


8th Garage International Conference.
Utopias of (Non)Knowledge:
The Museum as a Research Hub

The Garage Journal:
Studies in Art, Museums
and Culture

GARAGE



8th Garage International Conference. Utopias of (Non)Knowledge: The Museum as a Research Hub

September 24–25, 2021

Jacques Rancière connects the notion of knowledge with that of ignorance: a person who knows must be aware that they *do not* know. Rancière's theory of an "ignorant teacher" problematizes the hierarchical regime of the one-way transfer of knowledge from teacher to student. By criticizing the neoliberal production and commodification of knowledge in this way, he reminds us that the purpose of democracy is to attain equality, and in particular the equality of knowledge. What he offers instead can be described as a modernist model of a "knowledge utopia," where all citizens are equal and therefore equally involved in practices of (not) knowing.

The model suggested by Rancière allows us to reconsider the role that museums play in the creation, transfer, and preservation of knowledge. In the second half of the twentieth century, museums faced the need to review the foundations of their activity. As a result of this transformative process, they became increasingly focused on research activities: the practices of creating and distributing (non)knowledge. While research has informed museum practices since the emergence of museums, in recent years museums have begun organizing collaborative projects with researchers, including from governmental and business institutions and scientific laboratories, as well as with independent artists and others. These interactions allow us to speak of special—horizontal—modes of knowledge production and exchange that create a new understanding of the museum as a hub.

Four aspects of practices of (not) knowing in the museum will be discussed at the conference: the Objects of Research, the Methods of Research, the Space of Research and the Researcher

The conference is organized by Sasha Obukhova, curator of Garage Archive Collection, in collaboration with the team of *The Garage Journal: Studies in Art, Museums and Culture* (Katerina Suverina, Vlad Strukov and Andrei Zavadski).

Conference program

September 24, Friday Garage Auditorium

12:00–12:30

Reception

12:30–12:35

Introduction from Anton Belov, director of Garage Museum of Contemporary Art

Section 1: The Objects of Research

12:35–12:40

Introduction from conference curator Katerina Suverina

12:40–13:00

Tahani Nadim. Data Natures: Research in Collection Digitization

13:00–13:20

Yana Klichuk and Joana Monbaron.

Invisible Archives at Manifesta 13 as Action Research

13:20–13:40

Danae Tapia. Autopoiesis Today: Juxtaposing The Scientist, The Artist, and The Philosopher

13:40–14:00

Clémentine Deliss. Counter-Conduct in the Museum, or the Practice of Academic Iconoclasm

14:00–14:45

Open discussion of presentations

Participants: Katerina Suverina, Tahani Nadim, Yana Klichuk, Joana Monbaron, Danae Tapia, Clémentine Deliss

15:00–16:00

Break

Section 2: The Methods of Research

16:00–16:05

Introduction from conference curator Andrei Zavadski

16:05–16:25

Annette Loeseke. Curatorial Activism: Collaborative Research as Decolonizing Practice at Berlin's Museum Treptow

16:25–16:45

Anastasia Tarasova. More Than Just a Catalogue:
The Hidden Resources of a Museum Database

16:45–17:05

Pauline J. Yao. On Dynamic Ground: Museum and Collection Building in Hong Kong

17:05–17:25

Sela Kodjo Adjei. Nkyinkyim Installation as 'Alternate History':
New Frontiers of Museology in Ghana and Beyond

17:25–18:10

Open discussion of presentations

Participants: Andrei Zavadski, Annette Loeseke, Anastasia Tarasova,
Pauline J. Yao, Sela Kodjo Adjei

September 25, Saturday

Garage Auditorium

12:00–12:25

Opening reception

Section 3. The Space of Research

12:25–12:30

Introduction from conference curator Vlad Strukov

12:30–13:10

Discussion with Karen Sarkisov, Katya Inozemtseva and Vlad Strukov. Thinking with Art: The Theory and Practice of Research in the Museum

13:10–13:30

Duygu Dogan Taupitz and Aslihan Şenel. (Non)Frame: A Research Tool For An Experimental Exhibition Space

13:30–13:50

Cristina Moraru. Museums—From a Disciplinary Model of Knowledge Production to a Sensible Regime of Disseminating Confused Knowledge

13:50–14:20

Open discussion of presentations

Participants: Vlad Strukov, Duygu Dogan Taupit, Aslihan Şenel, Cristina Moraru, Karen Sarkisov, Katya Inozemtseva

14:30–15:30

Break

Section 4: The Researcher

15:30–15:50

Introduction from conference curator Sasha Obukhova

15:50–16:10

Margarita Kuleva. The Creeper Museum and the Weeds of Education:
What Ethnography Can Teach us about Research Institutions

16:10–16:30

Lyudmila Luchkova, Vadim Kimmelman and Valeria Vinogradova.
The Role of a Contemporary Museum in Launching Research
within the Deaf Community: From Visitor to Informant

16:30–16:50

Nadia Cannata, Maia Wellington Gahtan and Margaret J.-M. Sönmez.
Eurotales and the Diffuseum

16:50–17:40

Performative lecture by eeefff group

17:40–18:10

Open discussion of presentations

Abstracts of the papers

Tahani Nadim

Data Natures: Research in Collection Digitization

The digitization of collections transforms the museum in many ways. It necessitates spatial and organizational reconfigurations, generates novel research objects and questions, and introduces new roles and processes in all areas of the museum. Digitization shapes and is shaped by heterogeneous actors, some present (digitization staff, specimens), some imagined (users), some absent (source communities). Moreover, digitization is laden with many promises: global access, pluripotent usability, multi-scalar data integration, as well as the acceleration of discovery and the democratization of knowledge. In short, collection digitization can be understood as a sociotechnical and sociopolitical transformation. Based on the work of the Data Natures research group at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin (MfN), my presentation examines collection digitization as a novel field of research for science and technology studies (STS) and related enquiries. Using concrete examples from the digitization at the MfN, I will focus on three interrelated questions: How does digitization transform collections? What are the sociopolitical dynamics driving digitization? How does digitization change our understanding of nature? In doing so, I argue that critical engagements with digitization can offer inventive ways of challenging the “fixed sovereign taxonomies and epistemic frameworks” of the museum (Thylstrup, 24).

Tahani Nadim co-heads the interdisciplinary research center Humanities of Nature at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin. She is a junior professor of sociocultural anthropology at the Institute for European Ethnology at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, where she is also a member of the Center for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage (CARMAH). Her research focuses on the datafication of nature and the politics of digitizing museum collections. Her writings have appeared in *JRAI*, *Science as Culture*, *Big Data & Society*, and the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*. She also runs the experimental research unit Bureau for Troubles, in which she collaborates with artists and curators. Her exhibitions include *The Influencing Machine* (nGbK, 2018–2019) and *Dead wasps fly further* (MfN, 2015).

Yana Klichuk, Joana Monbaron

Invisible Archives at Manifesta 13 as Action Research

For the last thirty years, cultural workers have been asked to acknowledge the growing social responsibility of cultural institutions, perceived as essential social institutions and a key agent in civil society. In response to these debates, efforts have been made to re-examine the function of cultural (for instance, contemporary art) institutions in society by changing some of the institutions' central values and operating modes.

These attempts opened up possibilities for using the institution as an active vehicle for rethinking art as a tactical rather than a symbolic tool of resistance.

The question of the social responsibility of cultural institutions and artistic production urges us to reconsider the nature of institutional practices of artistic and curatorial research, for instance the constructed and therefore questionable authority acquired by artists and curators, and to some extent educators, to research and speculate over the histories or cultural practices of others. This systematic process of “disinterlocation,” as Eric Chauvier named it to qualify the negation of the observed as interlocutors in Western anthropological research, automatically produces effects of exclusion, disqualification, and instrumentalization that contradict the intentions put forward rhetorically in institutional, curatorial, and artistic discourses.

Bearing this context in mind, in this presentation we propose to analyze our attempt to counter the overhanging position of the “cultural worker as researcher” within the education programme of Manifesta 13 in Marseille and one of its projects, *Invisible Archives*. This project embodied the process and the outcome of situated research focusing on, and engaged in, the social knowledge produced by groups of citizens in Marseille. It formed around the archives of eight civil initiatives narrated in conversation with eight artists/collectives. The project included exhibitions, public programming, community events, and publications.

Throughout the work on *Invisible Archives* we faced the recurring question of the relationships and hierarchies between artistic production and the social processes that feed it, as well as the question of our own positioning and involvement as organizers. It raised debates about whether we should blur the lines between the research and its presentation, and about categories of institutional processes—research, curating, education, artistic work, and administration.

We retrospectively analyze our attempt to devise a programme dealing with extremely diverse social experiences of Marseille as embedded in the genealogy of action research, a methodological approach practiced by sociologists in the city since the 1970s. Action research raises fundamental questions concerning the positioning of the researcher with regard to their subject of study and the possibility for the researcher to participate in a process of social change without using their scientific objectivity as a methodological excuse to distance and protect themselves. It also addresses another important issue: the possibility for the communities concerned to participate in the development of a theory of their own practices. Thus, the action research approach must be interrogated for the extent to which it enables those whose lives are affected the most to articulate their priorities and to make change happen, while also placing the “cultural worker as researcher” in a situation of social responsibility.

Joana Monbaron is a PhD student at the Centre for Social Studies (CES) and the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research (iiiUC) of the University of Coimbra, Portugal. Together with Yana Klichuk and Alina Belishkina, she was one of the guest curators of the Symposium of the second Curatorial Forum organized by the National Center of Contemporary Arts in St. Petersburg (NCCA) in 2020, entitled *Educational U-turn. Who*

else is producing knowledges in culture?. In 2018, she conceived a general approach to education and interpretation for the first Riga Biennial of Contemporary Art and supervised the field research preceding the artistic programming of the 13th edition of the European Biennial Manifesta in Marseille, which became the foundation of the Manifesta 13 education and mediation program in Marseille in 2019–2020 and was renamed *Le Tiers Programme* (Third Program). From 2015 to 2018, Monbaron, together with Alexander Ivanov developed *Tracings Out of Thin Air*, a long-term collective research program addressing the complex conditions of norm, ability, and dependency in art in collaboration with artists living in a closed residential care institution. The program culminated in a publication of the same name, edited with Marina Gržinić and Aneta Stojnić.

Yana Klichuk is director of the Education and Mediation Program of the European Biennial Manifesta (since 2015), working with local teams to explore and engage with existing practices and initiatives in the biennial's host cities: Zurich (Manifesta 11, 2016), Palermo (Manifesta 12, 2018), Marseille (Manifesta 13, 2020), Prishtina (Manifesta 14, 2022), Barcelona (Manifesta 15, 2024). Previously she studied and worked in St. Petersburg. Her professional experience as a cultural worker and educator combines various forms of research, curatorial, and mediation practices. She advocates principles of equal footing and balance of power in collective processes of knowledge production, as well as sharing culture in temporary collaborations and cultural mediation. Klichuk is particularly interested in the critical analysis of intentions, practices, outcomes, and impact of collaborations between cultural and social initiatives. These topics are often addressed in her public talks and workshops.

Danae Tapia

Autopoiesis Today: Juxtaposing The Scientist, The Artist, and The Philosopher

In *What Is Philosophy?* Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari presented the figures of the scientist, the artist, and the philosopher as crucial actors of knowledge generation because of their capacity for dealing with chaos through the creation of concepts, precepts, and affects. Theirs is a sophisticated take on interdisciplinarity and, in a context of digitally mediated realities and global questioning of traditional paradigms, it is pertinent to revisit the different ways in which science, the arts, and philosophy create "zones of indetermination" where the ineffable aspects of knowledge can be grasped. As the fundamental proposal of their work, Deleuze and Guattari promote a vision in which science needs a non-science, art needs a non-art, and philosophy needs a non-philosophy. This proposition will be the starting point of my paper, in which I will develop notions of collaboration across these three disciplines through the revision of cases and methods of experiential research. The necessity of this approach has been raised by authors such as Timothy Morton and Donna Haraway, who have expressed the need for new modes of knowledge production capable of tackle major planetary challenges such as the current climate emergency.

I will connect this problematic to my research on the concept of autopoiesis, a theory developed in the 1970s by the Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, who dealt with the relational nature of living organisms at the cellular level. My hypothesis is that autopoiesis, because of its focus on autonomous and systemic processes of production, emerges as a scientific and holistic framework in coherence with Deleuze and Guattari's attempt to introduce order at a pre-conceptual level. It is an apt perspective that confronts "chaos" and exceeds the desire of giving opinions or merely providing literal accounts of observed phenomena.

This is a work that builds on posthuman knowledges, which, according to Rosi Braidotti, involve the displacement of anthropocentric value systems. In this paper I adopt this perspective through the examination of systems and infrastructures (computational, biological, and artistic) that exceed the human individual. Furthermore, a successful categorization and implementation of these ideas in the context of the museum as well as in educational instances will advance transformative and collaborative processes in the scientific, artistic, and philosophical scenes.

Danae Tapia is a writer, multimedia artist, and technologist born in the Chilean working class. She is a researcher and a lecturer of Hacking and Autonomous Practices at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam. Her research projects focus on technological autonomy, transdisciplinarity in the arts, and digital approaches to spirituality. She is the founder of The Digital Witchcraft Institute, an arts organization working on posthuman technology. This endeavor started thanks to a fellowship at the Mozilla Foundation and to date it has been funded by a number of international institutions.

Clémentine Deliss

Counter-Conduct in the Museum, or the Practice of Academic Iconoclasm

Today we are living through different manifestations of counter-conduct performed within the civic space of the museum. Critique of the museum's matrix swings between acute decolonial positions on employment equity to demands for the return of significant cultural heritage extricated, not without contention, from an original environment and system of ownership. The complexity of today's institutional dissent affects all museum typologies, be they old or new, art historical, contemporary or ethnographic, located in the global north or reconfigured elsewhere. The museum, with its collections and archives, is undeniably a colonial phenomenon, and it is this aspect of its genealogy that is being called into question.

If expressions of the early avant-garde or institutional critique in the 1960s and 1980s deployed tropes of conceptual and performance art alongside agitprop, then today's manifestations are a forthright practice of polemical argument. Art has become an extended debating chamber voicing controversies beyond its four walls and across the world, transporting both the exhilaration of a defiant position and the fear that emancipation can turn into demagoguery. The removal of monuments, petitioning via social media, the defamation of boards and patrons, disputes over divisive appointments, the race for restitution politics, and the wrangling around the

new ICOM definition of the museum all situate the voice of critique within the broader public realm. If 1989 opened the floodgates to non-Eurocentric artistic practices, 2020 has heralded a new global turn that forefronts the complex battle for fundamental inclusivity and equity in cultural representation.

To perform the decolonial on historical collections requires the practice of what I shall call *academic iconoclasm*, a form of counter-conduct that blankly refutes disciplinary divisions inherited from nineteenth-century European scholasticism. As a mode of research, it seeks out artefacts and artworks that invoke contention, inciting discordant readings of history, body politics, gender, race, ethnicity, and diversity, and potentially making the artwork unacceptable to public viewing. Its inquiry is located backstage and reflects counter-conduct as askesis, as communicational abstinence, as the right to non-disclosure, to withholding information, and confidentiality. With artistic interference and classificatory transgression, academic iconoclasm is the willful suspension of normative structures that inscribe epistemic, bureaucratic, and legal rules to police others working with public collections. It is, in the words of Michel Foucault, the “art of not being governed quite so much.”

Dr. Clémentine Deliss is Global Humanities Visiting Professor in Art, University of Cambridge (2021–2022) and Associate Curator of KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin, where she directs the Metabolic Museum-University. Her practice crosses the borders of contemporary art, curatorial experimentation, and critical anthropology. Between 2010 and 2015, she directed the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt, instituting a new lab for post-ethnographic research. She was a Fellow of the Institute of Advanced Study Berlin and has taught art theory and curatorial practice at the Ecole nationale supérieure Paris-Cergy, Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design, and the Hamburg University of the Arts. Her book *The Metabolic Museum* is published by Hatje Cantz in co-production with KW (2020) and in Russian translation by Garage Press (2021). She lives in Berlin.

Annette Loeseke

Curatorial Activism: Collaborative Research as Decolonizing Practice at Berlin’s Museum Treptow

Taking the municipal Museum Treptow in the southeast of Berlin as a case study, this paper explores the museum’s new exhibition *zurückGESCHAUT* (Looked Back) about the First German Colonial Exhibition, which was part of the Berlin Trade Exhibition in Treptow Park in 1896. Conceptualized in collaboration with activists and NGOs such as the Initiative of Black People in Germany (Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland Bund e.V.) and Berlin Postkolonial, *zurückGESCHAUT* is the first permanent exhibition to engage critically with Germany’s colonial past and postcolonial present. Open to the public since 2017, the exhibition particularly focusses on the 106 women, men, and children recruited in formerly colonized African countries in order to perform traditional cultural practices in the context of the First German Colonial Exhibition in Berlin. In my paper I argue that *zurückGESCHAUT* is of critical importance, since museum curators and Berlin-based activists have

collaborated to question Eurocentric approaches, colonial perspectives, and racist language. By examining their attempts to identify institutional bias and overcome hierarchical regimes of knowledge production, I explore to what extent the co-curators were able to change the research perspective, “look back” at historical curatorial practices of exploitation and exposure, return the Western gaze, and uncover various forms of agency in colonial contexts. Building on Iris Därmann’s (2021) broad notion of resistance (in *Widerstände*) and Ariella Azoulay’s (2019) theoretical framework for alternative memory politics (in *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*), I argue that by collaboratively reinterpreting historical photographs and tracing forms of protest and resistance, the co-curators were able to dismantle the Eurocentric victim/perpetrator binary from the colonial past without downplaying colonial power imbalances. My paper examines Berlin’s Treptow Museum as a case study to explore what might be the role of museums, galleries, and off-spaces in challenging the production of knowledge, mining colonial photographic archives, identifying blind spots within institutionalized memory politics, and decolonizing today’s curatorial research practice. By looking at how the co-curators situate the exhibition in the wider context of current and ongoing anticolonial protest in Berlin and beyond, I not only reconsider the museum as a space for open research, collaborative practice, and co-curation but also ask what might be the role of the museum’s municipal (as opposed to national) institutional framework and its peripheral (as opposed to central) urban location in one of Berlin’s outer boroughs in developing alternative research approaches, (symbolically) redressing historical wrongs, and producing counter-knowledge.

Dr Annette Loeske is Lecturer in Museum Studies at New York University Berlin and Honorary Visiting Fellow at the School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester. She holds a Ph.D. in Art History from the University of Bonn and degrees in Art History and Cultural Management from the University of Paris-Sorbonne, University of Munich, and London City University. Her research interests include expanded museum studies, visitor/stakeholder studies, decolonial/post-migrant memory politics, engaging museum practice, and cultural activism. Recent publications include “The Politics of Contemporary Art Museums: Calouste Gulbenkian’s Modern Collection in Lisbon” (in *Curating the Contemporary in the Art Museum*, Routledge/forthcoming).

Anastasia Tarasova

More Than Just a Catalogue: The Hidden Resources of a Museum Database

The paper examines the experience of creating a relational database and which data are in demand for research purposes outside and inside institutions. Using the practice of Garage and the Russian Art Archive Network platform as examples, Anastasia Tarasova will touch on the research potential of the database, interaction with databases of other institutions, and the interdisciplinary nature of research.

Anastasia Tarasova is an art historian, a recipient of fellowships from DAAD (2007), Gerda Henkel Stiftung (2010), and IFA CCP (2020). She has worked at Garage Museum of Contemporary Art since 2012 and is currently the head registrar of Garage Archive Collection and the coordinator of the project Russian Art Archive Network.

Pauline J. Yao

On Dynamic Ground: Museum and Collection Building in Hong Kong

M+, the new museum for visual culture slated to open in Hong Kong this November, is one of the world's most ambitious and far-reaching museum projects in recent years. Occupying a 60,000 square foot Herzog & de Meuron designed building on a swath of reclaimed land, M+ is often compared with the Centre Pompidou, Tate Modern, and MoMA. But unlike these institutions, M+ asserts a transdisciplinary, multi-centered, non-western perspective indicative of its geographic locale—a hybrid locus of local, regional, and transnational cultural flows situated at the crossroads of East Asia and Southeast Asia. Sitting at the core of M+ are its collections, encompassing modern and contemporary art, design, architecture, moving image, and archive materials from around the globe. In formation since 2012, the M+ Collections form the spine of the institution, defining the museum as both the builder and keeper of knowledge. This presentation will look at questions surrounding the complex process of collection building and some of the local and international challenges involved. How does an institution build a collection? What makes a collection important and what can collections do? Where does research factor into the process of building and maintaining a museum collection? Highlighting specific examples and works from the collection, this presentation considers the abstract and the practical, as well as what it means to be Asian and global in the shifting landscape of our current moment.

Pauline J. Yao is Lead Curator, Visual Art, at M+. She has held curatorial positions at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and worked as an independent curator and writer in Beijing for six years, during which time she helped co-found the storefront art space Arrow Factory. Since joining M+ in 2012, Yao has played a leading role in building the visual art collection by overseeing and acquiring works from around Asia and beyond. She is responsible for acquisitions, research, and interpretation of visual art at M+, including sub-areas of Ink Art and Hong Kong Visual Culture, and also serves as the co-editor of *PODIUM*, M+'s online publication. Recent curatorial projects include the M+ Pavilion exhibitions *In Search of Southeast Asia through the M+ Collections* (with Shirley Surya, 2018) and *Five Artists: Sites Encountered* (2019). Yao is a regular contributor to *Artforum International* and her writings on contemporary Asian art have appeared in numerous catalogues, online publications, and edited volumes.

Sela Kodjo Adjei

Nkyinkyim Installation as 'Alternate History': New Frontiers of Museology in Ghana and Beyond

This paper's main focus is on Kwame Akoto-Bamfo's *Nkyinkyim Installation*, an evolving museum that aims to reconstruct African history and preserve its cultural heritage for posterity. Currently focusing on generating social interactions on slavery and community revitalization, the art installation comprises over 3,500 sculptures spread across 3 continents (Africa, Europe, and America). *Nkyinkyim Installation* aims to use 11,111 sculptures to fill in the missing gaps in African history. Through his Ancestor

Project initiative, Akoto-Bamfo developed a structure which enabled him to organize a solid team of contributing artists, engineers, researchers, curators, designers, and volunteers to help realize his creative vision. With mass education being a core objective of *Nkyinkyim Installation*, researchers mainly employ historiographical methods and mixed method approaches to art-based research for data collection. Primary data collection is done through workshops, structured interviews, informal community engagements, focused group discussions, and participatory activities by volunteers, contributing artists, and community groups. Secondary data is collected from university libraries, national archives, and online journals. The research findings generated from the analyzed data form the cultural and historical basis to assist the artists, curators, researchers, architects, engineers, and designers in reconstructing African historical narratives. Relying on anthropological procedures, archaeological tools, and the philosopher's toolkit for critical thinking, data collected in the field undergoes triangulation, analysis, and critical review. The "dissemination" of research findings translates into sculptures, obelisks, architectural structures, art festivals, knowledge sharing workshops, and community development. This process of communal institution building and "(non)knowledge" production effectively transforms art into historical narratives and vice versa, subverting hegemonic knowledge regimes. This paper argues that *Nkyinkyim Installation* serves as a site for open conversations, "(non) knowledge" production, its presentation, dissemination, and a historical archiving of social anthropology through artistic research and community-driven development of *Nkyinkyim Installation* into a world class museum.

Dr. Sela Adjei is an artist/curator based in Accra, Ghana. He has a background in Communication Design and African Art from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. He received his PhD in African Studies at the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon. Adjei has worked as a designer and digital art consultant for various publishing companies and international organizations (including Sub-Saharan Publishers, Johns Hopkins University, World Bank, and Ghana Ministry of Health). He is a lecturer at the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI), where he teaches design, philosophy, digital imaging, drawing, and illustration. He is currently working on the postdoctoral project *Advancing Creative Industries for Development in Ghana* at the University of Ghana Business School, in collaboration with Copenhagen Business School, Denmark, and Loughborough University, UK.

Discussion with Karen Sarkisov, Katya Inozemtseva and Vlad Strukov

Thinking with Art: The Theory and Practice of Research in the Museum

This discussion between Katya Inozemtseva (Chief Curator, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art) and Karen Sarkisov (Curator and Senior Editor, V–A–C Foundation, GES-2) will be chaired by Vlad Strukov.

The speakers will discuss different kinds of knowledge, such as emotions and experiences, and reflect on contemporary theories of (non)knowledge. Through the lens of their personal experience, they will explore the ways in which knowledge

is produced in museums. They will consider competitive models of knowledge production—the university and the museum—and the nature of research, raising questions about museum infrastructures. Does the museum need a library? An archive? What is the aim of carrying out research in the museum? Is it possible to make knowledge “in-between”? What is open-ended research? How do curators employ research as an experiment? These are some of the questions that the speakers will address.

Karen Sarkisov is a curator and senior editor at the V–A–C Foundation and GES-2, Moscow and Venice.

Katya Inozemtseva is Chief Curator at Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. She studied philology at Moscow State University and holds a Candidate of Philological Sciences degree. She is the academic convenor of the Garage master's program *Curatorial Practices in Contemporary Art* at the Higher School of Economics.

Vlad Strukov (PhD) is a London-based multidisciplinary researcher, curator, and cultural practitioner, specializing in art, media, and technology crossovers. He is Editor-in-Chief of *The Garage Journal*. He is an associate professor at the University of Leeds, UK, working on global visual cultures. He is currently carrying out a major research project, funded by the Swedish Research Council, on contemporary queer visual culture. Strukov is the author and (co-)editor of many publications, including *Contemporary Russian Cinema: Symbols of a New Era* (2016), *Russian Culture in the Age of Globalisation* (2018), and *Memory and Securitization in Contemporary Europe* (2017). He makes regular appearances in international media such as *Al Jazeera*, *American Public Radio*, *BBC*, *RBK*, and others.

Duygu Dogan Taupitz and Aslihan Şenel

(Non)Frame: A Research Tool For An Experimental Exhibition Space*

The experience of encountering artworks is mostly in the area of (non)knowledge, as the artworks do not offer pedagogical knowledge but rather tend to unsettle what we know about things. The matter of encountering artworks encourages us to step out of our common practices of learning, understanding, and experiencing, makes us question the forms of our association with knowledge and ways of learning and knowing, provides an open space for the relationship with the things of the daily life, and helps finding new ways of relating to the world.

As an exhibition architect and an educator, our research areas collectively bring together ways of exploring the display of artworks in the exhibition space and knowledge production as spatial practices which constantly construct the material conditions of encounter and generate new ways of producing knowledge through complex relations.

The “frame” is one of the oldest methods of displaying artworks. It is taken as a wider concept to discuss what kind of (non)knowledge the museum can create through (non)

framing or by twisting the question: what kind of (non)frames do museums provide for creating (non)knowledge.

Until the early twentieth century, in Europe artworks were presented in thick frames not only to define their boundaries but also to provide the work its own existential space within the rules of academic creation. That is how, in early exhibitions, numerous frames could be presented from floor to ceiling, next to each other, and still be considered to have their own representational area. The emancipation of the artwork from the frame to the wall and to the void is a spiry history which tells a lot about the experience of artwork in the physical material space and, of course, a lot about the ways we imagine the world, even today.

For example, presenting a video artwork on the wall directly via a projection device and so having no frame, or showing it on a screen display, is still a crucial decision for the exhibition makers. These decisions are not only about making existing knowledge accessible but are themselves ongoing research. The concept of the frame might have changed, but the question of “frame” and “framing” are still valid topics. While thinking of exhibition space as a research area or a laboratory, the concept of (non)frame can be used to explore experimental research methods.

*This paper is part of a Ph.D. research project at Istanbul Technical University (ITU), Architectural Design Program.

Duygu Doğan Taupitz is an exhibition architect and a Ph.D. candidate at Istanbul Technical University. She has been in the Arter team since 2013, where she is responsible for the architectural design of exhibitions and focuses on exploring the ways in which spatial design relates to the curatorial or conceptual framework of the exhibitions. She worked as an exhibition architect within the Istanbul Biennial team for several editions.

Aslıhan Şenel (Ph.D.) is an Istanbul-based architect, researcher, and educator working with multidisciplinary and collective methods. She is an associate professor at Istanbul Technical University, where she teaches architectural theory and design.

Cristina Moraru

Museums—From a Disciplinary Model of Knowledge Production to a Sensible Regime of Disseminating *Confused Knowledge*

When museums manifest themselves as ideological apparatuses, instrumenting disciplinary strategies on the products of social reality and on the subjectivities of the contemporary world, the degree of success of these institutional initiatives is underestimated—as with the most efficient and functional ideological practices—given that any apparent state of luxury, marginality or even dismissal of institutional structures can be considered a symptom of a totalizing perfection (Preziosi). If the museum functions as a disciplinary model of knowledge production, defining, formatting, modeling, and re-presenting the multiple forms of social behavior (Alpers),

while recomposing and transforming its materials, products or relics into components of a spectacularization machine (Preziosi), we must turn to Rancière and substitute the disciplinary model of knowledge production with a different, more poetical model of *confused knowledge*.

Jacques Rancière used the syntagm *confused knowledge* as a specific form of knowledge that establishes a particular manner of thinking, constituted by means of relating thinking and feeling (non-thinking). For Rancière, confused knowledge is constituted similarly to aesthetics, and it does not necessarily imply a lesser form of knowledge but a paradoxical realization of a form of thinking of what does not think. Nowadays, museums should be able to transform regimes of distributing knowledge, embracing a horizontal model of knowledge production and instituting a sensible regime of disseminating knowledge.

Rancière calls into question the idea that the sensible is constituted differently to understanding, and, joining Alexander Baumgarten's theory that art addresses the senses and the intuition, he believes that the representations of the sensible are the most indistinct and confusing ideas. Therefore, Jacques Rancière conceives the phrase *confused knowledge*, opening a paradox that offers a possible interpretation of art as a territory of thought that is present outside it, and identified with non-thinking. However, a new regime of knowledge production that distributes *confused knowledge* does not deprive museums of their authority. On the contrary, it will only inform and orient museums toward different regimes of thought that can be established and disseminated under this expanded understanding.

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Margarita Kuleva

The Creeper Museum and the Weeds of Education: What Ethnography Can Teach us about Research Institutions

The paper presents an ethnographical perspective on the contemporary museum studied through its research functions. In particular, I suggest approaching research in the museum as a social practice, in terms of the sociology of cultural production and labor. How does research fit into the temporality and the economy of museum work? Which workers have access to research? How is the museum's structure connected with the right to conduct research?

The empirical part of the document consists of two sections. The first presents the findings of an ethnographical study of labor and structural inequality in cultural institutions conducted in Russia and the UK from 2015 to 2020 and based on participant observation and 70 in-depth interviews. First, I will attempt to present the museum's structure ("an unstable pyramid") with regard to the distribution of resources and responsibilities in a situation of a high degree of multitasking and the informalization of labour. Second, I will describe the place and the limitations of research practices in cultural institutions.

The second part of the report is a performative response to the problematic points formulated in the first part: *The Back Office Manifesto*, written on behalf of the workers in cultural institutions whose voices are heard less often. The manifesto presents a model of a horizontal or "creeper" institution. In particular, it points to the need for acknowledging the existence of all human and non-human agents involved in the work of an institution, including museum cats and fig trees.

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Lyudmila Luchkova, Vadim Kimmelman and Valeria Vinogradova

The Role of a Contemporary Museum in Launching Research within the Deaf Community: From Visitor to Informant

The paper focuses on the creation of a database of lexical variation in Russian Sign Language. The project was conceived at Garage and developed with the participation of sign language linguists and scholars. In summer 2020, a large database of signs from different Russian regions was collected (more than 250 people, over 19,000 video recordings). This was followed by a three-day public laboratory for the study of the variability of sign language hosted by Garage in September of the same year, during which linguists and deaf and hearing visitors studied the materials gathered and learnt to distinguish the types of and reasons for variability. In 2021, the database was made available to the public and is currently being used by researchers from various countries. The paper also demonstrates the role that the museum can play at all research stages, and reveals the importance of Garage as an organization that can successfully engage the Deaf community in research activities.

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Nadia Cannata, Maia Wellington Gahtan and Margaret J.-M. Sönmez

Eurotales and the Diffuseum

In our paper we present the *Diffuseum*, a project within *Eurotales: A Museum of the Voices of Europe* that combines linguistic research with digital representation and a physical *museo diffuso*.

The *Diffuseum* is based on language traces diffused throughout a borderless European territory. A language trace is any monument, place, object, wall, corner, urban space, painting, inscription, graffito or other element in the public domain that testifies to the life of languages, linguistic varieties, traditions, events or anything remarkable that may serve to retrace the history of language cultures. Fragmentary and often indexical, language traces resonate with the memory of languages and illustrate both the archaeology of language and the deep and layered relationship between tangible objects and their intangible significance—they represent, in essence, the linguistic dimension of place and material culture. Constituting a kind of living museum, these traces form a major component of the *Diffuseum*, which embraces a website, database, map, timeline, and field app.

Through the *Diffuseum*, we expect to:

- 1) develop a better understanding of how the linguistic cultures interact with each other over time and within space, and even within the same individual. In contrast to traditional studies of single language groups, the Diffuseum offers a detailed representation of linguistic cultures in disparate communities across large geographies. The collection will also allow for written and oral examples to be studied together. In the case of much recent informal graffiti, traces also serve as unique documentation;
- 2) illustrate the deep ways in which language is embedded in physical places and monuments whether it be through inscriptions or oral/literary traditions attached to those sites. The vehicle of language traces promises to enhance the precision of our understanding of languages by identifying and analyzing their material contexts, thereby encouraging the collaboration of art historians, cultural anthropologists, and linguists;
- 3) engage and elicit excitement about linguistic sites and cultures in those who inhabit our borderless territory through an interactive field app, which, through GPS technology, alerts potential viewers to the whereabouts of all traces when they

happen to be nearby. The app provides both a window on the world of traces and an invitation to dialogue. In the course of discussing the *Diffuseum* we will also address meta-museological issues, including the difficulties of engaging in both research and museum activism while maintaining a dynamic nonhierarchical and non-linear approach to a uniquely evanescent subject matter.

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A Performative Lecture by eeefff group

The Inappropriate Archive: 'Self-Made' Temporalities and Memory through Infrastructure

Archiving deals with the issues of time and producing subjects. Here it is important who puts the archive together and how detached is their view of the events being archived. What might an archive look like when it is not the distant past that is being archived but processes taking place here and now? The lecture by eeefff group explores the distributed communities in Belarus and the technological extensions they invent to function and build a narrative about themselves.

The lecture will take place as a 3D tour, allowing for encounters with real and imaginary artifacts and voices of the *Economic Greenhouse 2021*.

eeefff is an art group formed by Dina Zhuk and Nikolay Spesivtsev in 2013. They work with the emotional effects of the new regimes of economy through public actions and creation of situations, online interventions, hacks, and construction of environments. They are co-organizers of the project *WORK MORE! REST MORE!* (eeefff.org).

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