krauss, *Maria Lind (Drawing)*, 2015. Felt pen on paper. Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 2.

Documentation of the exhibition *Die herrschende Ästhetik ist die Ästhetik der Herrschenden* (The Ruling Aesthetics is the Aesthetics of the Ruling), 1970. Photograph by Branko Senior. Courtesy of Kunstverein München.



Figure 3.
Documentation of the exhibition *Die herrschende Ästhetik ist die Ästhetik der Herrschenden* (The Ruling Aesthetics is the Aesthetics of the Ruling), 1970. Photograph by Michael Volkmann. Courtesy Kunstverein München.



Figure 4.
Students of the Munich Academy of Fine Arts at the Kunstverein München. *Poesin måste göras av alla!: Förändra världen!* (Poetry must be made by all!: Transform the world!). Photographs by Branko Senior. Courtesy of Kunstverein München.



Figure 5.

Andrea Fraser, *Eine Gesellschaft des Geschmacks* (A Society of Taste), 1993. Installation views at Kunstverein München, 1993. Photographs by Wilfried Petzi. Courtesy Kunstverein München.



Figure 6.

Katharina Schlieben, Søren Grammel and Maria Lind. October 2002, photographer unknown.
Courtesy Kunstverein München.



Figure 7.

Telling Histories. An Archive and Three Case Studies with Contributions by Mabe Bethônico and Liam Gillick, 2003. Spatial design developed by Liam Gillick to host the archival materials processed, selected and structured by Mabe Bethônico. Courtesy Kunstverein München.



Figure 8.
 Documentation of the talk-show within *Telling Histories. An Archive and Three Case Studies with Contributions by Mabe Bethônico and Liam Gillick*, October 16, 2003. Speakers: Helmut Draxler, Ingrid Rein, Gabrielle Czoppan, Bazon Brock and Birgit Sonna. Courtesy Kunstverein München.



Figure 9.
Documentation of the symposium “Curating with Light Luggage”, October 26, 2003. The panel: Barbara Steiner, Christina Freire, Clémentine Deliss, Minerva Cuevas, Maria Lind, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Liam Gillick. Courtesy Kunstverein München.



Figure 10.

Installation shots of *Poesin måste göras av alla!: Förändra världen!* (Poetry must be made by all!: Transform the world!) at Kunstverein München. Photographs by Branko Senjor (left) and Michael Volkmann. Courtesy Kunstverein München (right).



Figure 11.

Installation shots of *Poesin måste göras av alla!: Förändra världen!* (Poetry must be made by all!: Transform the world!) at Kunstverein München. Photographs by Michael Volkmann. Courtesy Kunstverein München.



Figure 12.

Installation shots of *Poesin måste göras av alla!: Förändra världen!* (Poetry must be made by all!: Transform the world!) at Kunstverein München. Photographs by Branko Senjor. Courtesy Kunstverein München.

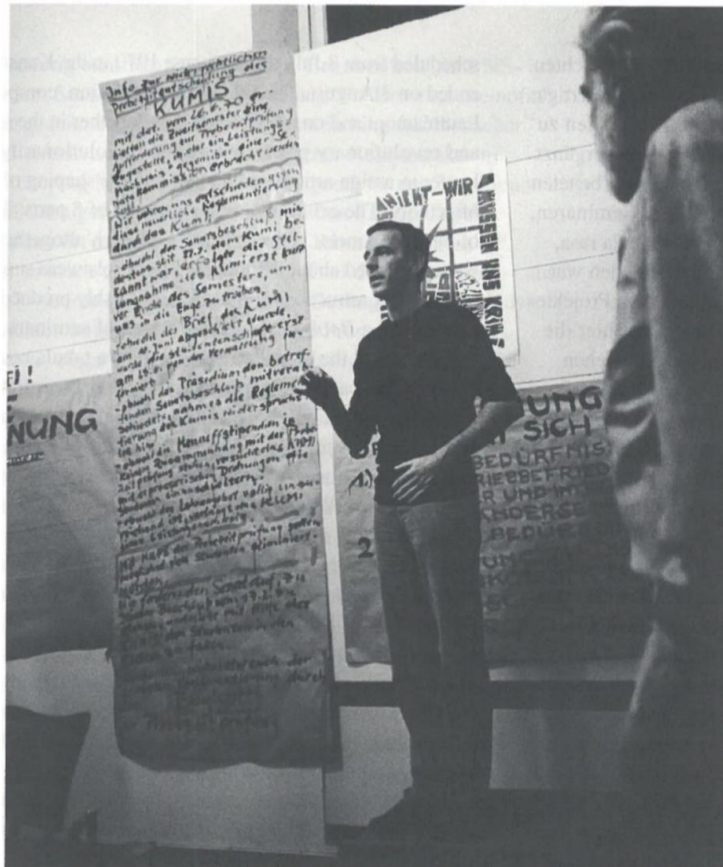


Figure 13.

Poesin måste göras av alla!: Förändra världen! (Poetry must be made by all!: Transform the world!). Public protests against the closing of the exhibition. Photographs by Branko Senjor. Courtesy Kunstverein München.

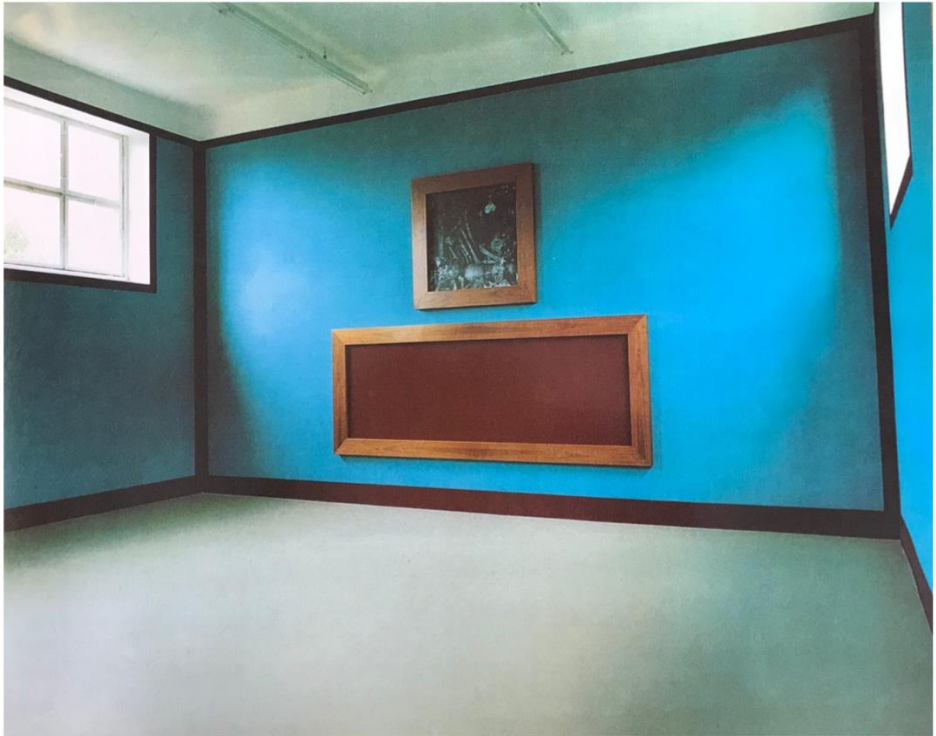


Figure 14.

Gerhard Merz, *Dove Sta Memoria* (Where is Memory), 1986. Installation views at Kunstverein München, 1986. Photographs by Ludwig Rinn. Courtesy Kunstverein München.



Figure 15.

Gerhard Merz, *Dove Sta Memoria* (Where is Memory), 1986. Installation views at Kunstverein München, 1986. Photographs by Ludwig Rinn. Courtesy Kunstverein München.



Figure 16.

Gerhard Merz, *Dove Sta Memoria (Where is Memory)*, 1986. Installation view at Kunstverein München, 1986. Photographs by Ludwig Rinn. Courtesy Kunstverein München.



Figure 17.

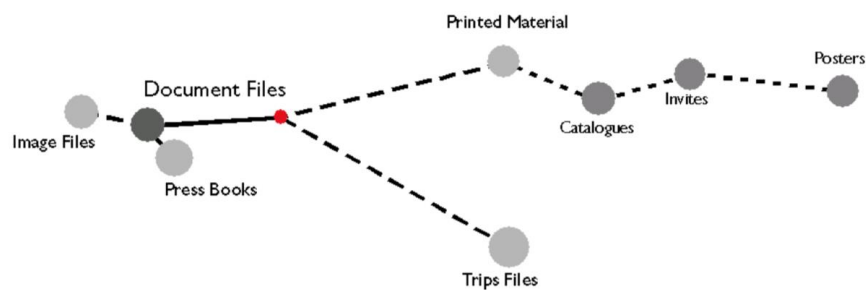
Andrea Fraser, *Eine Gesellschaft des Geschmacks* (A Society of Taste), 1993. Installation views at Kunstverein München, 1993. Photographs by Wilfried Petzi. Courtesy Kunstverein München.



Figure 18.

Telling Histories. An Archive and Three Case Studies with Contributions by Mabe Bethônico and Liam Gillick, 2003. Spatial design developed by Liam Gillick, materials processes and arranged by Mabe Bethônico. Courtesy Kunstverein München.

ARCHIVE COMPOSITION



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Figure 19.

Archive structure developed by Mabe Bethônico for the *Telling Histories*. *An Archive and Three Case Studies with Contributions by Mabe Bethônico and Liam Gillick*, 2003. Courtesy the artist.

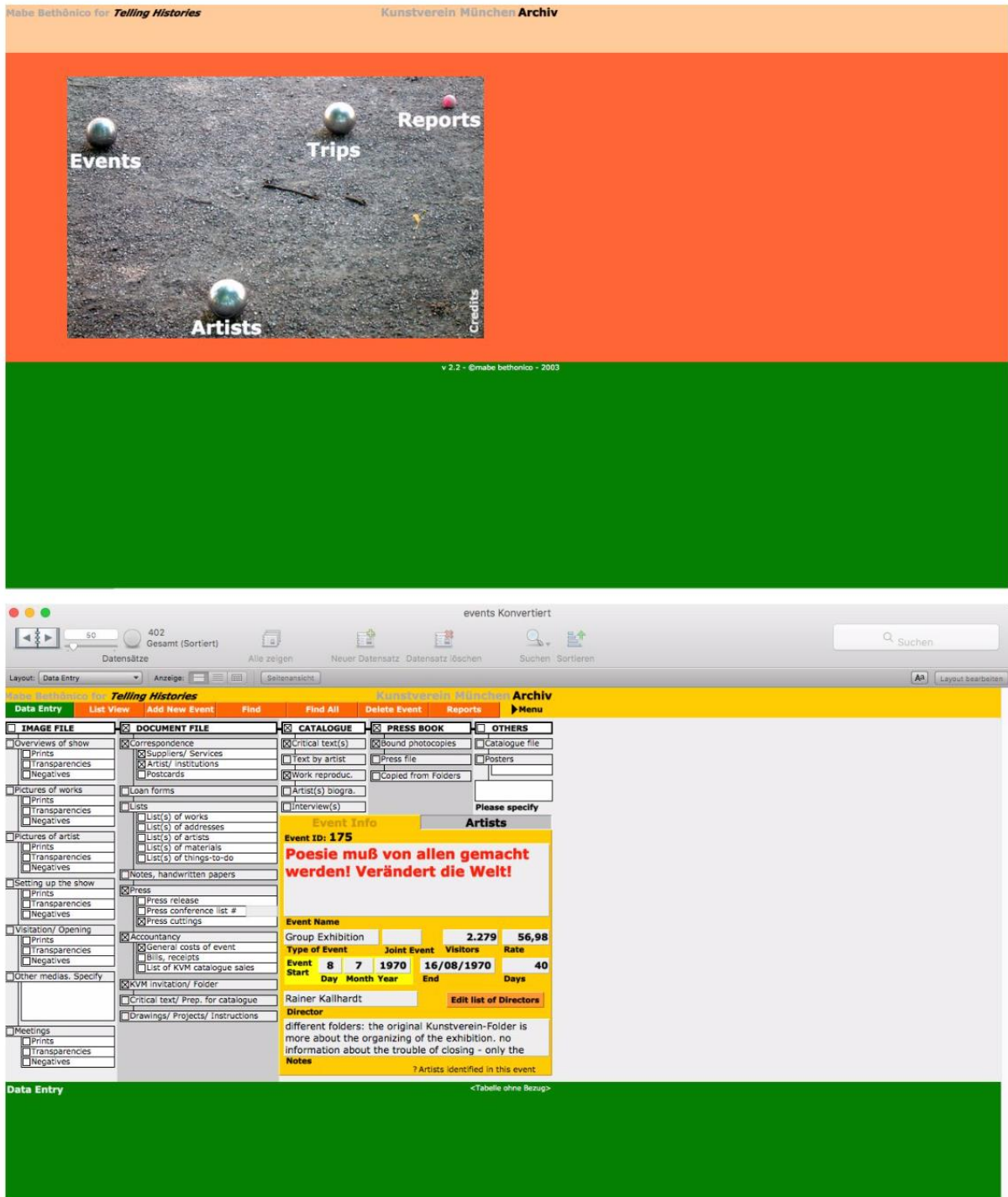


Figure 20.

Screenshots of the database developed and designed by Mabe Bethônico for the *Telling Histories. An Archive and Three Case Studies with Contributions by Mabe Bethônico and Liam Gillick*, 2003. Courtesy Kunstverein München and the artist.

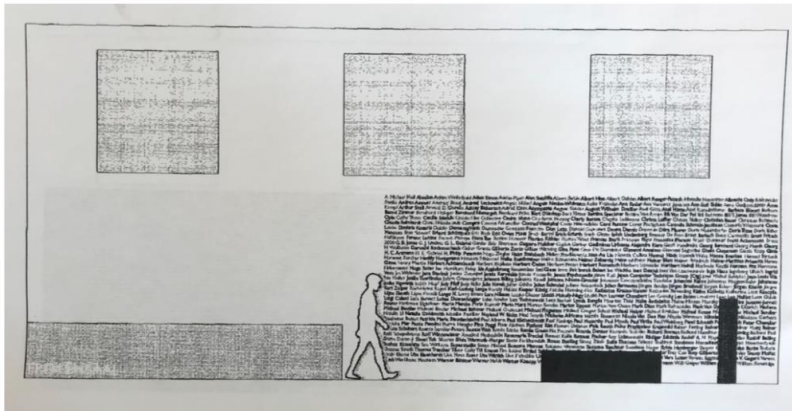
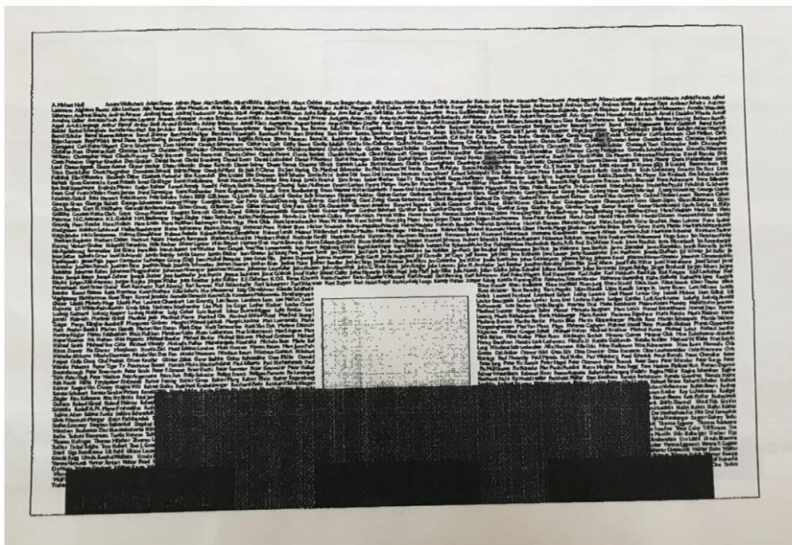
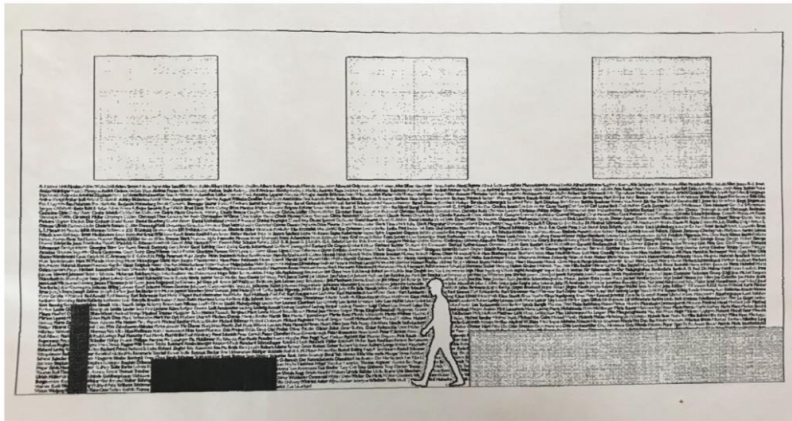


Figure 21.

Telling Histories. An Archive and Three Case Studies with Contributions by Mabe Bethônico and Liam Gillick, 2003. Wall-texts designed by Liam Gillick. Courtesy Kunstverein München.



Figure 23.

The first meeting of Sputniks in Munich, February 02, 2002. Courtesy Kunstverein München.

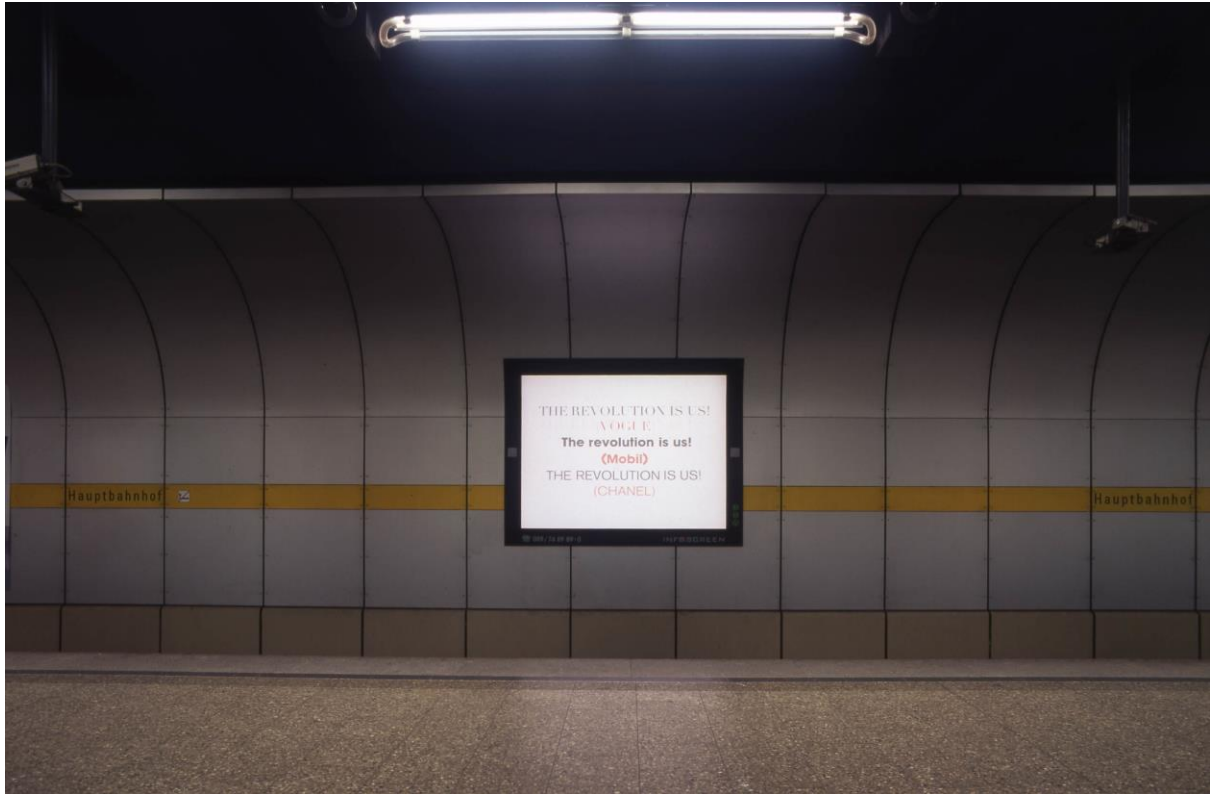


Figure 24.

Carey Young, *The Revolution Is Us!*, 2004. Installation shot of a looped digital animation displayed at the Hauptbahnhof U-Bahn station. Courtesy Kunstverein München and the artist.



Figure 25.

Carey Young, *Getting Things Done When You're Not in Charge*, *Viral Marketing* series, 2004.

Courtesy the artist.



Figure 26.
Apolonija Šušteršič, *Eintritt* (Entrance), 2002. Installation views at Kunstverein München, 2002. Courtesy Kunstverein München and the artist.



Figure 27.

Apolonija Šušteršič, *Eintritt* (Entrance), 2002. Installation views at Kunstverein München, 2002. Courtesy Kunstverein München and the artist.

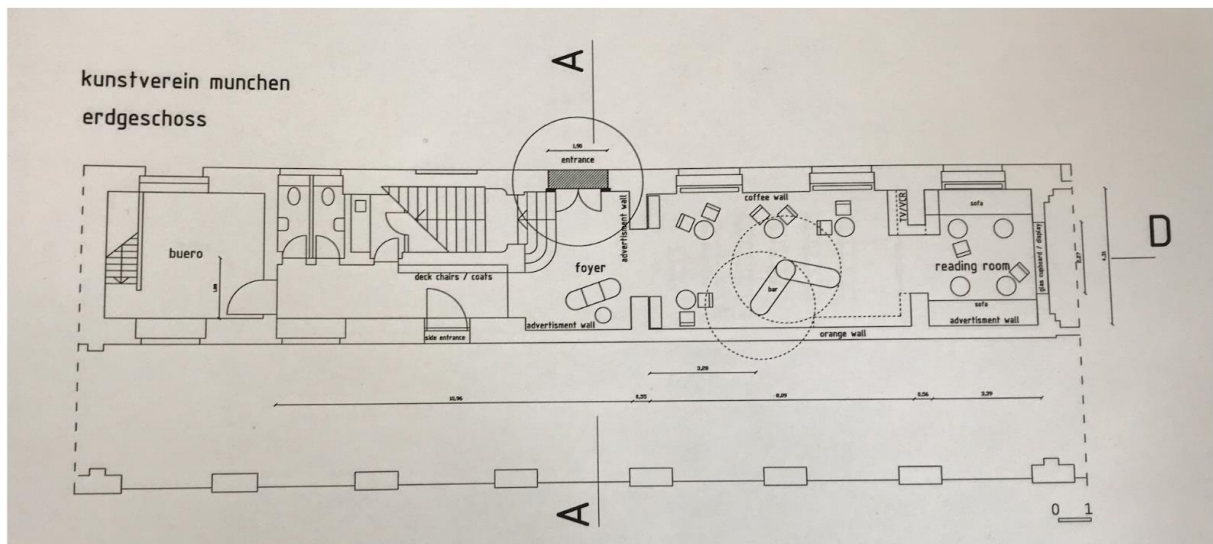
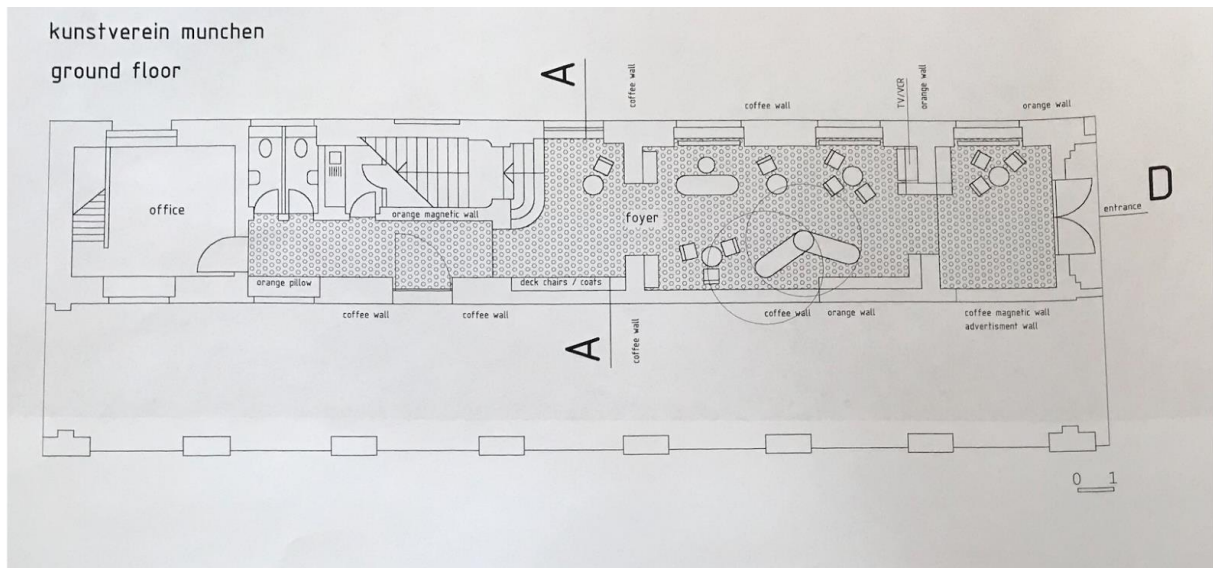


Figure 28.

Two floor plans by Apolonija Šušteršič for the *Eintritt* (Entrance), 2002.

The bottom image - suggested relocation of the entrance to the side wall of the Kunstverein München, the one, facing the Hofgarten. Top image depicts the realized layout, after the permission to intervene in the facade and relocate the entrance was denied.

Courtesy Kunstverein München and the artist.