Education for a New Museum

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One of the National Museum's objectives is to increase the number of its publications and articles within the field of museum education. With the publication of this collection of articles, we hope to contribute to expanding the debate surrounding museum education – and in the longer term to make the Museum's offerings and activities even more relevant to even more people.

The National Museum is initiating a wide range of strategies designed to enhance the experience of, debates about, and knowledge of art, architecture and design. In the summer of 2017, the museum held an internal seminar, including contributions from international participants, on the subject of education in art museums under the title Learning Strategies for a New National Museum. The objective was to reveal new potential for educational programs in the 'new' National Museum, by engaging more visibly and actively with the city, its population and the contemporary era.

The two-day seminar consisted of lectures and practical workshops. Some of the contributions to the seminar now appear as articles in this collection. In addition, the collection begins with a new text by Boel Christensen-Scheel, Professor of Aesthetics and Art Theory at Oslo Metropolitan University, who in conjunction with Christin Fonn Tømte, the National Museum's then Coordinator Education, took the initiative to organize the seminar. We are very grateful to them both for their work.

Per Odd Bakke
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Introduction: Education for a New Museum

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Education for a new museum is a collection of texts by leading voices in the field of museum education – three of the authors work in museums, while the fourth is a practising artist. When referring to a 'new museum', we are thinking not only of the new building for the National Museum, which will be completed in 2020, but also of other art institutions relocating to new buildings and the new roles that these institutions have – or could have. Traditionally, museums have had various functions that go beyond those of collecting, preserving and displaying – recent reports to the Norwegian Parliament, as well as national and international cultural heritage strategies, have emphasized the social, cultural and educational roles of museums (Official Report on Cultural Policy 2014; White paper no. 8 2018-19). Digital opportunities for museums and the concept of 'digital museums' or 'online museums' are also being developed to an even greater

extent, partly to accommodate new audiences who are unable to visit museums in person, but also to permit museums to display larger parts of their collections that otherwise would remain out of sight in storage.

Today we also talk about the hybridisation of art and cultural institutions, and of cultural institutions as 'third places': places that supplement the home and workplace (Oldenburg 1982, Nagel Delica 2016, Christensen-Scheel 2019a), where members of the public go not only to see specific artistic and cultural offerings, but also to 'hang out', work, study or socialize. In Oslo, the House of Literature and Sentralen are two typical examples of this kind of hybridisation: venues where one finds a range of auditoria and education rooms, places to eat and drink, desk spaces, children's areas – basically a range of different types of spaces intended for different activities. These activities tend to be both organised and informal, with the venues often programming a certain proportion themselves, while also making spaces available for hire and free of charge to external initiatives and organisations wanting to organise seminars, debates or workshops. Art and cultural institutions have thus taken on a number of new functions, partly as a result of institutions' desires to attract new and larger audiences, and partly in response to a social trend in which innovation, cross-disciplinary interaction and social engagement are of central importance.

In some places it may perhaps seem that this hybridisation is happening at the expense of traditional gallery and museum education, which has tended to take a specific work or artist as its primary starting point. Instead of telling us something we don't – or are assumed not to – know about an artist's life and intentions, or about the production and composition of the artwork, the education that emerges from these more hybridised institutions may emphasise completely different perspectives, such as another artist's view on the artist whose work is being exhibited, a socially relevant theme, or the public's experience. In some situations, we might fear that this trend will result in paintings disappearing from museums and books disappearing from libraries, to be replaced by different kinds of experiences and entertainment. But we could also say that this kind of hybridisation attaches more importance to art and literature as overarching concepts and practices, rather than to specific paintings and books. Hybridisation may also promote factors that can enlarge audiences for art and culture, by creating more participatory and engaging institutions that are capable of reaching more people from more diverse backgrounds. In this context, we are talking about 'the art of relevance', which is a primary concern of museum director and interaction designer Nina Simon (2010, 2016).

In this anthology, the various authors describe a transition that has occurred in museums – and in our expectations of museums – from thinking of museum education as centred on *objects*, to education that is more about *people* and *encounters*. This trend could be said to be driven by both internal and external influences: in art education and in the fine arts generally there has been a movement towards emphasising the experience of the viewer or 'recipient', rather than that of the 'source' or artist in order to 'democratise' the museum visit and decode museum content. But the

attention around public engagement is also part of the political and economic legitimisation, that does not always mean the same thing as giving the public high-quality, important experiences of art. Here frictions may occur that are worthy of closer examination – the movement away from objects and towards people and experiences is driving museums towards becoming part of an 'experiential society', characterised by the fleeting consumption of ever-more-intense experiences. This cannot be described as particularly sustainable. On the other hand, the major 'collections of objects' are encountering new ways of thinking in the era of sustainability – can we simply continue to collect more and more things? In many places, collections are now being digitised in order to create digital museums where people can re-experience or experience a museum visit remotely. This digital focus is less dependent on the physical object and can generate many different experiences based on one and the same artefact. Digital media are used both to manage and to disseminate museum artefacts, but artefacts continue to have an important place in museums and in their educational activities. The norm is still that physical object is ranked higher than the digital reproduction, at the same time more digital works are produced and acquired for museum exhibitions and collections.

The National Museum's Strategy for the period to 2022 states that "[w]e must develop innovative exhibitions for a larger and more diverse public." The Strategy describes the Museum's role as being to "manage, develop and make accessible Norway's largest and most important collection in the areas of art, architecture and design," and the Muse-

um's vision is stated as being "to create new generations of art enthusiasts". In addition, the Museum must serve as a museum for all of Norway and as a leading museum in the Nordic region. It must also work to promote broad enthusiasm for the museum. Accordingly, many of the strategic goals set for the Museum are about looking outwards and concern the engagement and inclusion of diverse groups of visitors and users, whether these are new audiences from diverse social groups or habitual visitors and visitors with a professional interest in the collections. If the core tasks of museums are to collect, preserve, research, exhibit and communicate (ICOM), then this must of course be done bearing in mind the management of artistic and cultural heritage. But since cultural heritage is not a given entity, the role of museums is moving more towards acts of justifying, discussing, educating and creating a basis for people's own decision-making and meaning production. Why should precisely this object be collected, preserved, exhibited, developed and documented? This should be done in ways that improve experiences of art for diverse public groups, while at the same time substantiating the museum's role as a custodian of art and/or culture and as a societal actor.

Director of the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design Karin Hindsbo has said that she wants museum education to be closely linked to the art, and she emphasises the need for both classical art and for new perspectives that create friction. She has also said that Sámi and multicultural displays should be given more space and weight, synchronising with the museum's ambition to be 'polyphonic'. The future for museum education is thus most likely both physical

and digital; it is also probably both closer to the art *and* more socially oriented. As our first insight into museum education in this book, we hear from an American director of education who is reviving art teaching in museums with the help of contemporary artists, among other approaches. Through her approach, the contemporary artist becomes a living person in the museum, and not simply represented by an object.

Art-based museum education – a laboratory approach to art and audiences?

In the first article in this book, Wendy Woon, Deputy Director for Education at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA) writes about MoMA's renewed focus on museum education. She describes how museum audiences often do not define museum visits as part of their cultural activities – art museums seem to have gained a kind of elevated status that sets them apart from more everyday kinds of culture. As a result, members of the public do not necessarily recognise museum visits as falling within the scope of their broader definitions of culture and cultural diversity, which would encompass community events, amateur theatre productions, food and drink, music and so on. Woon refers to MoMA's first Director, Alfred Barr Jr. (1929), to highlight MoMA's origins in art education and give new impetus to an investigative, 'laboratory-like' approach. In her view, museums should be seen more as 'learning' institutions than 'learned' institutions. This view also concurs with the theories of Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, a museum researcher, which describes a move from education in the sense of teaching towards more participatory

learning (Hooper-Greenhill 2007). All experience and learning passes through the individual spectator, and accordingly, the creation of experiences in museums needs to acknowledge the position of the one experiencing in addition to or instead of the position of the exhibiter. According to Woon, if we envisage the museum as moving from being a temple to an agora, then we reflect precisely this idea of encounters and experiences, and we turn on its head the reverential atmosphere that the public often sense in museums. In a public marketplace, an agora, we could also imagine members of the public entering with knowledge or something else they can share, rather than arriving as empty containers ready to be filled (Christensen-Scheel, 2019a and b).

Woon thus traces links back to the foundation of MoMA and its history of art education. By reviving art education practices from the first half of the 20th century, she also awakens some ideas tied to Modernism and the development of new social and pedagogical structures. American philosopher John Dewey is often linked to art education precisely because he attributed such an important role to sensory experience, while also emphasising the importance to learning of individual experience and *doing* (*Art as Experience*, 1934, *Experience & Education,* 1938*)*. This approach is about how the individual can be motivated and have greater 'ownership' to their own experience – in other words, this is a *phenomenological* perspective that makes the individual the custodian of his or hers own learning. The individual is the starting point for the sensory experience, even though the experience may take place in a public space and in the company of others.

MoMA has in this regard established a People's Studio, which is a kind of workshop or activity centre within the museum's galleries. The special feature of the People's Studio is that it is connected to current exhibitions and offers a wide range of activities, for example architecture-related activities linked to a Frank Lloyd Wright exhibition. The activities range from simple cut-and-paste exercises suitable for children to more advanced games and computer-based activities – although visitors could also simply sit and draw the view of MoMA's garden. Active participation and experimentation are important features of this approach to museum education, which takes the visitor's experience as its starting point. Several of the leading voices in contemporary museum education cite surveys in which audience state that they would like museum visits to be more participatory. The participatory design expert and museum director Nina Simon points to *participation* and *identification* as key elements for what visitors describe as 'good museum experiences'. In her two books *The Participatory Museum* (2010) and *The Art of Relevance* (2016) she describes how cultural heritage institutions have opportunities to work actively and nuanced with various participation and inclusion strategies, in order to take on a more active and visible role in society.

In this anthology, however, education director Woon describes how MoMA has actively employed artists and artistic strategies to promote these connections with the public. One member of MoMA's education department is the artist Pablo Helguera, who has also published *Education for Socially Engaged Art* (2011). Among other things, Helguera has initiated a residency project called Artists Experiment, which involves the resident artists devising projects that could be described as cross-overs between art and museum education, and also linked to artistic research. This project requires the artists to think more actively about how the public engage with the art, perhaps creating something performative or, like Nina Katchadourian in 'Dust Gathering', working with the experience of the museum space and revealing new aspects of it.

This artistic approach to museum education could be termed 'art-based museum education' (Christensen-Scheel 2019), but it can also be thought of as a newer form of art pedagogy whereby artists themselves engage actively in creating sensory exchanges with the public. This approach can be about an ability or power to communicate, but is also about using experience as material – as described by Dorothea von Hantelmann in 'The Experiential Turn' (2014). Like von Hantelmann, Woon puts experience at the centre, and this is precisely why the artist is taking on a new, central role in museum education. Through conversations with artists, artist-led tours, artists' residencies, artist-led workshops and studios at museums, artist-authored educational texts and performances centred around other works in the collection, contemporary artists are being given a living, educational role in the museum, opening the door to many new possible artistic experiences and new roles for artists in museums.

Social responsibility and the museum as a social institution

The second article in this book is by Asta Busingye Lydersen, author of the book *Afropolitt* ['Afropolitan']. Lydersen, a former deputy chair of Arts Council Norway and member of the Afropean artistic collective Queendom, has long experience of Norwegian cultural policy and artistic production. The starting point for her article 'Visible/Invisible' is her own personal experience. She describes her 1997 visit to an exhibition at the Historical Museum in Oslo that she experienced as portraying Africa and Africans in a manner that was 'exoticizing', to put it mildly. Lydersen says that the exhibition's portrayal of Africa excluded contemporary Africa and heightened her feeling of otherness – she experienced her voice and culture as partially 'invisible' in this Western representation. At the same time, certain characteristics of Africa were visible in Norwegian society – as opposed to in the museum exhibition – for example, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and catastrophic famines. As Lydersen explains, for a young African-Norwegian, there was little to be proud of.

This paradox of the visibility or invisibility of cultural differences and belongings remains current and reminds us of the discussion by the much-quoted philosopher Jacques Rancière in *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*: sensibility is political in the sense that it encompasses different aspects of the visible and invisible. We notice some things rather than others, and we perceive things in certain ways rather than in other ways. In turn, there are things we don't notice, or to which we attribute subsidiary importance when we orient ourselves in a space or a landscape.

Many museums today are making efforts to develop and update understandings and representations of otherness – thinking both about what is being put on display and also about who one is addressing when doing so. The exhibition at the Historical Museum has now been dismantled, but even so Lydersen describes how some of the idea of 'otherness' influences how Norwegian museums and cultural institutions treat other cultures and people with different skin colours. The term 'negro' is still lurking around, and young women with African background are still mainly in the background in theatre plays and movies, seldom the protagonists. This article can be seen as a call to the art and cultural sectors to address their own blindness to both conscious and subconscious discrimination. This is not only about addressing a 'colonial' past, but also about awareness of the role of the art and cultural sectors as societal actors. If museums wish to attract new audiences, which can also generate professional renewal and new knowledge, then the museums must view these new audiences *as audiences*, and present them as such, rather than as victims or objects for exhibition.

Tate Modern's participatory project Tate Exchange offers one example of a possible strategy. Tate Modern has entered into partnerships with over 60 associates – schools, organisations and universities – that take turns producing programmes for the spaces in London and Liverpool and contribute to the curation of their own projects and perspectives (Christensen-Scheel 2018). Here the exchange between the museum and its partners becomes one of the ends in itself, rather than the presentation of its partners as they are viewed by the museum.

Rancière's attention to sensuousness as political material in its own right also offers an opportunity to new museums, because here we can create sensibilities other than those found in our everyday lives and elsewhere in the urban realm. Museums and their art can display images, ideas and concepts that transcend the reality we exist in and they can display them in ways we have not noticed before. The autonomous and independent nature of art museums makes the museum space into something that can generate unique experiences – it can give feelings of 'upliftedness', peace, time for sensory experiences and contemplation, or it can enable intense encounters with people, colours and shapes. Art museums can be like entering a different world at the centre of the urban realm, and this constitutes a quality. Even so, we know that many people, particularly young people and people from immigrant communities, do not perceive museums as accessible or see themselves as potential audiences. Lydersen reminds us that first- and second-generation immigrants make up a third of Oslo's population, and as part of a new national museum, her question is more than relevant: "Why should we choose to spend a day with you and your paintings?" The museum's staff are custodians of a shared cultural heritage and the museum space gives us the physical opportunity to encounter precisely what is shared and what is different in our cultural heritage.

The cultural heritage researcher Laurajane Smith writes about the problem of 'heritage' in *Cultural Heritage* (2006). According to Smith, a heritage is defined by the fact that it belongs to some people and not others, and this can be a difficult starting point for creating a shared cultural history and cultural present in a society with many different and sometimes conflicting cultural heritages. Images can mean different things to different people. Symbols – for example the swastika – have different origins and are used in very different contexts. Depictions of nudity represent an ideal of beauty in Western tradition, with roots going back to ancient Greece, but depictions of nudity are still problematic for a number of other cultures and religions. Smith also talks about the 'consumption' of cultural heritage, and to this we could add its 'production' – as art history debates throughout the 20th century have shown, the canon is not a given. Our cultural heritage is both consumed and produced through our contemporary treatment of it, and what we choose to display will become more entrenched than what we do not display. In addition, we have forms of cultural expression that never come near a museum, but that are important parts of people's everyday lives and cultural experiences. What forms of cultural expression are not displayed and why? These types of questions are part of the museums' opportunities not only as custodians of culture but also as producers, or even *makers* of culture.

The curator as educator

As roles have transformed in the 21st century, we have seen the emergence of new areas of responsibility in museums: first the curator became an artist, then the artist was seen as curator, and now we have seen an 'educational turn', where the artist, curator and museum educator all take responsibility for different forms of experiences. As a repre-

sentative of contemporary curators, Maria Lind is a voice who is both open to and critical of this trend. Accordingly, Lind uses the English word 'mediation', with the intention of furthering Nordic and German ideas of museum education, and of creating a kind of dialectic with the style of Anglo-American education that is often used in museums. In England, many museum education departments have rebranded themselves as 'learning departments' in order to highlight the above-mentioned move towards the viewer, but this is still a concept that at least in a Nordic context is linked more to pedagogy than to art. Lind's use of the English word 'mediation' in this context is thus intended to refer to a more *art history oriented tradition*, where the work of art is the starting point for museum education, and not the viewer.

Lind's article published here was written originally for a special issue of *Mousse* magazine in 2011. The article focuses on a central dilemma, or a near conflict between art and museum education in some contexts within contemporary art. Lind starts with a definition of the museum educator as occupying a kind of middle position, that of a link or a mediator, between the art and the public. By way of introduction, Lind thus sets up this position as involving a kind of interpretation, perhaps also a misinterpretation, of art. Art's capacity for contemplation and critique risks being altered or diluted by diverse educational activities that fail to take either the form or content of the art seriously. But, says Lind, as the years have passed, she sees ever more clearly how contemporary art discourse, driven by curators and autonomous art institutions, also represents a very inward-looking and discourse-dependent per-

spective. This discourse, by its layers of references, renders the art partially inaccessible. Quite simply, the art is not presented as something intended for the public, but as something to be placed in a curatorial landscape to serve as a subject of communication amongst colleagues.

For Lind, who was director of Tensta Konsthall in a suburb of Stockholm, over time this approach has become problematic. Contemporary art needs lines of connection to the 'outside', and the whole apparatus of museums must now be engaged to find innovative approaches to this problem. Lind is thus in some way arguing for the same approaches as Woon – new forms of experimentation and new forms of mediation of art, rather than merely boosting the number of activities offered at museum workshops. Here, like Woon, Lind comes back to thinking of museum education as being linked to encounters with art, and with an in-depth investigation of the content of these encounters. Museum education can be thought of as encounters between art and the public, not simply as encouraging participatory activities by the public in museums. Nevertheless, there might be a difference between the curatorial *art centred* perspective and the educational *human centred* approach.

The museum as organisation – creative evaluation and self-awareness

Ensuring that museums are flexible and outward-looking meeting places requires continual work on the structure of the museum. Museums are also knowledge organisations,

places where research must be conducted and where employees are accustomed to contributing their expertise in various areas. This means that museums contain different *views of knowledge*, and that different employees manage this knowledge in different ways. The author of the final article in this book is Emily Pringle, Head of Research at the Tate museums in London. Her article is about something she calls 'creative evaluation' in museums, with the objective of developing more holistic education strategies. Pringle has written previously about the views of education and of art of some people who work at Tate, and she continually asks 'Why?': Why do we conduct museum education like this? Who are we reaching, and how?

In the here published article "Creative Evaluation and Museum Education", Pringle discusses the importance for institutions of awareness and self-awareness, not least an awareness based on empirical data and studies of how audiences actually experience their encounters with the museum. According to Pringle, such studies should not be restricted to quantitative research, but should also include qualitative research and more in-depth conversations with individual museum visitors in order to gain more insight into different aspects of their experiences. Pringle's approach is about taking into account other perspectives than the ones driven by the institution itself, and then discussing these perspectives to make ourselves aware what we do intentionally and what we do without really realising what we are doing.

Pringle also delves further into what she calls 'creative evaluation', to distinguish amongst three types of evaluation: to

measure results or outcomes; to gain new knowledge; and to facilitate development. In other words, she sees evaluation not only as a tool for evaluating public satisfaction or dissatisfaction, but also as important organisational work for gaining new knowledge about one's own organisation and for facilitating development and innovation within the organisation. What do we really mean? Why do we do what we do? Is what we do consistent with what we intend? At the Tate museums, Pringle has facilitated different forms of development work, and presents evaluation as a professional tool, not simply a means of measuring satisfaction. So if the professionals who develop knowledge within museums work in different ways, perhaps museums should also develop different views of education and different forms of educational activities. By promoting awareness of different views of art and knowledge, we can also justify different views of museum education. The important feature in the Tate evaluation process described by Pringle is the transition from an implicit to an explicit evaluation process, where more voices and agendas emerge, together with a recognition that there is not just one correct view of knowledge in a museum, but that the museum in fact incorporates various different views of knowledge, and should be aware of and benefit from these different views.

All of the authors in this anthology conduct a kind of meta-reflection in relation to their own perspectives on museum education, and they represent different views on museum education – the artist's, the art educator's, the public's, the curator's, the administrator's and the research director's. These different views give us different and complementary

insights into what today's museum education can be about. These educational fields are generating new challenges that can contribute to the creation of a new museum with a virtual as well as a physical presence.

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Education for A New National Museum: State-of-the-Art in Museum Education

Wendy Woon — The Edward John Noble Deputy Director for Education, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

I am not sure which topic is more complex and fugitive, the idea of 'state of the art' education or what it means to be a 'national' museum? Both concepts are clearly in flux in a rapidly changing social, global, political, cultural, digital, and economic landscape. How people are learning, and how they are defining, and consuming cultural experiences is fundamentally shifting to new forms. How we consider what is at the core of our identities is being challenged--ethics, beliefs, the connective power of empathy, and our person-

al and collective identities within and without borders. To whom does the 'national' museum belong? Who is it for? What is it for?

As a Canadian, who also holds United States citizenship, married to a Spaniard, also a United States citizen, with a son who is a native-born United States citizen with Canadian and Spanish (EU) nationhood, I understand that borders and citizenship are very fluid. For millions of asylum seekers, who fled their countries or were displaced not by choice to migrate to new countries, the complexities of identity, citizenship, and nationhood are tested for both current citizens and migrants. As much as national museums are official 'storytellers' of the past, the traditionally static nature of how museums tell stories through exhibitions of objects is increasingly out of sync with the dynamic pace of change within society.

The Evolving Museum Context

The November/December issue of the American Alliance of Museums' publication, entitled *museum 2040*, imagines the future of museums:

> *"How did this happen? How did we go from a static concept of 'stuff in a building open 10-5 Tuesday through Sunday' to the fluid, dynamic, community-centered institutions of today? The modern museum evolved out of the financial necessity and the realization that our offerings, at the turn of the century, were no longer relevant and of benefit to*

society. We had become unsustainable mausoleums, with dated business and programmatic models. We let our history constrain our vision, clinging to a business as usual approach regardless of whether the public cared or came. We found ourselves closed off from the world in many respects, standing idly by as our industry languished."
– American Alliance of Museums, *museum 2040,* November/December 2017, 18.

According to the LaPlaca Cohen 2017 Culture Track Study, today's audiences have much broader, more democratic definitions of culture, with over a third of art museum goers not defining them as cultural experiences. Cultural experiences are more broadly defined to include community festivals, public art, food and drink experiences, along with traditional museums, theaters, and music venues.[1] Clearly culture is seen as more integrated into daily life and community as a social experience, and one that stimulates more of the senses beyond passively looking or listening.

According to the LaPlaca Cohen Study, this shifting cultural context still has a purpose, today. Participants in the study indicated that culture is relevant because it transforms perspectives, helping you feel and question your current knowledge; it brings people together who may not have much in common; educates people, broadening horizons to understand more about others in the world; and fosters empathy, bringing together people from different backgrounds, engendering greater understanding and acceptance about the value of diverse cultures.[2]

This would suggest that the museum has moved from being conceived of as a temple to an agora--a place of exchange, and of facilitated conversations and experiences. In these conversations and experiences, people would feel comfortable to express themselves and to engage with others they might otherwise not meet. In the process, they would learn more and be changed through socially engaged experiences. Ideally, the museum culture should change, becoming more responsive, perhaps a 'learning' institution, rather than a 'learned' institution.

This would strongly suggest that the role of museum education, which is essentially the welcoming, frontline, pedagogical interface between art and people, within the museum, in communities and increasingly online, will play a most pivotal role in the relevance and successful transition of museums in the future. Museum educators are keenly attuned and specialized in the needs of audiences of varied age and ability, and their changing behaviors and contexts. They are skilled in designing social experiences that invite people to connect with art, ideas, artists and their processes, and each other. Today, imaginative and responsive design of experiences is key, moving beyond the traditional and hierarchical academic formats of lecture, symposia, and panel discussion. The wide and deep knowledge and experiences of people who come to museums must be valued, but visible in tandem with knowledge and experience of art experts. Museum educators are highly attuned to understanding the wide range of reasons people have for seeking out cultural experiences. Too often, museums internally assume that people will want to participate for the same reasons staff devote their lives to the study of art and culture.

According to LaPlaca Cohen, motivation for cultural participation indicates that experiencing new things and learning something new--in essence seeking out cultural experiences--is key to personal development. In addition, choosing culture as a major form of stress release is one of the surprising new findings of the study.[3] Yet, the study found the greatest barrier to cultural participation is the lack of relevance followed by lack of awareness and logistical concerns such as inconvenience, finding someone to attend with, and cost. Again, museum educators do and will continue to play more significant roles, especially since they are already focused on removing barriers, and crafting experiences and resources that make the museum more accessible intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically through making connections between people's lives and art.

MoMA Education:
A laboratory approach to art
and audiences

What are the critical factors that will ensure that museums are approaching museum education as 'state of the art,' so that museums do not lose their cultural relevance in the future?

The most critical factor is to approach the educational function at the museum not as a set of events, programs, spaces or resources, but rather as process of research that

is ever-evolving as art, perceptions of culture, and people change. Pedagogy should be as experimental as the art and artists we champion and as worthy of deeper consideration. This is an era in which the most valuable commodities are time and attention, therefore engaging people through innovative pedagogical strategies will be even more important.

Although evolving museum education theory and philosophy continues to be informed and shaped by external social, political, scientific, and technological forces, in practice, each opportunity to design an experience with art is, in effect, a hypothesis that should be observed, tested, analyzed, and iterated to ensure it meets the needs of participants.

MoMA was founded with an educational charter with a primary mission, "to help people enjoy, understand, and use the art of the times."[4] It is well known that MoMA was considered a laboratory for art and exhibitions from the start, but what is less known is that it was conceived as a laboratory for experimental art education. In fact, the first MoMA Director, Alfred Barr, Jr., was an educator who taught the first undergraduate course on modern art, "Tradition and Revolt in Modern Painting" in 1926 at Wellesley College.[5] He championed the same transgressive innovation of the art in his teaching practice. Barr referred to his students as 'faculty' and charged each of them with mastering and teaching course content. He assigned readings from the *New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair,* and *The New Masses*, choosing current magazines rather than scholarly texts. He planned seemingly unorthodox field trips to see the design of the Necco Factory, rather than Boston's finest museum collections, fostering a

more experimental, democratic embrace and responsiveness to contemporary culture and education.[6]

Barr conceived of the Museum of Modern Art as a "laboratory: in its experiments the public is invited to participate,"[7] and when artist and educator, Victor D'Amico was hired part-time as the first Director of Education, it was to implement an innovative vision for the Educational Project, a two-year experimental pilot that led to the development of the Education Department at MoMA, today.[8] The same, experimental, laboratory-like, research-based approach to education continues today. In these rapidly changing times, it is the singularly most important approach to ensure relevance for museums in the future.

Over the past eighty years MoMA's Education Department has, for the most part, eschewed traditional methods of education, wherein the consumption of expert-given information is the goal. The Department empowers the broadest range of people to not only enjoy and understand art, but to instigate the most creative and innovative means of helping people find meaning, connection, and 'use' for art in their lives. As D'Amico said, "we are not making artists."[9] Instead, the goal was to foster, "individuals responsive to creativity and the world around them."[10] This emphasis on the individual developing their own critical abilities to use art as a catalyst for personal and creative development has been at the heart of MoMA's Education Department from the start.

Underpinning the laboratory-like approach to education is a research-based culture throughout our history. The

museum was a 'test-kitchen' for experimentation with new teaching methods, design of spaces, resources, and use of evolving technologies to foster people's engagement with art in ways that are useful and relevant to them throughout their lives. In the early years, classrooms were designed with two-way mirrors so teaching methods could be easily observed, analyzed, critiqued, and iterated. Today, we continue to experiment with programs and spaces for children as young as three years to people in their nineties, including people of all abilities. We use a wide-ranging set of research tools to provide data that allows us to continually challenge, plan, and enhance our work in museum education, focus our goals and resources, and function as a critical culture of innovation inside and outside the museum.

MoMA Education Today:

Three key directions that I would strongly recommend in museum education are:

1. Embodying research and experimentation as the ethos of museum education practice in order to continue to be responsive and relevant to changing audiences and art;
2. Framing content and programming through the lens of artists' inspiration and processes to humanize art objects and model creative thinking;
3. Championing accessibility through active listening and sustained connection to audience to identify needs and barriers be they social, economic, political, intellectual, emotional, or geographic.

An Ethos of Research and Experimentation

When I started at MoMA eleven years ago, I was inspired by this lineage of a more research-based creative approach to education, and committed to a full-time position for qualitative research and evaluation to ensure, that in a rapidly changing world, we could continue to be responsive and relevant. For example, our research indicates that the top two things our visitors most want to know about art is "artist's inspiration and materials and processes," essentially how artists think and operate in the world."[11] This knowledge is helping us to focus and shape our programming in our approach to our work, how we design pedagogical experiences, and how we frame content for our visitors.

We approach our work with the same curiosity, continued questioning, innovative thinking, and respect for process that artists bring to their practices. We are also attuned to what unseen messages are communicated through all the choices a museum makes. We work to make them more visible in engaging and critical ways. If critical and creative thinking are values, as educators, we can help model the processes in the type of experiences we create.

My team and I have been inspired by the thinking and work of Invisible Pedagogies, a collective of people who work in museums and art centers in Spain, whose influence grows. Andrea de Pascual, one of the collective members has noted that, "Art and Education are the two sides of the museum coin and should be approached at the same time. Just

as art can be educative, education can be artistic. Why not use performance, installation, minimalism, video, body action, etc. as educative tools? We are interested in the idea of using contemporary art not only as content of the program but also as a pedagogical format."[12]

Artists and Their Processes at the Center of our Work

Art museums often think of artists as the purview of curatorial. Curators by nature of vocation are discriminating, choosing the best works of art to represent stories of cultural significance. Yet, I would argue that the broader spectrum of artists and cultural workers are equally significant to museums. The creative community is potentially the most devoted audience, using museums, the collections, and exhibitions most frequently to stimulate their own thinking and practices. Many work as educators and consider educational work as part of their creative practices. At MoMA, we support the creative community in New York City by hiring teaching artists as we believe that direct contact with artists and what they bring to considering the art on view adds great value to the museum experience for people participating in programs.

A large portion of our budget is devoted to hiring artists and creative practitioners to facilitate conversations, develop classes and workshops, engage with people within New York City's communities, and develop resources online that engage people around the world.

Over the past several years, we have been inviting artists into the process of developing public programming, working closely with them to better understand audiences and their needs. Putting people in direct contact with artists and cultural workers often provides greater, intriguing ways of thinking about art and culture more critically, and in much more human and relevant ways. Art museums can be critically important places to model and stimulate personal learning and creative growth, and to find other like-minded individuals through socially engaged programming that foster collective imagination. This is especially relevant with an economy shifting from consumption to one that requires current and future generations to continue to innovate and learn new skills as careers evolve rapidly. It seems radical to say, but how artists think, respond to the world, and create may be more influential in the long run than the art that is displayed. What follows are three examples of ways we have engaged people in thinking like artists.

Creating Spaces: Art Lab, MoMA Studios, Pop Ups and The People's Studio

We asked ourselves, what if you could move beyond the standard gallery experience that allows only looking, and highly formal, coded behavior within the gallery setting? What if you could bring process into proximity of the art experience? What if you could shape experiences and spaces that were meant to be participatory and activated in meaningful ways?

Art Lab participants arrange shapes at a Frank Lloyd Wright inspired activity, June 2017, The Museum of Modern Art. Photo: Martin Seck © 2017 The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

In 2008, Art Lab, a space for families, was created for an exhibition entitled *Color Chart*. This experiment was a collaboration between our Family Programs team and a curator of the exhibition. It ran for only the duration of the exhibition. The Art Lab, an engaging, sunlit space, directly adjacent to the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden, was designed by the Family Programs team with a series of interactive activities and resources related to the topic of color. The space quickly distinguished itself as a destination, facilitated with highly trained educators knowledgeable in early childhood education. Art Lab added value for families with young children visiting the museum. The larger museum, with its limited behavior code, can be a draining experience for both parent and child with limited attention span and a need to explore through all the senses. Therefore, the activities were geared not as diversion, but rather as opportunities to engage with all of the senses, and the ideas and art on view. Art Lab also had the express intention of stimulating greater interest in families to return to see the works on view. The space became so celebrated by members and tourist visitors alike, that after a few, additional, shorter-length iterations, it became an 'institution' within the institution with year-long thematic installations exploring art and processes on view in the collection.

The Art Lab continues to be a laboratory to better understand how different activities and ideas can be explored with intergenerational audiences. Art Lab facilitators act as researchers, reporting daily on what is working and what is not working. In addition, the facilitators make observations about challenges and opportunities observed so that activities and operations can be iterated to better serve family audiences. What has been learned within that space, has also informed other initiatives including the Art Lab App, an iPad application. The application included activities informed by experimentation within the Lab, which invited people to engage digitally with art processes, and to post and share creations. This brought together a global community of learners and creators, and not just children. What has been learned within the past nine years in Art Lab, has also continued to inform the development of participatory spaces and experiences for adult visitors, as well.

The People's Studio: Design, Experiment, Build, a participatory drop-in and programmed space within the Museum's third floor galleries in summer 2017, was the culmination of nine years of experimentation with exhibition-related complementary spaces. It marked an important shift to a location that was a significant commitment and integrated it into the overall museum experience.

Starting in 2010, a series of short-term exhibition-themed spaces were developed in the mezzanine level of the Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Education and Research Building, a separate building connected to the Museum through an extended walkway. The Bauhaus Lab, Print Studio, Common Senses, Sound Studio, Flux Lab, Breathe With Me, and Beyond the Cut-Out were all iterations of this type of exhibition-themed space. They followed a similar design concept. Each was planned in collaboration with curators and provided a series of facilitated drop-in experiences related to the exhibition content. In most cases, these drop-in activities and resources were developed in collaboration with contemporary artists responding to the art and ideas of the exhibition. In some cases, the activity became like an environment. For example, for the Common Senses space, artist Fritz Haeg developed a huge braided rug installation, which people could add to and enjoy as a place to sit and engage. A series of scheduled, artist-led workshops and conversations were also offered. Each iteration of these studio-spaces involved continued, qualitative research, which helped us continue to learn about visitors' interests, needs, motivations, and experiences. For example, we learned early on that people would spend twice the amount of time in the

Common Senses Studio if they were briefly greeted by a facilitator and oriented to the various activities on offer. Time spent in the space ranged from around seventeen minutes to fifty-four minutes in the Matisse-themed Beyond the Cut-Out Studio. We also learned that these spaces created communities of learners, who became a cohort of friends who continued to participate in subsequent offers of both studios and artist-led workshops. Benefits that participants articulated included participation having inspired the desire to change his/her own home environment to make it feel more creative. One of the greatest challenges was that the spaces were not within the Museum and, hence, difficult for visitors to find. Even with continued efforts to help visitors be more aware and easily find these spaces, the maximum number of participants over a three-month period was about 5,000 participants.

By contrast, the People's Studio this past summer served over 91,000 participants in three months. Themed to primarily take cues from an exhibition about Frank Lloyd Wright, *Frank Lloyd Wright at 150: Unpacking the Archive*, on the same Museum floor, the Studio focused on aspects of Wright's modern art education approach. These themes also connected to a concurrent exhibition of the work of Robert Rauschenberg, *Robert Rauschenberg: Among Friends*, which began with his early education at and association with the innovative pedagogy of Black Mountain College, as well as MoMA's own influential history of modern art education. Overlooking the garden with a wonderful view of architecture of the city, were individual drawing tables and chairs with prompts inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's teaching methods, and a place

Broadacre 2017 Neighborhood Planning Model Workshop, August 17, 2017, The Museum of Modern Art. Photo: Manuel Martagon © 2017 The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

The People's Studio, June 2017, The Museum of Modern Art. Photo: Beatriz Meseguer/onwhitewall.com © 2017 The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

for people to display and share their drawings. Tables were devoted to different building materials and design challenges, bringing together visitors of all ages and backgrounds, creating a social space for learning together. Digital design resources, books, and videos were also available.

As with the prior spaces, artists and designers were invited to develop participatory activities in response to the exhibition. Artist, designer, urban planner, and educator Damen Rich took a cue from Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City, a model for a utopian city. He created an interactive model, where people were invited to envision what the ideal city

would have and would not have, and to collectively use a variety of materials and surfaces to continually build a model together, while a video camera recorded new iterations every few minutes. These videos and images taken by participants were posted on a People's Studio digital tagboard, prominently displayed in the Studio so all could see how people contributed with their creativity.

In addition, the Studio became an active location for scheduled workshops, conversations, and fostered multiple visits over the course of a day, with people dropping in to participate, returning to see exhibitions, and returning back

again to the Studio. During one workshop based on Josef Albers' paper folding curriculum, participants were broken into teams to solve the problem of creating the tallest structure with one piece of paper. When the teams presented, those watching cheered them on, even though they were complete strangers. Several participants exchanged contact information afterwards. Facilitators reported several New Yorkers visiting so often that both the visitor and facilitators greeted each other by name. A group of artists, musicians, poets, and storytellers met while at the Studio and continued to meet up there throughout the summer.

In addition, we experimented during evening hours, using the space for a series of drop-in programs for teens, and a weekly series of community program art classes for adults seeking their high school certification. It was reported that the location and ambiance of the space fostered a greater connection to the art on view, an intimacy, and elevated the experience for many participants given the view of the garden and design of the space.

We are currently processing the research data, which is drawn from observation, post-visit participant surveys, facilitators' daily notes, and the creative output of participants including drawings they displayed. As with all studios and the Art Lab, the facilitator's role is key to continuing to learn and iterate the design of the space, activities, and social interactions between the Museum and participants. The development of the People's Studio required the varied expertise of educators across the Department. A core team included colleagues from access programs to ensure the space was accessible to people of all abilities, family programs as the program drew adults and children, interpretation and research to help with texts and resources, a researcher, public programmers, and community and teen programs. Not only did this build a better design, it invested all areas of the Department in the success of the space.

The People's Studio is the final pilot before we begin planning for a new participatory space in a highly visible location as part of the overall new vision for MoMA's expansion in 2019. Located in a prime loft-like location on the second floor of the Museum, visible from the Lobby and easily accessible to visitors, *The People's Studio* will incorporate drop-in experiences, a series of daily innovative, lively programs and conversations, and partnership initiatives. The programming will provide opportunities for nimble responses to address current topics. The content will be focused on two key frameworks for considering the museum experience: how artists think--their inspiration and their processes; and making visible and valued the wealth of knowledge, experience, and creativity that people bring to the process of engaging with art.

The Studio will function as a means to test new ideas and to study ways in which people of all ages and abilities engage with artists, art, ideas, and each other with the Museum as a platform. It will continue to engage visitors deeply in an age of continual change and distraction, making connections to art on view. Within the space we will experiment with both analog and digital means to add value to the visitor experience at MoMA with unexpected, imaginative interventions that make it personal, shareable, and memorable.

Paco Cao Psychological Cocktail Services, February 27, 2017,
The Museum of Modern Art. Photo: Erica Gannet © 2017
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

In Gallery Interventions, Artists Workshops and Classes

How can a gallery experience, workshop or class be less pre-dictable and more memorable? How can a tour make you think differently and see new perspectives? These are ques-tions we continue to ask ourselves as we constantly try new ways of engaging audiences. A few examples follow.

Artist Paco Cao had a very different idea about how peo-ple might use the gallery experience to reflect upon their own tastes. For his class, Psychological Cocktail Services, Cao led participants into the galleries to view art and to fill out a detailed questionnaire about their tastes in regard to MoMA's on-view collection. After the tour, he used the sur-vey to create a custom cocktail for each participant based on their survey data 'taste', drawing their attention to anoth-er way we express our tastes in everyday life.

Art museums can often be intimidating places. Our visitors regularly self-report on surveys that they have high interest in art, but lower knowledge. Cao, in his outfit of a top hat and tails, made this experience not only memorable and unex-pected, but crafted it in an engaging and social way, critically and playfully thinking about taste and hierarchy. He did this in a way that supports the La Placa Cohen study's findings about more expansive definitions of culture today.[13]

In the major 2015 exhibition, *Yoko Ono: One Woman Show, 1960-1971*, a key work of art for the show, *White Chess Set* (1966), sat solemnly on a pedestal with a gallery label. The work was meant to be played, yet the original work could

Participants playing an exhibition copy of Yoko Ono's *White Chess Set* (1966/2015) in MoMA's Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden. Photo: Manuel Martagon © 2015 The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

not be touched in order to conserve it. However, in collaboration with Christophe Cherix, The Robert Lehman Foundation Chief Curator of Drawings and Prints and curator of the exhibition, a replica of the chess set was created, and we were able to offer the opportunity for people to play, most often strangers, in the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden on scheduled days. *White Chess Set* only includes white pieces, so that it becomes difficult to remember who moved which piece, and essentially who is the 'opposition'

you are battling against to win. The program was facilitated by educators who were able to introduce the work to visitors and encourage participation and conversation. In addition, chess savvy teenagers who are part of the Chess in the Schools program, a non-profit program in New York City, provided their expertise in chess strategy and rules as needed.[14]

MoMA has offered classes and workshops for adults at the museum on an ongoing basis, but one class in particular has had incredible impact. *Postwar Abstract Painting Techniques* continues to be a high demand course offering, on-site and at the Museum. The fee-based class is an in-depth, hands-on exploration of the thinking of New York School Postwar abstract artists as realized through materials and processes is taught by Corey D'Augustine, a practicing artist, art historian, and conservator. In 2010, we took a risk and experimented with bringing this artmaking class online. It quickly built a lively and devoted student body. The online version was a rich array of videos, articles, narrated slide-shows, and more. It also included "The Cedar Bar", a virtual, 'threaded' conversation feature, where people could introduce themselves and contribute to a discussion or debate, ask or respond to questions from the instructor, and post and critique each other's work. The online course brought together learners from all over the world. Students began to form their own communities on Facebook, sharing information about exhibitions, artists, books, and resources, as well as their own artwork. Other intriguing manifestations of this experiment included participants meeting up at exhibitions around the world, connecting with the instructor when he

Instructor Corey D'Augustine demonstrates the materials and techniques of Willem de Kooning in the online course *In the Studio: Postwar Abstract Painting* © 2017 The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

was travelling abroad and visiting MoMA, and meeting up with Education staff members, sometimes bearing gifts.

Over the course of five years, with online learning changing rapidly, we decided to partner with the massive open online course platform, Coursera. MoMA was one of two museums and the only art museum among the growing number of higher education partners who provide course content on Coursera. The platform provided the infrastructure we did not have, with a substantive data capacity, technical and pedagogical expertise, and marketing that allowed us to reach younger audiences. Our Coursera audiences now include over 300,000 active learners and over 470,000

enrolled learners in over 180 countries since our launch in 2013. The courses are offered free on Coursera, therefore there was a trade-off with a loss of revenue in exchange for greater reach. Prior to our use of Coursera, we developed seven fee-based courses and only reached 5,000 learners over five years.

We currently have seven free courses on the Coursera platform and recently re-worked content to create *In the Studio: Postwar Abstract Painting*, which includes a focus on the work and painting techniques of Willem de Kooning, Yayoi Kusama, Agnes Martin, Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, Ad Reinhardt, and Mark Rothko, as point of departure for students to develop their own artwork. This on-demand course allows learners to register and take the class at any time, unlike prior classes further removing barriers to participation. Peer to peer learning is a key part of the pedagogical strategy for Coursera courses.

Periodically, we activate the courses. For example, Corey hosted In The Studio: Live Q & A on YouTube, answering questions about artists and their processes, listening to requests for future sessions. His live Q&A session added a personal aspect to this MoMA online-learning experience. Thousands of learners continue to be engaged in lively discussions in all of our courses on the Coursera platform, posting their weekly artworks, fostering lively discussion, and sharing feedback and encouragement. In January 2018, MoMA will host an exhibition of images of artworks created through the course. To-date, we have received over five hundred submissions from across the world.

The course impact can move beyond an individual student. A school teacher from São Paulo reported that after taking the course she was inspired to present Jackson Pollock's artworks and methods to her students with cerebral palsy, and collaborated with them to make a work of art. In addition to geographic barriers, students have self-reported that the online courses have enabled participation because of disabilities that would have precluded them from attending in person at MoMA.

Dust Gathering: An Audio+Experience by Artist Nina Katchadourian, October 21 – April 21, 2016, The Museum of Modern Art. Photo: Manuel Martagon © 2016 The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Artists Experiment

In 2012, we invited four artists to participate in a new initiative, Artists Experiment. Unlike artist residencies that are about artists creating artwork within the museum context, this invitation was focused on experimentation with the public to engage with education at the Museum. It was designed to be an exchange of ideas and expertise between the artist and educators, drawing upon the knowledge and experience of both parties, challenging artists' assumptions about museum audiences, and pushing educators to think anew,

in experimental ways about the museum and its function, informed by the artist's point of view. The 'experiments' that resulted from the initiative benefit not only the audience but are learning opportunities for our team and the artist. Some of the earliest experiments included a 'studio' space focused on the theme of exchange by Caroline Woolard, and a series of guerilla-style gallery interventions with music, poetry, and, conversation developed by Kenneth Goldsmith.

Artist Nina Katchadourian became interested in dust at the Museum, and interviewed people across MoMA including a conservator, operations staff in charge of HVAC systems, curators, visitor services staff, specialists in cleaning the art on view, and even an allergist. The resulting podcast provides an interesting behind-the-scenes look at how the Museum addresses this intersection between caring for cultural objects and the public mission of the museum, given that dust is primarily flakes of skin from our visitors.

The collective, Office of Creative Research, became interested in MoMA's collection data and interrogating how that information is presented in accompanying the art in the museum's galleries, and through public programs. The project, A Sort of Joy (Thousands of Exhausted Things) challenged MoMA to follow other museums to make a selection of MoMA's collection data available to the public domain. They worked with the data like material, ultimately partnering with an experimental theater company to create four in-gallery events where the data was 'performed' in new ways that challenged people to think about information and its relationship with the art, and how interpretation is collective-ly interpreted--such as in tours--and individually interpreted--such as with headphones--within public gallery space.[15] Emily Spivack, our current artist in the Artists Experiment initiative, became very interested in what people have worn to MoMA. She spent time in the MoMA archives and found that there is little documentation of visitors. To complement the current exhibition *Items: Is Fashion Modern?*

We worked with her to develop a means by which visitors could self-report what they wore to MoMA during the run of the exhibition via text. These visitor reports of what they wore to MoMA are viewable, digitally projected against a wall of the current iteration of the People's Studio, which provides programming complementary to the *Items: Is Fashion Modern?* exhibition. There was healthy debate between the artist and Education team about who could report, as the idea of reporting on what others were wearing could make our visitors uncomfortable for a variety of reasons. What people have worn to MoMA from November 2017 through January 2018 will be printed out, bound, and given to MoMA's archives as a document of what people wore to MoMA during this slice of time. The project not only makes visitors visible in the MoMA landscape, but values them and their daily aesthetic choices at MoMA. In this case, we are valuing and making visible how visitors choose to present themselves through their clothing, which is, in effect, culture in action.

Access is Everyone's Work

Museum Education departments have traditionally been the museum's 'eyes and ears' with a finger on the pulse of

audiences, their needs and change. In addition, they are most frequently the relationship builders with the community and individuals over time through ongoing programming and partnerships. Although MoMA may appear to be a massive institution, MoMA Education staff are often personally engaged with people spending time in programs, helping guide their experiences with art and each other.

This access to and understanding of people's needs, interests, and barriers to participation, such as age, ability, economic status, etcetera, is of high value to museums now and in the future. For example, at MoMA, the Education Department offers programs for people of all disabilities--blind and partially sighted, deaf and hard of hearing, mobility limitations, cognitive and developmental disabilities, and more. Yet, to be accessible only within education programs is truly not being an accessible museum. For examples, if entryways, doors, counter heights, signage, font sizes, restrooms, audio guides, furniture, websites, exhibition spaces, plinths, and art and media works are not accessible to people with disabilities to make preparations for and to make a visit to the museum on their own, then, as the LaPlaca Cohen study notes, accessibility fails without empathy: "People with disabilities are 59% more likely than those without to say they do not attend cultural activities because they 'Had a negative experience last time.'"[16]

In 2011, MoMA's Chief Operating Officer in collaboration with MoMA's Education Department's Director of Community, Access, and School Programs worked to create a museum-wide task force, the Accessibility Task Force, to not

only educate staff internally about the needs of people with disabilities, but to empower change by removing barriers to participation throughout the building and, in essence, create disability advocates across the museum's departments. Training was an important initiative to help frontline security officers and visitor services staff feel empowered with knowledge about best practices and languages to welcome people with disabilities. Post-training surveys indicated that traditional classroom methods were not working as planned. In response, we developed a new training video, which incorporated seven people with disabilities at the museum, speaking about why art and the museum are important to them, modeling best practices, such as offering an arm rather than taking an arm. It also included statements of support from both the Director of the Museum and the Chief Operating Officer, noting why being the most welcoming museum for people of all abilities is important. These resources, developed by the Education Department's Access team, drew upon personal relationships with people with disabilities through access programs and vastly improved the frontline training, making it personal and insightful, and underscoring that access is at the heart of MoMA's mission. In addition, the resources are accessible to others online, and have been used in online training sessions for museum professionals at the request of the American Alliance of Museum, having impact on the museum field more broadly.[17]

The world is changing, and museums must change with it. The skills, research-based knowledge, creativity, and empathy of museum educators will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in ensuring that museums are relevant cultural forces,

places of exchange where, for example, the changing state of national identities, ethics, politics, social welfare and ideas can be explored among people with varied points of view.

Poet and artist Kenneth Goldsmith, after spending a year working with MoMA's Education Department made this prediction in his 2013 "Poet Laureate"--a self-proclaimed title--address at the Museum:

"And those once considered to be the gym teachers of the art world — the educators, the archivists, and the librarians — are the new cultural elite. Their curatorial materials are the masses and their information. And front door — in order to have any clue about how to run their institution in this rapidly-changing digital age — has no choice but to follow the back door's lead."[18]

Notes

1   LaPlaca Cohen, Culture Track '17, 2017, 7-9.

2   LaPlaca Cohen, Culture Track '17, 2017, 7-9.

3   LaPlaca Cohen, Culture Track '17, 2017, 12.

4   The University of the State of New York Education Department Provisional Charter of The Museum of Modern Art, 1929.

5   Grace Glueck, "Alfred Hamilton Barr Jr. is Dead; Developer of Modern Art Museum," *New York Times*, August 16, 1981.

6   Meyer, Richard. "What Was Contemporary Art?" Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA. February 21, 2007.

7   *Art in our Time*, The Museum of Modern Art exhibition catalogue, 1939, 15.

8   Douglas C. McGill, "Victor D'Amico, 82, A Pioneer in Art Education for Children," *New York Times*, April 3, 1987.

9   *Up in the Sky* episode of the NBC Through the Enchanted Gate television show, 1953.

10   *Up in the Sky* episode of the NBC Through the Enchanted Gate television show, 1953.

11   Jackie Armstrong, "Questions Visitors Have About Works of Art," 2012, The Museum of Modern Art.

12   Andrea de Pascual, "Invisible Pedagogies: Expanding the Concept of Education in Museums," Art Museum Teaching, April 3, 2014, https://artmuseumteaching.com/2014/04/03/invisiblepedagogies/

13   LaPlaca Cohen, *Culture Track* '17, 2017, 7-8.

14   "About Us," Chess in the Schools, 2017, https://chessintheschools.org/about-us/

15   Fiona Romeo, "Thousands of Exhausted Things, or why we dedicated MoMA's collection data to the public domain," *Medium*, July 27, 2015, https://medium.com/digital-moma/thousands-of-exhausted-things-or-why-we-dedicated-moma-s-collection-data-to-the-public-domain-7e0a7165e99

16   LaPlaca Cohen, Culture Track '17, 2017, 14.

17   The Museum of Modern Art, "Museum Resources," https://www.moma.org/visit/accessibility/resources

18   Kenneth Goldsmith, "Uncontested Spaces: 2013 'Laureate' Public Events," Inside/Out, March 20, 2013, https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2013/03/05/uncontested-spaces-2013-laureate-public-events/

Visible/invisible: an Afropolitan Take on Norwegian Cultural Institutions

Asta Busingye Lydersen — artist and producer

Introduction

As Norway awaits the opening of its new National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, we should ask ourselves some fundamental questions. What is it for? And for who? This article explores these issues using both a subjective and an academic approach, combining personal experience with interviews, reports and scholarly articles from a

wide range of disciplines. A central concept is Afropolitanism, which refers to a global academic, political and cultural discourse about Africans and images of Africa. (Knudsen & Rahbek, 2016)

> *"Afropolitanism is encouraging a fresh look and a shift in the discourse"*
> – Tayie Selasi, 2012

Using Afropolitanism as a point of departure, I encourage a fresh look, not just at Africa and Africans, but at how museums and cultural institutions operate. The article recounts incidents from 1997, 2007 and 2017 – events that had a profound effect on my understanding of the power relations between minorities and society's institutions. By sharing experiences from my life as an African-Norwegian artist and cultural activist, I ask the reader to look at Norwegian museums and arts institutions through my eyes. Adopting a minority perspective can be a powerful tool for uncovering institutional blind spots.

1997: Black Norwegians

It was a spring day in 1997, when I stood outside the Historical Museum in Oslo for the first time. I saw someone hurrying up the steps, pulling open the heavy wooden door of the museum housing Norway's largest antique and ethnographic collections. Ironic, I thought, as I entered this massive Viking-inspired Art Nouveau building, looking for Africa – my father's home, and the continent where I spent seven years of my childhood. Could a piece of my identity be found with-

in these stone walls? Could I learn something about myself, my history here?

Up the stairs, and into the museal dark, I saw tribal patterns, artefacts and pottery, confined behind glass, arranged in display cases and cabinets, ready for inspection. I found fetishes and carved wooden masks - engraved, dark, frightening. I found some small dolls; "Pygmies", according to the signs, and suddenly, there I was; eye to eye with a life-size Masaai man. Next to him, a similar Somali statue, and a big banana-leaf hut. I studied the traditional clothing of these silent African bodies, looked at their stiff, painted faces and stared into their flat, life-less eyes: What would they say, if they could speak? And how would my Norwegian-Somali friend feel, I thought, seeing himself and his people exhibited as ethnographic specimens?

I studied the masks and the artifacts, dislocated bits and pieces of a vast continent – a mixture of sacred, ritual and everyday objects stripped of meaning and detached from context. Were they borrowed or bought? Looted or lost? Who crafted them, how did they end up here, and whose Africa was this? Certainly not my Africa. My mind went to busy roads, hooting cars and buzzing mobile phones. I thought of Congolese skyscrapers, Nigerian rappers, and South African fashionistas. Black businessmen, artists and architects. Where was the Africa that I know? Invisible.

I was the only black person at the Historical Museum that day, and most likely would have been any other day as well. A young, alienated and uncomfortable Norwegian, trying

to identify with this institutional representation of my African roots. It occured to me that the exhibition might even have been designed and curated by people who had never set foot in Africa. It was as if the room was confirming what I had always felt growing up: I don't belong here. I am *'the other'* (Bauman 1991:14).

In 1997, the 'immigrant population' in Norway constituted only 5,3% of the total Norwegian population (Statistics Norway, 1998:3), of which the largest groups in that category were Europeans and Asians. The term 'immigrant population' referred to all inhabitants with two parents born outside Norway, regardless of where they themselves were actually born, or whether they had in fact migrated at all. Using that definition, 34 800 young Norwegians born and raised in Norway were classified and referred to as 'immigrants' (Statistics Norway, 1998:3). This statistical construct continued to dominate media and public debate for yet another decade, when Statistics Norway finally decided to differentiate between immigrants and their descendants. (Dzamarija, 2008). There was also no such term as Black Norwegian, or Norwegian Muslim either, in fact, the terms Norwegian and Muslim were seen as mutually exclusive. You were either Norwegian - or you belonged to that large, unspecified group called 'immigrant', a type of 'racial coding' that basically mean non-white. (Gullestad 2007:29) In that way, the terminology of the 1990's contributed to continued 'othering' of young multicultural Norwegians, as the idea of Norwegianness remained white, blond, blue-eyed and Christian.

Black children and youth who grew up in local communities around Norway thus constituted a visible and vulnerable minority, treated as oddities, rare and exotic specimens – the only black face in the classroom, the bearer of kinky hair that everyone wants to touch, the 'Negro' – an exotic figure in Norwegian language and history. (Gullestad 2007:43). In short, people of African descent were both visible, invisible and hypervisible – a confusing dynamic many ethnic minorities had to navigate then, and still do today. While white Norwegians often explained this type of behaviour as simply curiousness, ignorance or positive attention, I started seeing visibility/invisibility as a manifestation of socially constructed categories like us/them, ingroup/outgroup and subject/object, as *'visibility is controlled by dominant group members'* and *'..when individuals are hypervisible, their personal identities are invisible as they are seen only in terms of their marginalized group membership' (*Buchanan & Settles, 2018)

In the 1990's Africans in Norway were visible as societal problems – when public health authorities warned Norwegians not to have sex with Africans due to the risk of HIV, and when street police in Oslo performed stop-and-search on young black men based on skin colour. The African continent was visible in the media mainly in light of war, corruption and bad governance, but invisible in terms of positive developments in art, culture and innovation. For those of us who grew up singing "Do they know it's Christmas" (Band Aid, 1984) and "We are the world" (USA for Africa, 1985), it seemed like Africans were visible merely as passive victims of famine and poverty, whereas African agency was overlooked and under-reported.

It was this feeling of misrepresentation that led me to become an activist, through co-founding and running an organization called Afrikan Youth in Norway. The 'k' was no spelling mistake, but a conscious statement. Based on an Afrocentric ideal instead of a Eurocentric mindset, we used African phonetics, inspired by the American scholar Molefi Kete Asante's books and teachings. Afrikan Youth started as an empowerment project in the inner-city borough of Grünerløkka, run by young volunteers of African origin, providing a safe space for young black Norwegians to share experiences and express themselves – politically, emotionally and creatively, through music, arts and culture.

Afrikan Youth involved into an informal think tank and a youth activism network. Through our voluntary activities, we met hundreds of young African-Norwegians: children of immigrants from West Africa or the Caribbean, Eritrean and Somali refugees, adopted Africans raised in Norwegian families, and quite a few who were the result of mixed-race marriages, love affairs or one night stands. Together we formed a sort of diasporan family, tied together by shared experiences of racism and identity struggles, pride in our African roots, and a wish to nourish our talents, humour, creativity and resilience.

While immigrants from the Global South who arrived in Norway from the 1960's and onwards (Gullestad 2005:29) were busy working in low-paid manual jobs, I found their sons and daughters dreaming of greater things. But as young, black Norwegians, we had few role models – there were hardly any black celebrities, TV presenters, politicians, business leaders, artists or academics anywhere to be seen in Norwegian public life. When the information brochure "Young in Oslo" was published, it only contained pictures of white youths. An international generation of Norwegians was emerging, but society's institutions were acting as if we didn't exist. Why were they making us invisible? Why couldn't our faces represent Oslo? Afrikan Youth sent a letter to the City Council, pointing out that a lot of young people in Oslo had international backgrounds, and that official publications should reflect the diverse ethnic and cultural make-up of the city. They did not reply.

As I embarked on a career as performing artist, my hair and skin continued to get in the way. For the cultural institutions of the 90's it was "business as usual", as they continued casting, curating and storytelling, virtually unaffected by the multicultural Norway emerging right outside their doorstep. It made us upset, and it made us creative. Together with four other African-Norwegian writers, actresses and singers, I founded Queendom in 1999 – a performing arts group, a sisterhood, and a creative space. With our mix of live music, humour, slam poetry and political satire, our stage productions represented a type of subculture that did not fit into any traditional performance genre. Over the years, we would break the surface, and enter the Norwegian cultural establishment as performers, board members and public speakers.

2007: Discovering the Afropolitan

Around 2007, a decade after my visit to The Historical Museum, I came across the term *Afropolitan*. I had for years been freelancing within theatre and performing arts, both within – and outside – the established cultural institutions, battling stereotypical roles and ethnocentric attitudes along the way. Growing up as a black minority in a white country, I had felt the weight of otherness, a sense of being *"burdened with identities enforced and imposed by others"* (Bauman 2004:38)

Having been called everything from 'negro' to 'black', 'mulatto', 'colored' and 'immigrant', I was tired of reductive labels referring only to skin color or a statistical status. My own private quest for a sustainable African-Norwegian identity ran alongside Norway's own struggle to form a new national identity based on its changing demographics. By chance, I came across the term Afropolitan online. A re-invention of the world 'cosmopolitan', it is constructed from of the name Africa and the ancient Greek root word -polis, meaning city or citizenship (Wikipedia). Afropolitanism thus seemed to offer a refreshing outlook on identity.

Although no one can really be credited for inventing the term, it is popularly credited to author Taiye Selasi and her article "Bye, bye Babar", originally published in the ambitious British student magazine *LIP* in 2005. Presenting an alternative to old stereotypes, Selasi described a new, cosmopolitan generation of Africans, through a term that captured her own international background: Born in London to Nigerian-Ghanean parents, she was raised in Massachusetts and has since established an international career as a writer and public speaker in Europe, Africa and the US.

> *While our parents can claim one country as home, we must define our relationship to the places we live. (...) We are Afropolitans: not citizens, but Africans of the world.*
> – Selasi, 2005

Although Selasi's article went viral and the term Afropolitan was quickly embraced by young Africans in the Diaspora, it has since become harshly critiqued, not least by the African-Norwegian academic Marta Tveit, in her 2013 article entitled: "The Afropolitan must go". In the online magazine *Africa Is A Country*, Tveit claims that the term Afropolitan is superficial, elitist, upper-class and therefore just as reductive as the old stereotypes about Africa and Africans. Although strongly opposed to one another, Selasi and Tveit are actually coherent in one ideal: They are allergic to simplifications and generalisations about Africa and Africans.

Being born in Scotland, and raised in Kampala, Flekkefjord, Nairobi, and Grimstad, Afropolitan was a term that spoke to me on a personal level, because my identity and outlook on life is both global and very local. Coming from a middle-class African family and relating both to urban Africans and rural, small-town Norwegians, I felt this was a concept that came much closer to my personal identity than any other. To me, Afropolitanism also carried a promise of empowerment, a means to disentangle myself from old-fashioned definitions

and categories of race and color: I am not my skin, I am not my hair, or even; "I am not your Negro", as was the title of the 2017 documentary film about American author and civil rights activist James Baldwin.

Although I was unaware of it at the time, Afropolitanism was also introduced in academic circles in 2007, by one of Africa's greatest intellectuals, Cameroonian professor Achille Mbembe. He described how Africans on the continent and across the world *are developing, sometimes without their knowing it, a transnational culture that I call 'Afropolitan' culture"*. Interestingly, Mbembe links Afropolitanism not just to Western influence, but points out that the African continent has always been characterised by mobility, broadmindedness and the intermingling of cultures. In that respect, Afropolitanism exists in Africa, as well as outside.
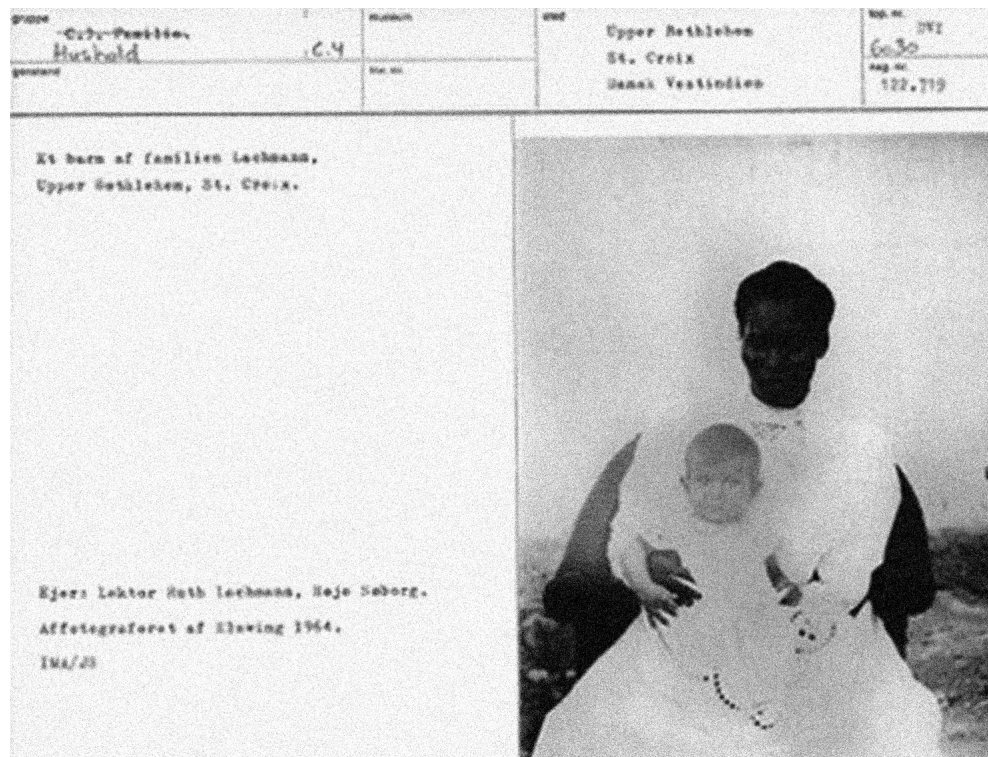
Although Selasi went on to call herself 'multi-local' (TED Talk, 2014) her original article "Bye, bye Babar" brought the world's attention to the existence of a new globalised generation of Africans – inside and outside the continent – founded in Africanness, but informed by a multitude of other cultures, educational systems and personal experiences. Instead of discussing the stereotypical images of Africa that we had all grown accustomed to seeing – war, poverty, famine – Selasi introduced us to what the Kenyan scholar Simon Gikandi sees as a celebration of cultural hybridity, *and "a new phenomenology of Africanness – a way of being African in the world."* (Gikandi, 2011)

Over the years, it became clear to me that identity politics, and debates about diversity, decolonisation and cultural hegemony are not peripheral, or relevant only to ethnic minorities. On the contrary, they are central to understanding the dynamics between cultural institutions and society as a whole.

2017: Making the invisible visible

Another decade passed, and in the Nordics, issues of nation building, and national identity seemed to be more pressing than ever. 2017 was the year when Denmark commemorated its colonial history, Danish participation in the transatlantic slave trade, and the sale of the Danish West Indies to the US in 1917. The Danish National Archives, the National Museum of Denmark, and museums all over the country organized exhibitions, conferences, book launches and public debates, in an attempt to tackle this troublesome past. (Cremer, *The Local*, 2017)

In a speech on the Virgin Islands in March 2017, Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen called slavery and the colonial era "a dark and disgraceful" part of Denmark's history. (Danmarks Radio, 2017) This is highly relevant for Norway, because the Danish slave trade is also part of our history. During the political union (1537–1814, *Store Norske Leksikon*) between the two monarchies, Norwegian sailors and captains, investors and administrators took part in the trafficking and exploitation of Africans. (Hove, 2017) Norwegians worked on slave fortresses along the West African coast, as

Child of the Lachman family. Archive photo, National Museum of Denmark, Artefact DVI603: https://mw17.mwconf.org/paper/augmented-and-mixed-reality-design-for-contested-and-challenging-histories-postcolonial-approaches-to-site-specific-storytelling/

captains or crew aboard the slave ships, and as overseers on the Caribbean plantations. There are also families, institutions and businesses who built their wealth on the toil and suffering of enslaved peoples, for instance through the 19th century sugar refineries in Bergen, Halden and Trondheim. (Hove, 2017) Another example is the high school Grimstad Gymnas, where I was once a student. The founder Peter Dahl from Grimstad earned his fortune in the 1770's, trad-

ing goods with the colonists and slave owners in the Danish West Indies. (Eliassen, *Historiebloggen*, 2013) Around Norway, many benefited from the human traficking, but most of those stories are still in the dark, hidden under the surface, invisible to the eye.

Dr. Temi Odumosu is an art historian and postdoctoral researcher at Malmö University in Sweden. In a talk in June 2016 entitled: *How Images Speak: National Museum Artefact DVI6030, and Its Affects* she speaks of a woman in the Danish West Indies, one of the many maids and nannies looking after the master's children - oftentimes portrayed in photographs, sometimes even in paintings and other artworks.

The old black and white photograph Dr. Odumosu speaks of shows two people, one adult and one child. The subject of the picture is named "a child of the Lachman family", but the black woman has no name, even though she is the one who takes up most of the photographical space. The woman caring for the child is made to be a mere object, a nameless, silent prop, a chair for the little, white subject to be comfortably seated on. Dr. Odumosu addresses the woman in the picture in the following way:

"So I speak of what usually lies unspoken... (..) for you are here, but not here. Invisible in the catalogue, no name or description to bring the substance of your humanity into focus, not even a recognition that you are indeed a subject."
– Odumosu, 2016

So, again these dichotomies; us/them, subject/object, visible/invisible. And of course black/white - both the photo, and the depicted. The PhD thesis *The 'othering' of Africa and its diasporas in Western museum practices* gives useful insight into this dynamic by critiquing scholars who treat race and racism *'as a purely academic exercise..', detached from personal, real life experience.* According to Dixon (2016:254) those *'who feel they can take (and justify) such a stance are the very people whose research perspectives have dominated the field of cultural geography to its detriment for far too long.'*

Dixon's argument is not just relevant to that specific academic field, but to all professionals working within cultural institutions. Including racialised experiences, whether they stem from the audience, professionals within the institution, or from the artefacts or works themselves, can give valuable insights into the power relations between institutions, marginalised groups and the public at large. This is precisely what the Living Archives project (Malmö University, 2017) tried to do with pictures from the Danish colonial era.

> *"The contemporary online collection of the archive to which this photograph belongs briefly describes the black woman as a nanny; however, it is clear that both contemporaneous and more recent sources were not interested in documenting all lives, only some, therefor, the task to foreground and give voice to those erased or made invisible falls upon us."*
> – Engberg 2017

Museums and archives are custodians of our history and cultural heritage, but they do not fulfil their purpose if they do not engage us as a people in dialogue and critical debate. As Denmark sheds light on its dark past, they try to give names to the nameless, and a voice to the silent. It is within this process, the process of making the invisible visible, that I find the inspiration for our new National Museum.

An Afropolitan take on audience development

In the opening of the 2016 book *In search of the Afropolitan*, authors Eva Rask Knudsen and Ulla Rahbek propose the following:

> *"Afropolitanism is the name not of the solution, but of the challenge."*

Afropolitanism is not an ideology, a political stand or a clearly defined cultural category - and that is precisely what makes it useful. To me, it is a state of mind, a way of thinking about oneself and the world. The opposite of simple categorizations and one-dimensional definitions, it points to nuances, pluralism and heterogeneity. Just like art. Because, this is precisely what art does; it asks us to complicate things - blur the picture, look at the spaces in between. Art is not just a reflection of its creator, the artist. It speaks of more than what is shaped, described or depicted. It is also points to who *we* are - the spectators, the audience, the public. Art reflects and reveals us as individuals and as a society, in all our complexity.

The reason the term Afropolitanism was so quickly popular-ised, was because it directed the spotlight to the millions of Africans living inside and outside the continent who belong to an ambitious, international generation full of drive and agency. In essence, one could say that the concept drew attention to previously invisible social groups, by focusing on African resources and creativity, and Africans as an integral part of a wider, global urban culture. This mindset can be of use to the new The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, as any arts institution who wants to stay rele-vant and engage a wider public need to start by turning the institutional gaze outwards, asking: Who is really out there? Let's talk!

This way of thinking is also the basis of a study initiated by the European Commission called: *"How to place audiences at the centre of the cultural organizations"* (Bollo et al, 2017) The study gives insights into the different challenges that European cultural organisations face,and presents meth-odology and best practice examples. It could be a valuable resource in the process of creating more innovative and in-clusive museums.

In an interview with Audiences Norway (Norsk Publikums-utvikling, 2016), archeologist and museologist Cristina Da Milano talks about audience development in museums. As President of European Centre for Cultural Organisation and Management, she has been responsible for the European study, and some of her perspectives can be relevant to the National Museum, whose *Strategic objectives 2016–2022* include the following keywords: *All* of Norway, *larger and*

broader audiences, the *whole* country, *broad enthusiasm*. Based on this, my question is:

> *Are you ready to place not just the works – but the audience – at the* centre *of your new museum?*

Da Milano suggests that there are three groups of audienc-es: *audience by habit*, *audience by choice* and *audience by surprise*. The two latter ones can be hard to get at, because some people are not in the habit of going to art museums, some don't have access (because of financial or logistical hindrances), others again, are simply not interested. If we add that Norway is one of the world's most digitalized socie-ties, top three in the use of Social Media (*Global Information Technology Report*, 2016) and that our capital is booming with concerts, festivals and sports events - it boils down to one, brutal question:

> *Why should we choose to spend a day with you and your paintings?*

Many artists wish to just create, without any responsibility to mediate or educate the public afterwards. This leaves audiences up to marketing departments, educators, guides and art mediators. Then you have the directors, curators and conservators, holding powerful positions between the artist, the work and the public. Of course, they are passion-ate about art, but are they necessarily passionate about the public? In line with Da Milano, my impression is that many see audience development, diversity and equal access as a type of Corporate Social Responsibility - something they

just "have to do" in order to get public funding or sell more tickets. The challenge is to see it less as plight, and more as a positive potential.

As an African-Norwegian, my personal identity has gone through many phases, and the concept of Afropolitanism has been useful because it acknowledges and celebrates complexity, as well as presenting *"an opportunity for reimagining new narratives for the future."* (Gikandi, 2011) Whether called Afropolitanism or something else, African culture and aesthetics continue to inspire design, architecture and fashion, as well as ongoing intellectual discourses around the world. Africa is becoming visible in new ways, to new people. IKEA's Head of Design, Marcus Engman points to the *'creative explosion'* taking place in African cities (Design Indaba, 2017) which inspired IKEA to recruit some of Africa's top designers to co-create a new limited edition furniture line. 'Överallt' was launched in February 2019 (Design Indaba, 2018) and is inspired by cultural, aesthetical and and political phenomena, from African hair braiding to the 2012 Egyption revolution (Chutel, 2018). In that way, it is one of many projects that can serve as inspiration for cultural institutions wishing to engage more actively with the world outside.

A Norwegian take on audience development

When I was young in Oslo and an Afrikan Youth activist, the so-called 'immigrant population' of Oslo was 16,4% (Statistics Norway, 1997:48). Two decades later the numbers have doubled. Today, 33,1% of Oslo's population are immigrants or Norwegian born descendants of immigrants, the largest groups originating from Pakistan, Poland, Somalia and Sweden. (Oslo kommune, 2018). It is quite obvious that this statistic should be one of the main parametres guiding audience development strategies in the years to come.

It is time for The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design to find out who is missing, and why.

If Afropolitanism challenges us to shift the perspective, we could start by taking a critical look at how we talk. For decades, young multicultural Norwegians have been labelled immigrants, even if they are born and bred in Norway. In Oslo today, we can also question the practice of thinking about them as minorities. When 1 out of 3 in the country's capital have some sort of migrant or international background, they are not something apart from the rest. They are an integral part of Oslo's population and urban identity, and a potential core audience. Although the National Museum website does advertise "The Manifold Museum", it is a fact that many of these groups never find their way to the National Museum. In that sense, one could say that it is not only multicultural people and perspectives that are invisible in - and to - the museum. The museum is itself invisible to a substantial part of the public.

The preface of the evaluation report *Free from strangers* (Berkaak, 2002) points out that until the 1990's, Norwegian cultural policy was mainly focused on Norwegian national identity and the Western cultural canon. In the 1990's there was a shift of focus, and new policies emerged, based on

the realization that Norway was becoming a multicultural society. Among them were several White Papers from the government, stating the importance of giving minorities access to public cultural institutions, and involving them in decisions-making positions and processes. (St.meld. nr. 4, 1996–97, St.meld. nr. 47, 1996–97 in Berkaak 2002)

White paper no. 10 (2011–2012) *Culture, inclusion and participation* described the need to "challenge and expand the cultural field so that it may come to include new groups, as well as new artistic expressions". This was followed up in NOU 2013: 4, which stresses the importance of a 'cultural citizenship' in public policy (*Kulturutredningen 2014*:87) as well as a highlighting 'cultural democracy' as an important value. Both concepts imply more of a 'bottom-up' rather than 'top down' approach, moving away from the paternalistic cultural policies of the past, to a more inclusive cultural policy. This understanding of arts and culture as a reflection of society at large has implications along two lines: making the existing cultural institutions more accessible to indigenous peoples, national minorities and diasporan communities, as well as creating platforms for them to express themselves.

White Paper no. 49 (NOU 2008–2009: *Framtidas museum –Forvaltning, forskning, formidling, fornying*) deals specifically with museums and their role and obligations, including better interaction with indigenous peoples, national minorities and new immigrants. For a number of years, the National Museum has also been a member of the *Diversity Network* (Nettverk for minoriteter og kulturelt mangfold / Mangfolds-nettverket) - a forum for exchange of ideas and collabora-

In 2012, only around 3% of the National Museum audience had a non-Western background. Photo: Børre Høstland/Nasjonalmuseet.

tion between Norwegian museums. In other words, there is no lack of academic, practical or political framework to support a more audience-centered curatorial approach.

In 2012, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design published its first documentation of audience participation since 2003. The Perduco report found that the museum has a highly educated audience, and most of them are women - groups that Christina Da Milano would call *audiences by habit*. On the other hand, the museum is failing

miserably when it comes to attracting ethnic minorities. The Perduco report shows that in 2012 only 3% of the museum's audiences had a non-Western background. (Perduco Kultur, Norsk Publikumsutvikling, 2012) Among those who don't use the museum, Perduco found that 42% said that they feel alienated in 'places like that'. Making them feel welcome - that is turning them into *audiences by choice or by surprise* - should be a top priority in for the new National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design.

Image building, accessibility and strengthening the relationship to the public was part of the National Museum's formal strategy for 2011–2016 (Perduco 2012), but these parameters are almost invisible in the Annual Reports from the Board 2013–2015, found on the National Museum website. Reading through those reports, I found a lot of information about the Munch anniversary in 2013 and other exhibitions, the new website, the newsletter, and social media presence, but no clearly stated ambition, or consistent tracking and measurement of progress regarding audience development and engagement.

The museum's Annual Report 2016 represents a change, in that it has included a chapter on audience development, stating the ambition to reach a wider and more diverse audience. According to the new museum strategy, the museum has an ambition to be 'for all', and that is not just a marketing issue or a technique. It is a political choice and a *value,* and that value needs to be embedded at the core of the institution, at all levels (Da Milano, 2016). In practice, that means embedding an audience-oriented perspective into strategy

and action plans, in work descriptions, project design, curation, research and evaluation – all the way from the board, to the individual director, project manager, curator, conservator and exhibition guide. And then that value has to be put into practice.

Education for a new museum is about more than ticket prices, marketing strategies and disabled access requirements. It doesn't have to be commercial, lower the quality, or compromise artistic and scientific integrity. It is about allowing people outside the institution ownership to what goes on inside the institution. In order to achieve that, museums must build trust, and engage with the public at a deeper level.

The Museum of Cultural History case: It's all about trust
More than 20 years ago, I was a young alienated African-Norwegian at an ethnographic exhibition in Oslo. Today, passing the National Gallery and its massive Art Nouveau neighbour, The Museum of Cultural History, they seem to me like gentle giants. They are beautiful, but also intimidating, heavy like dinosaurs, taking time to change their course as the environment around them changes. It occurs to me that engaging with these old institutions is in fact an issue of trust. Why should we trust institutions if they make us feel small, incompetent or alienated? Why approach someone who doesn't engage with our lives and our challenges? Why visit a house that makes us feel invisible? Who is it for, why is it there, what is it supposed to do?

In January 2016, the digital economy news outlet *Quartz* wrote about all the celebrated artworks that are stored away

in the big museums and never shown to the public. According to them, this situation forces a larger question:

What are museums for, anyway, and whom are they supposed to benefit?
– Groskopf, 2016

In order to answer this question, I have to make a phone call, a call I wish I had made many years ago. My memory keeps taking me back to the Africa exhibition in the 1990's and the dolls, the masks and the straw hut. Why did the Historical Museum make such an exhibition, what was the thinking behind it? Why was it presented as an objective representation, when it was obviously heavily curated and designed? Why was there no critical angle, no counter-perspective?

Lecturer and Diversity Curator Tone Cecilie Simensen Karlgård picks up the phone, and she is happy to answer all my questions: The permanent ethnographic exhibition *African Cultures* (Afrikanske kulturer) was on display from 1984 until 1997. The life-size "Pygmy" dolls were purchased in Hamburg in 1928, and the statues representing different African ethnic groups were commissioned by the museum and crafted by a Norwegian sculptor in the 1970's. Later, these human dolls created ethical controversy amongst the staff, leading to an internal evaluation process where old habits were confronted and traditional academic and curatorial attitudes challenged.

The museum's next African exhibition project was named *Made in Africa* (Museum of Cultural History, 2002) – a

Co-curating "Congo Gaze" in 2016, from the left Isabelle Maroy, Lola Buchengende and Susan Andrua Wilson. Photo: Ellen Holte/KHM (Museum of Cultural History).

reaction to the old-fashioned stereotypes of Africa as 'the dark continent'. This exhibition focused on bustling, urban markets and consumer dreams in West Africa. Although it showed a much more positive and up-to-date image of Africa, it was still curated by white Norwegians only. To amend their Eurocentric past, the museum has since embarked on a different curatorial journey, resulting in innovative projects aiming to present Africa in general, and Congo in particular, in new ways.

Simensen Karlgård was a driving force behind the long term relationship between the Museum of Cultural History, and organizations and individuals from the Congolese diaspora in Norway. The collaboration first came about in connection with the exhibition *Traces of Congo* (Kongospor, 2007) - a Nordic exhibition shedding light on the hidden colonial history of Nordic engagement in Congo. Since then, the museum has also hosted a DR Congo Independence Day event every year, as well as the experimental exhibition "Congo gaze – people, encounters and artifacts" (Kongoblikk – blikk på Kongo, 2016).

Together, these projects represent a remarkable shift in the museum's curatorial approach, as they were created not *for*, but in collaboration *with* individuals from the Congolese community in Oslo. Although the traditional objects and artifacts in "Congo Gaze" were mainly collected by Norwegians working in King Leopold's infamously brutal Congo Free State (1885–1908), the items on display also told a different story. For the Congolese involved in the project, these objects did not just represent European oppression, but rather remains of a proud African past, a rich cultural heritage made invisible through colonization, civil wars, urbanization and globalisation. Giving contemporary Congolese-Norwegians access to the archives and inviting them to co-curate, allowed for alternative narratives, interpretations and perspectives.

Society's institutions have always played major roles in defining who belongs, who matters and who doesn't. The museums and their archives are a reflection of, and intricately connected to, society's power structures: Who works there, and who is invited in? Who decides what is displayed, and how it is displayed, framed, mediated and communicated? By relating to the Congolese diaspora in Oslo as partners and participants – and not just as a passive audience once the exhibition is complete – the museum turned traditional curatorial practices upside down.

> *"Based on visits to the museum's archives, the Norwegian-Congolese individuals chose the objects to be displayed. It is their explicit wish that the exhibition should present a broader and more positive narrative about Congo than what the public has grown accustomed to through the media."*
> – Simensen Karlgård in *Klassekampen* 2016

In short, they acknowledged the existence of a public that they had previously ignored, they gave them voice and visibility. But these collaborations were not free of conflict, they also showcased the pitfalls and lack of trust between ethnic minority groups and society's institutions. *Congo Gaze* became a source of conflict and misunderstandings, as Simensen Karlgård describes in her keynote speech *Congo Gaze – People, Encounters and Artifacts. Reflections on cooperation and challenges.* (2016) According to Simensen Karlgård, the conflicts between the Congolese co-curators and the museum staff were based on a power imbalance between the two parties in relation to expectations, roles and perspectives.

Simensen Karlgård ends our telephone conversation by stressing the issue of building trust. It all comes down to trust, *radical trust*, she says, referring to the British academic and museum professional Bernadette Lynch. According to Lynch, this trust depends on shared authority (with the source community, the public or ordinary people), as well as giving up institutional control (Lynch 2009 in Simensen Karlgård 2016) That, in turn, demands a power shift, but also opens up for a whole new world of ideas and creativity.

Education for a new museum can involve multivocality in decision-making processes, as well as more ethnically and socially diverse curatorial and educational teams – including artists, scholars, activists, and practitioners. (Dixon 2016:257) To me, that is an Afropolitan mindset – casting away old, rigid, structures and opening up for an ebb and flow of conversation, debates and exchange of ideas with the outside world. Both The Museum of Cultural History and The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design are financed by 'we, the people', and have a national, political mandate to be 'for all'. They house huge, invaluable archives and collections, our common cultural heritage – objects and artworks that can speak *for* themselves, but not *to* themselves. They come to life through being seen, touched, challenged, and made visible. Just like us.

Summing up

To investigate the challenges facing museums and art institutions today; this article has applied the two concepts *Afropolitanism* and *visibility/invisibility,* as well as a subjective narrative on African identity in Norway, from the 1990's until today.

The Afropolitan take on audience developement is an invitation to inspire new curatorial practices and revitalise traditional mindsets. The Norwegian take on audience development adresses the need for systematic documentation, ambitious audience-centred strategies and forceful implementation.

While 1 out of 3 inhabitants in Norway's capital Oslo have some sort of migrant or international family background, diasporan communities and cultural institutions remain largely invisible to each other. Education for a new museum requires more than 'business as usual'. It must combine in-house art expertise with an ability to turn the institutional gaze outwards. In order to attract and stay relevant to a wider public, a shift of perspective must take place; from art to audience, and from traditional curating to new forms of collaboration.

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Why Mediate Art?

Maria Lind — Curator and writer

If we adhere to the meaning of Vermittlung--mediation in German--we have a term which signifies a transfer from one party to another. Chiefly the pragmatic and fairly neutral transmission of a message. It also stands for attempts at reconciling parties who disagree on something, such as nations and people in conflict. Mediation can include education, programming and other didactic ways of working. Museums and other art institutions employ different methods of mediation – we can even talk about different traditions of mediation which are specific to time and place. In some contexts there is a sense of "too much" mediation and in others "too little", or in the "wrong way". Mediation is in any case a contested area, and yet unavoidably at the very heart of curating. Now therefore seems to be the time to think more and harder about the mediation of contemporary art. About the widening gap between artistic experimentation and mainstream culture, about whom we as curators want

to communicate with and about the associated questions of how art actually functions and how it is allowed to exist in contemporary society. At the core of this apparent paradox, where the excess of didacticism meets a renewed desire for mediation, not least new forms of mediation, the two are intrinsically connected in complex ways. What then is the good of mediation?

The two different conditions to account for here, before the dance with the question of mediation can begin, occupy different positions in discussions about art and curating. The first is generally considered more annoying than useful by the professional community. The second is by contrast little-discussed, possibly even below the radar of most practitioners. I am referring to the educational and pedagogical approaches that are in place at most art institutions. On the one hand they can be overbearing, and they may even obscure the art. On the other hand there is the increasing bifurcation between experimental, cutting-edge art and curating, and the ambition of institutions to spread art beyond social and economic boundaries. An effect of the latter condition is a growing sense of isolation between spheres of interests and activities in the arts, not to mention an almost total lack of mediation beyond relatively closed circles in the more experimental arenas.

The one institution that has played a greater role than any other in setting the standard for mainstream museum education is the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The model that its founding director Alfred Barr instigated in the 1930s did not add pedagogy at the end of the exhibition-making process, as icing on the cake, but rather integrated it into every exhibition. In the brilliant book *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, the art historian Charlotte Klonk demonstrates that exhibitions at MoMA have always been consciously didactic, promoting Barr's formalist view of art. His main purpose was to refine the aesthetic sensibility of visitors and to mold a mode of spectatorship based on what she calls "the educated consumer," in contrast to the 19th-century ideal of the spectator as a "responsible citizen". Despite Barr's famous charts of stylistic developments and well-written, accessible catalogue texts, the educational approach in his exhibitions tended to be more visual and spatial than discursive. The paintings were hung low on the white walls, and numerous partitions created more [organized the?] wall space. The selection of works and the display strategies themselves were of utmost importance. "Points" were made in the exhibitions: for example, in the 1936 exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art,* the identification of historical and non-Western visual sources for 20th-century Western geometric abstraction.

The fact that MoMA from the outset quite literally situated itself as a mediator between industrial producers and distributors (a powerful interest group with a strong presence on the board of trustees) and a "buying" audience cannot be underestimated. MoMA openly borrowed display techniques from department stores and other commercial settings. And visitors were considered not just consumers, who in conjunction with certain exhibitions could even buy the displayed design objects in the museum shop, but tastemakers who were expected to become responsible mem-

bers of the emerging society of consumption. Thus market strategies and business interests merged and shaped new ideals of spectatorship. Given MoMA's influential status, its approach was taken up at innumerable other art institutions in all different parts of the world. The idea of "winning people over," of persuading them, was central to MoMA's didactics from the outset, just as it was in the contemporaneous advertising industry, which was itself coming of age and transforming for the new modern era. Within this largely commercial scheme, unconventional and "innovative" art was accepted as long as the innovations remained on a formal level and did not allude to, let alone provoke, any practical overlap between the sphere of art and the sphere of social and political action.

This should ring more than one bell for those familiar with contemporary art museums and other institutions and curating. Another familiar phenomenon is the concept of the education or pedagogical department. Despite the fact that its particular brand of curating was based primarily on integrated didacticism, in 1937 a separate education department was started at MoMA. Under the leadership of Victor E. D'Amico, it deviated from Barr's ideas about a more or less detached spectator and promoted visitor participation. Instead of emphasizing enjoyment or judgment of the art on the wall, it encouraged visitors to explore their own creativity. John Dewey's pragmatist philosophy and theories about art as an emancipatory activity with great potential to stimulate political participation in democratic societies played a certain role. Nevertheless, in the cases of both Barr's educated consumer and D'Amico's participant, a heightened

sense of individuality was promoted. This was markedly different from the collectivist approaches to spectatorship, influenced by Constructivism, that around the same time and even before were promoted by artists such as El Lissitzky and curators such as Alexander Dorner, both in Europe. Collective spectatorship was inspired by the Russian Revolution and by Einstein's theory of relativity. It encouraged a varied and active experience through dynamic exhibition design, where things looked different from different angles, while simultaneously emphasizing the totality of the installation. It also promoted ideas of shared, collective encounters with art.

Today, Barr's didactic model of "educated consumer spectatorship" can easily be identified in the operations of most major museums and other exhibiting institutions, from MoMA in New York to Tate Modern in London to Moderna Museet in Stockholm. The idea of "collectivist spectatorship" has been largely left behind, although it has hibernated and survived in the work of Group Material, the group around Shedhalle in Zurich in the late 1990s, and artists such as Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Philippe Parreno, and Liam Gillick. At the same time museum practice in the United States has, since the early 20th century, promoted itself as reaching out to a wider audience. European welfare states have done some of the same in the postwar period and in the name of equality they have supported both broader access to high culture and reformulations of what constitutes high culture. Educational concerns are important, maybe even essential in democratic societies. But this attitude often clashes with high-modernist ideas about art not

imposing itself on its viewers—that it is, or at least should be, strong enough to stand on its own feet and speak for itself, removed from "external" contexts. Which leads to decontextualized "What do you see and what do you feel" pedagogy.

Again the art in question does not typically challenge the status quo; it is about enjoyment and judging. We can call this method "the establishment of the canon," relying mostly on developments internal to art and certainly echoing Barr's ideas. This method aims at producing a genealogy of artists, and to a certain degree also a sequence of accepted themes, whose work can be included in a master narrative of the history of art. Importantly, however, this maneuver happens at the expense of more investigative approaches where a stated ambition is to contextualize artistic practice and to study and question current phenomena and inherited norms and procedures. In other words, to decode and recode artifacts and activities that pertain to contemporary life, guided more by what is interesting and relevant than by what is "pleasurable," "good," and "lasting." Nowadays this model can itself be contextualized within the widespread call for canons of culture, blueprints of "eternal quality" to be implemented in school and university curricula.

So what does this have to do with mediation? All of the above count as forms of mediation, employed more or less consciously: integrated didacticism, supplementary participatory education and pedagogy, and finally narrative information deployed both inside and outside the institution. This last was historically generated by educational and pedagogical departments but nowadays it comes more and more

from PR and marketing people. Whereas the added participatory education is based on an assumption that there is a deficiency among the visitors—a gap to be bridged, a hole to be filled, or even a conflict to be solved—the other two are concerned more with a perceived lack of contact between parties, a "misunderstanding," or a conflict to be straightened out. The idea that a sort of "dating service" is needed to put the right people and "things" in touch with each other. At the same time, mediation can be much more than this: It is essentially about creating contact surfaces between works of art, curated projects, and people, about various forms and intensities of communicating about and around art. As a term, mediation seems to be open enough to allow for a wider variety of modes of approaching exchanges among art, institutions, and the outside world. In short, mediation appears to provide room for less didacticism, less schooling and persuasion, and more active engagement that does not have to be self-expressive or compensatory.

Let us return for a moment to the current abundance of didacticism. It is an excess that pertains in equal measures to what is typically considered the very nucleus of the craft of curating (for example, Barr's model of selecting, installing, and in other ways contextualizing work) and what is tagged onto a curated project (gallery tours and workshops, wall texts, labels, audio guides, et cetera). Whereas the latter is frequently deemed over-didactic, the former is not commonly thought of as "didactic" at all but rather as common practice, the normal thing to do. It is almost not visible, like curating before Harald Szeemann—invisible hands selecting and arranging. In addition to the type of curating described

above (the didactic establishment of the canon, with narrative information added on), among the most common modes of interpellation in art education within exhibiting institutions today remains the participatory format promoted by D'Amico. Experience-based guided tours and workshops where visitors are asked to share what they see and what they think and feel about what they see, to discover "the creator" in themselves, are part and parcel of this.

The division of labor in larger art institutions involves the educational and pedagogical departments taking responsibility for educating the audience, in essence for "fixing" what ought to be the responsibility of other social institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities. The collections and temporary exhibitions departments take care of the more persuasive, integrated, and therefore probably more efficient didactics. An interesting feature of D'Amico-style formats within this scheme is that they are easy to avoid – we don't have to join in unless we really want to – as opposed to Barr's model, which is baked into the institution or exhibition. This is also the case with the many overly simplified and often promotional wall texts, brochures, and other presumably generous narrative techniques, which tend to render art at the same time more simple and more spectacular. The pure promotion has reached almost obscene levels, particularly in press releases. Marketing and PR departments have gradually taken over responsibilities that used to be shared between curators and educators. In many art institutions, marketing and PR take the lead on any added narrative, and they can for example decide *not* to provide written information about a specific project, even though it is up and run-

ning, because it detracts attention from the blockbusters. It is not unknown for marketing and PR people to interfere with the program itself, even.

But do we really need more mediation? Maybe what we should call for is different types of mediation, and in other contexts. As well as a heightened awareness of the specific forms of mediation that are already employed in institutions, not least the persuasive mediation embedded within the traditional craft of curating. We as professionals would certainly benefit from methods that help us reflect upon what we do and how we do it, as a form of consciousness-raising. Furthermore, most of the methods of mediation in use today have been modeled upon modern art, which functioned in radically different ways than contemporary practice. Formats derived from one paradigm are being applied to art from a different paradigm.

But most importantly, it is time to consider and take seriously the fact that the art and curated projects at the forefront of experimentation, which formulate new questions and create new stories, are growing increasingly remote from the mainstream. These sidestreams, many of which test various forms of "Constructivist spectatorship," trickle further and further away from the situations where most people encounter art and curated projects (large institutions in big cities), and here mediation, whatever type it may be, is marginal. This kind of strategic separatism is in many ways a survival strategy in order to guarantee other proportions of self-determination; the mainstream is not particularly welcoming to the sidestreams and the sidestreams prefer to

stick to themselves. And yet the inevitable result is self-marginalization, where only the already-converted are reached.

Another reason for asking what is the good of mediation: More and more over the last decade, I have observed in emerging curators and students of curating a relatively limited interest in communicating about art beyond professional circles. This pattern stands in stark contrast to the developments in mainstream institutions discussed above, which suffer from too much (and too much one-sided) didacticism. Together with a number of colleagues I am partly to blame for this development, having supported ideas around all kinds of experimentation, both artistically and curatorially, advocating the necessity to try out the unknown without having to constantly glance at the reception. We have been motivated by the need to create other ways of thinking and acting—a direct reaction to a perceived stasis among mainstream institutions, including their overly didactic modes of address. The experimentation has more or less only been possible in the sidestreams. And I will continue to pursue it, but while trying to keep more of an eye on how what we are doing might be communicated beyond the confirmed believers. On how mediation can create space for exchange with something "other."

This limited interest in communication beyond the select audience of one's peers manifests itself in two tendencies among younger curators and students. One foregrounds smart curatorial concepts and another privileges collaboration and new production. The first one, let's call it the "curatorial pirouettes," focuses on the ideas of the curator. Here

art tends to be included based on illustrative or representational grounds and the outcome is usually a thematic group exhibition. In this category we can also include some of the more self-reflexive curatorial models, which tend to focus on reworking structures and formats. The second one, which we can term the "over-collaboration," involves close collaboration between the curator/student and an artist with the purpose of creating new work. Although the rhetoric involves "avoiding traditional notions of authorship" and "escaping individuality," this intense interaction between the two players often ends up being close to a symbiosis. Others are kept outside, and the result is a "super-artistic" subject who has two bodies instead of one and is surprisingly self-expressive.

In both situations, a third term – a wedge to trigger a dialectical dynamism – is missing. Instead there is little exteriority, almost no outside and very few "others." Again, this is the opposite of the theoretical open-arms strategy of mainstream art institutions. The curator/student creates a separate universe for her/himself and her/his ideas or artist buddy. Of course any show involves detailed work that needs to take place behind closed doors, but I believe that the moment has come to insist on experimentation while simultaneously attempting to develop new forms of mediation – to consider earnestly the question of what art does in culture, what its function can be in society, and to be more generous with the material at hand. And to shift the terms of the existing forms of mediation in mainstream institutions in order to make room for other types of exchanges, and possibly also to let art use more of its potential.

Given that consumption is one of the most widely known and accepted forms of engagement with the surrounding reality, we should ask whether dismissing MoMA's model of the "educated consumer" is necessarily a good thing. Is it actually the fastest and most efficient means by which to reach new audiences, or rather, to develop a different "exteriority"? Most likely this model can be used in other ways, for different purposes. At the same time I wonder if we have not already seen the emergence of yet another model, that of "the entertained consumer," where visitors arrive at the museum with the expectation that they must be constantly amused and entertained. And yet the collectivist spectatorship advocated by the Constructivists continues to have an allure. The theoretician Irit Rogoff has argued for a related version of spectatorship, or rather "terms of engagement," in which the physical participation that is part of the 200-year-old art *habitus* carries the nucleus of a qualitatively better form of democracy than the separation offered by representative democracy. If we take Rogoff seriously, "reaching new audiences" is less relevant than changing the terms in which we think and talk about how we together produce a public or semi-public space thanks to, with, and around art, curated projects, institutions, and beyond.

Creative Evaluation and Gallery Education: Moving beyond an Accountability Model

Emily Pringle — Head of Research, Tate Museums, UK

Introduction

In 1986 the Getty Center for Education in the Arts commissioned a national study into art museum education. Museum educator Stephen Dobbs and academic Elliot Eisner interviewed a number of museum directors and educators in America to understand better the current state of the profession. Their findings regarding the mission of art museum

education, status, role and professional training of museum educators, programme resources, quality of research and evaluation and relationship to the community were largely damning (Dobbs & Eisner, 1987). Within their overall summation, Dobbs and Eisner reserved some of their most pointed criticism for the lack of adequate training in research and evaluation methods relevant to the profession for art museum educators. They recognised that this failure had negative implications, not only for the validation of individual programmes, but also for the overall development of the profession.

Despite many positive developments in the field of gallery education that have taken place since 1986, it remains true that there is a need for professional development for educators on research methods and a greater commitment to evaluation by arts organisations. Debates on how best to research and evaluate art museum teaching and learning continue, as is the case within the arts more widely. Discussions across the cultural sector reveal widespread and unresolved views on how best to account for the value of creative and cultural engagement and in particular which methods will generate the most robust findings (see Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016). Yet, at the same time, the need for effective evaluation is increasingly important as policy makers, funding bodies, project co-ordinators and participants recognise how it can contribute, not only to assessing the 'success' or effectiveness of arts projects, but also to enhancing the progress of a project, representing different participants' experiences, disseminating good practice and learning from previous activities.

Nonetheless, evaluation within the arts occupies a difficult territory. Whereas undertaking research in, with and through art practice is increasingly recognised and validated by practitioners[1], it remains the case that all too frequently evaluation is seen as the uncreative, form-filling exercise conducted hastily at the end of an activity to satisfy external requirements. This limited view of evaluation fails to acknowledge that a broad range of techniques and theoretical approaches can be employed, which blur the boundaries between creativity and critical reflection, and which serve to widen the scope of any evaluative exercise. From my experience as an artist and gallery educator who has spent the last twenty years researching and facilitating participatory and pedagogic practice in art museums and other learning scenarios and examining interconnections between art making, teaching and learning I have observed that evaluation can enrich creative practice and participatory projects, enabling fresh insights and deeper engagement.

Considering specific evaluation models and exploring how and why different methodologies operate is valuable, as there is much to be learnt from how others have undertaken evaluation. Consequently, this text begins with a brief overview of evaluation generally and moves on to consider various approaches, with reference to selected case studies. Having considered the challenges and advantages of these initiatives, a detailed examination of the evaluation of one participatory project - Tate Exchange at Tate Modern - in London is given. Whilst recognising that each evaluation approach and technique contributes to our understanding, the argument made here is for methodologies that involve

gallery educators and participants engaging in ongoing critical reflection and self-assessment. This latter approach can be seen to enhance the development of a project as well as providing essential evaluative data.

What is evaluation?

Evaluation is both straightforward and simultaneously more complex than would at first appear. Most obviously evaluation entails a judgement ('this book is better than the last one she wrote', is an evaluative observation, for example). However, for evaluation to be meaningful in the context of arts education it needs to consider the basis on which judgements have been made, the procedure by which the assessment has been reached, and the purpose and desired outcomes of the evaluative exercise. It is apparent that any evaluation of phenomena is circumscribed by the basis, or criteria, upon which the assessment is made. These criteria in the context of the arts might include, effectiveness, efficiency and aesthetics, but could also relate to equity and justice (Weiss, 1998).

Similarly, the evaluation procedure, or methodology might include studying the development of an activity or programme over time, but could equally entail looking only at the outcomes or impacts of an intervention. Finally, as will be illuminated below, the purpose of and ambitions for the evaluation can be several – to learn what is happening, to account for what has taken place, to inform practice and policy going forward, amongst others – and exert a profound influence on the nature of the evaluation.

Given this complexity, it is not surprising that a variety of definitions of evaluation exist. Matarasso, for example sees evaluation in ethical terms, since for him, 'evaluation is fundamentally about value, any engagement with it raises the question as to whose values are being adopted.' (*Ibid*, 1996: 5). Alternatively, Weiss (1998), locates evaluation within the context of social science research, seeing it as 'the *systematic assessment* of the *operation* and/or the *outcomes* of a program or policy, compared to a set of *explicit* or *implicit* *standards*, as a means of contributing to the *improvement* of the program or policy.' (her emphasis, *Ibid*, 1998: 4). Alluding to both conceptions, Wolf (1999) describes arts evaluation more in terms of what it can involve, rather than more narrowly defined in terms of what it is. She argues that evaluation is based on three key ideas: that evaluation involves making judgements, based on evidence about the value and quality of a project, that it is open and clear and involves all partners, including the people taking part and finally that it helps with decision-making during a project and for future projects (*Ibid*, 1999: 3). These three features; judging quality, participation by all and the importance of the decision-making process in terms of informing future activity resonate to some extent with Weiss' understanding of evaluation (as systematic assessment to improve practice) and surface in evaluation initiatives across gallery education. However, the extent to which each of Wolf's three features is present within individual evaluations varies significantly and is determined by wider issues including varying concepts of what constitutes valid evidence, the position of the evaluator and the extent to which those involved consider it is possible or desirable to make "objective" assessments of what has been called

"the multiple complexities of empirical events'' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000:12).

The differing purposes of Evaluation

As noted above, the aims of the activities being interrogated and the purposes of the evaluation will, in turn, impact on the methods chosen and the reception given to findings. Equally important are the epistemological and qualitative frames of reference within which any evaluation is located; in other words, the 'values' that Matarasso refers to shape how the evaluation is structured and what judgements of quality or success will be applied within it. For example, who determines the 'quality' and value of an activity (and for what end) is a central and essentially political question that all evaluations need to make explicit. Socially engaged art practice has been critiqued by art theorists on aesthetic terms and for prioritising the experience of participants over the intentions of the artist (Bishop, 2012). And, although this view has itself been robustly critiqued for failing to recognise the inherent value of art practices created by artists and non-artists working in dialogue together (Kester, 2006), the discussion provides an example of some of the tensions and contradictions in ascribing value to participatory practice, which inevitably impact on evaluation. For this reason, it is useful to give some thought to considering the relationship between the aims of an arts intervention and, associated with this, what the purposes of evaluation might be. In broad terms, all evaluations are conducted to gain knowledge and understanding about events and activities. Although each

evaluation is clearly specific and unique, it is possible to recognise general perspectives in relation to aims and objectives. Chelimsky has identified three broad categories that provide a useful basis for further analysis:

— Evaluation for accountability (e.g. the measurement of results or efficiency)
— Evaluation for knowledge (e.g. the acquisition of a more profound understanding in some specific area or field)
— Evaluation for development (e.g. the provision of evaluative help to strengthen organisations) (*Ibid*,1997)

Each of these perspectives overlap and it is rare, particularly within the arts, that one is adopted exclusively. An exploration of each of Chelimsky's approaches in turn will assist in clarifying this.

Evaluation for Accountability

Evaluations that are primarily concerned to establish the results, efficiency or 'success' of a project can be classified under this approach. 'Success' in this context is commonly judged in terms of how well a project has conformed to and attained its original aims and ambitions, with emphasis usually on the results or outcomes, rather than on an examination of the processes involved. Generally, these evaluations are conducted to determine whether an arts project has achieved a set of goals within the social realm and to provide information to decision-makers, funders or policy makers. The work is undertaken by an evaluator who is deemed to remain independent and tends to involve a greater reliance

on quantitative analysis. This approach is allied to a belief that reality is objective and measurable and that the researcher is detached and value-free. For these reasons (as is explored further below), it raises questions of how effective any evaluation of an arts project can be that concerns itself with accountability issues only. However, examples can be found which evidently draw upon this perspective.

Although dating from some time ago, the GLLAM (Group for Large Local Authority Museums) Report 'Museums and Social Inclusion' (2000) provides a useful illustration of an accountability approach to evaluation. The report aimed, amongst other things, to identify the impact of museums and galleries in relation to social inclusion issues and to consider the nature of evaluation used within museums to date. Interestingly, the definition of evaluation given in the report is:

> *An approach to data collection with a specific purpose – to determine the degree to which an exhibit or program matches some criteria for success. It is the systematic process of data collection and analysis, and the presentation of findings in the form of a report... Assessment is another term that may be used as synonymous with evaluation.*
> (Ibid, 2000: 61)

Both the terminology used and the focus on 'success' imply that an accountability approach was being advocated here – in the sense that, even though a range of data gathering methods (including interviews with museum staff, document analysis and site visits) were employed, the purpose

of the evaluation was to provide an external assessment of the extent to which museums and galleries have a positive social impact, judged in terms of specific outcomes, such as a reduction in vandalism.

In relation to the report's ambitions, the authors acknowledge that museum and gallery users' perspectives were only included 'in a limited way' (*Ibid*, 2000: 55). Furthermore, within an Appendix they admit that the museums participating faced problems analysing their data and summarising and presenting their findings, whilst finding it difficult to describe 'a non-conventional and complex process (such as a community project) using a conventional report' (*Ibid*, 2000: 58). A 'conventional report' is not defined, but the writers advocate for sensitive and relevant approaches (including progressive data collection) to be used in the future. All of which suggests that inclusive and ongoing evaluation methods may be more appropriate to allow for nuanced and holistic understandings of such complicated and organic projects.

As practitioners know, the unpredictability and complexity of the processes inherent in the arts tend to prohibit easy measurement. Projects that explore new areas, by definition involve experimentation and it has been argued that any evaluation of aims and objectives is inappropriate, as the intention of art activity is to defy predictability and move away from what was originally intended (Kushner, 1989). Similarly, it has been recognised amongst social scientists, critical theorists and feminist researchers that researchers and practitioners cannot exist in a detached, objective state. In-

stead, it is essential to recognise inter-subjectivity within any project (Reason,1988, Rogoff, 2004, Denzin & Lincoln, 2013).

In light of these difficulties with the accountability model, there exists a second understanding of evaluation, which argues that, rather than judging the success of programme outcomes or performance, it should instead constitute a 'rendering' of a project from inception to close. Within this model the focus is on the construction and 'telling' of the story of the project and the sharing of experiences (Kushner, 2000). The emphasis shifts, therefore, towards an understanding, not only of what was accomplished during a project, but also how it progressed and what it meant to the participants. The making and articulation of meaning, significant as the desired outcome of participatory arts projects, takes on an additional relevance here. Evaluations of this nature can be identified as having a 'developmental' perspective.

However, prior to examining developmental evaluation, consideration is given here to the importance of evaluation as a tool for drawing attention to good practice and ensuring that participatory arts projects exist beyond their actual realisation. The frequency of short-term project funding within the arts, combined with a tendency to put projects 'to one side' once they are complete, can result in the learning from projects invisible to all but the immediate participants. Evaluation, as Eisner and Dobbs noted in their 1989 review, can and should function to recognise, disseminate and promote best practice as well as record and assess individual projects. In this context 'best practice' does not necessarily equate to

'successful', trouble-free projects, but rather to evaluations that allow for an in-depth interrogation of an initiative and bring about a greater understanding of an issue. Such evaluations seek to advance solutions to specific problems within a sector and can be described as having a knowledge perspective.

Evaluation for Knowledge

In some instances, evaluations may be undertaken to learn about and explain what lies behind particular issues or activities. This form of evaluation is most likely to involve an in-depth cumulative enquiry into a particular sector and can involve both quantitative and qualitative research methods. These evaluations aspire to produce results that are generalisable and may include some form of advocacy on behalf of the projects. The role of the evaluator within this category is flexible, depending on the evaluation design and methods.

One example of this approach is given by the Learning Through Culture. The DFES Museums and Galleries Education Programme: A guide to good practice report. This report demonstrates how evaluation can be used to gain understanding about a particular programme, in this instance to 'raise awareness of the high potential that exists in museums and galleries for genuine and long-lasting learning and to show some of the ways in which this learning can be achieved' (Clarke *et al*, 2002: 4). The report draws on 65 case studies, but also includes guidance for museums and galleries on establishing and maintaining successful projects. This report is clearly advocating the benefits of visit-

ing galleries or museums, which poses problems for some commentators, who have argued that by championing the activities under investigation so overtly, the evaluators have inevitably compromised their independence, if not their objectivity, particularly in relation to the funders of the evaluation (Scriven, 1997). In other words, it can read as a promotional document rather than an evaluation. However, others have argued that it is vital that evaluators adopt an advocacy role and that evaluation has an essential task:

(a) To compensate for the marginal voice (usually young people), and (b) to correct biases in data generation which have historically tended to lean towards representing the voices of the powerful. (Kushner, 2000:43).

Whether or not a report such as Learning through Culture does give voice to the marginalised is debatable however and the danger of conflating evaluation and advocacy is significant. One of the recurrent criticisms levelled by policy makers at arts education and participatory practice in museums and across the sector more widely is the lack of 'robust' evidence to support the positive claims made by practitioners and to demonstrate the beneficial impacts on those taking part. In the UK, the recently launched 'Learning About Culture' programme (see www.thersa.org), for example, describes itself as 'the largest ever study of cultural learning' (Londesborough *et al*, 2017) that is expressly seeking to 'build a stronger evidence base' and 'improve the use of evidence in cultural learning' (*Ibid*, 2017: 1). The rationale for the programme is given, in part, because 'the evidence

for the contribution that arts and cultural interventions make to raising attainment is too weak to be convincing' (*Ibid*, 2017: 4). And, whilst there is not space here to debate the merits of justifying the arts in terms of their impact on attainment in terms of numeracy and literacy, it is worth noting that this project, which is directly funded by the UK Government, is seeking to provide the type of evidence that in their words can function 'not to justify the presence of the arts in school, but to inform how it happens. Not to 'prove' but to 'improve.' *(Ibid*, 2017: 2). As such this programme appears to be adopting a knowledge perspective, by seeking to generate understanding of the relationship between the arts and attainment and to provide a solution to how evidence is gathered in support of this across the sector.

The principal methodology being adopted within the Learning About Culture initiative is the randomised control trial (RCT), since the project directors consider this to be the most effective in determining 'what actually happened to students' (*Ibid*, 2017: 11). Similarly, for some gallery professionals the employment of quasi-scientific approaches including the use of RCTs provides a means of demonstrating improvements in, for example, critical thinking skills (see for example Adams *et al*, 2007, Greene et al, 2014). However, criticism has been levelled at the use of RCTs firstly on the basis that, rather than provide generalisable findings (which is one of the major claims made for them) the specificity of the conditions required to ensure scientific rigour and precisely determine cause and effect prohibit easy replication of the research conditions in other sites (Matarasso, 1997). A second criticism identifies that, instead of providing a rig-

orous approach, such quasi-scientific 'objective' methods are in reality an irrational, flawed and reductive approach to understanding the multi-dimensional world (Haraway, 1988). Furthermore, these approaches have raised concerns for practitioners who argue that this method fails to capture the richness and complexity of an arts-based pedagogic and does not represent the practice authentically.

The drawbacks of the two approaches detailed above suggest that in the context of gallery education an approach that aligns with the values of the practice, accommodates the diversity and situated nature of the work and provides thorough and detailed evidence of what takes place and the changes brought about in all who take part is what is required. Considering evaluation in terms of how it can support and improve the practice is a step towards that.

Evaluation for Development

The purpose of a developmental evaluation is primarily for all involved to gain greater understanding of the processes and the results of a project, to inform and develop the practice. Evaluations that contribute at the planning stage of a project, that chart progress, attempt to understand what has occurred from a multitude of perspectives and, in some cases, to empower those involved in the evaluation can be classified under this approach (Chelimsky,1997). Tending to rely more heavily on qualitative research methods, such evaluations adapt and change as the process moves forward. Here the relationship between the evaluator and the participants is required to be close, with the former provid-

ing support and guidance to the participants, rather than detached assessment. Examples of this approach to evaluation can be found within the arts. Indeed, Felicity Woolf appears to consider this the only approach to take, since she argues that the purposes of evaluation are to improve practice during and after the project, so that partners 'like artists, group leaders and participants feel the evaluation is for their benefit and not just for funders' (*Ibid*, 1999: 7). The contribution made by participants to a developmental evaluation is critical, although it varies between projects. At one extreme, the process can rely almost wholly on the participant's self-assessing, to develop themselves and the project they are involved with. In which case, the approach described as Empowerment Evaluation is relevant, since in this context participants conduct their own ongoing analysis and reflection, with the outside evaluator acting as an advisor or 'critical friend' (Fetterman, 2005). These empowerment evaluations, which share characteristics with action research[2], aim to engender a dynamic, inclusive and responsive process that produces understandings of a situation from the participant's own perspective. They are not intended primarily to assess a project's value, but be part of a process of shared goal setting and decision making that brings about positive change for all those involved.

An example of this form of participant-centred evaluation is given by the 'Young People, Digital Technology and Democratic Cultural Engagement: DIY Digital Learning Map Programme' conducted at The University of Central England in Birmingham and Jubilee Arts, West Bromwich. This project initiated work in informal contexts with young people using

digital technology and aimed to be as inclusive as possible. The project developed methods to enable participants to reflect on their learning, identify their own value for the work they had made (and accredit it accordingly) and set goals for the future. Specific techniques included the keeping of project journals by the participants and the project leader, regular discussion groups and peer review sessions. Participants self-evaluated and therefore retained some control over the process of assessment, rather than have notions of 'quality', which they may not agree with, ascribed to their work (Hall, 2002).

Underpinning this initiative was the perception that critical reflection and ongoing evaluation were essential to the overall creative process. As the project co-ordinator Roz Hall stated:

> *The creative process can be understood as an ongoing evaluative process, whereby artists make evaluative decisions with every mark made, rather than a process which might have evaluation imposed upon completion. The creative process is dependent upon ongoing evaluation as it informs the development of both the outcome and the process. Judgements of quality (are) utilised by young people during a creative process... and are reflective of their unique and distinct cultural experiences. (Ibid. 2002: 86)*

In this case evaluation is inseparable from the project itself and becomes a crucial aspect of participants' overall pro-

gression. Such an evaluation, that aspires to understand the development of a programme and empower those taking part, can enrich and deepen the experience for participants and for project organisers who commit to documenting, analysing and reflecting on progress together. It is also congruent with the values of those gallery education projects that aim to give voice to the disenfranchised or marginalised. What it requires, however, is a significant commitment of time and intellectual energy by everyone involved to a documentary and reflective process; something that overstretched gallery staff and unconfident participants may not feel able to undertake. And whilst a purely developmental approach may generate a wealth of data (too much if not carefully managed) the types of evidence produced may not satisfy the requirements of external funders.

Having examined three different models of evaluation, highlighting the varied aspirations and value systems that underpin them and outlining the advantages and challenges implicit within each, the closing section of this text focuses on the evaluation of the first year of Tate Exchange. This is to illuminate how an evaluative approach that drew to some extent on all three of the models examined above, provided a means by which to understand a complex, large-scale participatory project led by a learning department in a major art museum.

Tate Exchange

In September 2016 Tate Exchange was launched at Tate Modern[3]. Described by those working on it as an 'experiment in practice', this programme takes place on Level Five of the

new Blavatnik Building. It has as its stated aim 'to consider what the role of art might be in relation to broader societal systems and structures; specifically to better understand how art makes a difference to people's lives and through that to society more widely.' The programme is structured as a yearly interrogation of a relevant theme (for 2016/17 the theme was 'Exchange') and during this first pilot year it took shape in three phases. Phase One which ran from September to December 2016 was described as 'Framing the annual provocation' and involved Tate Learning teams working with artists, thinkers and facilitators to examine the idea of exchange. Phase Two took place from January to April 2017. Styled as 'Expanding the annual provocation', this phase involved external organisations, the Tate Exchange Associates[4], bringing their expertise to develop programmes on Level Five that explored the notion of 'exchange' further. The final Phase Three – 'Reflections on Tate Exchange' – that ran from May to June 2017 was intended to provide space and time for the institution to reflect with the public on how art can make a difference to society.

From the start the evaluation was intended to help Tate and others understand the programme as it unfolded and to inform its (and hopefully the sector's) future development in positive and productive ways. It needed therefore to combine both a Knowledge and Developmental approach to evaluation. However, the evaluation also needed to have an accountability function. It would be required to explain and rationalise what had taken place and the extent to which the programme had achieved its aims and objectives to a range of key stakeholders within and beyond the museum.

The evaluation also aspired to support the values and ambitions of Tate Exchange through empowering staff, participants and Associates to examine, review and account for their and the participants' experiences for themselves, to contribute actively to everyone's learning and to the programme's ongoing development. Whilst aligning with Tate Exchange's ethical position, this final aspiration to charge those directly involved in the programme with reflecting on and accounting for their experience had a pragmatic rationale also. The sheer scale and complexity of the Tate Exchange programme involving at that stage seven Tate Learning programming teams, 54 Associates, 216 artists and 60 separate strands of activity in Phases One and Two (Wilmot, 2017) required us to work with others involved to gather and analyse data.

At the core of the programme were Tate staff and Associates who were tasked with planning and carrying out the evaluation of their Tate Exchange projects with the support of the Tate Exchange Evaluator, Hannah Wilmot. The Evaluator's role was not that of detached objective enquirer, but rather that of a critical friend who contributes her research skills and knowledge of the project and who 'urges practitioners to reflect on the data and their own knowledge of the project in a process that will move toward better programming' (Weiss, 1998: 99). To accomplish this, Hannah developed an overarching evaluation framework and a brief 'Guidance on Evaluation'. She also circulated an 'Event Report' which 'was designed to capture evaluation and other feedback on the event' (Wilmot, 2017) and was completed by Learning staff and Associates, based on the data they had collected

and analysed during and after their events. Throughout the three phases of Tate Exchange Hannah worked closely with staff and Associates, prompting, providing guidance and facilitating formal and informal reflective sessions.

In addition, Hannah undertook six detailed case studies, three from Phase One and three from Phase Two, whilst an audience research company gathered monitoring data on audience demographics. Working within the parameters of the Evaluation Framework and guided by the Tate Exchange values formative evaluation commenced from September 2016, with the gathering and analysis of data continuing through until June 2017. Data was collected throughout the three phases:

> *By the evaluator, Learning teams, Associates, consultants and researchers. Qualitative and quantitative data was gathered from participants, artists, those involved in managing and delivering the programme and senior leaders at Tate Modern. Evidence was gathered through observation (including participant observation), interviews and conversations, surveys, written feedback and online comment, participative evaluation at events and facilitated reflection sessions.*
> (Wilmot, 2017. P.11).

As a result, by the time Hannah came to write up her evaluation report in July 2017 she had a significant amount of evidence from various sources. The data presented different voices and opinions, from the staff and Associates program-

ming the events, through to participants who had taken part in longer-term projects with Associates and visitors who had dropped into Level Five for an hour (which was the average time spent in the space) and taken part in an activity. Her continuous and close involvement in the process also ensured she was aware of the challenges encountered during the evaluative process.

There is not space here to outline in detail the findings from the evaluation[5], but without question the process revealed much about who attended, what the affordances of the space were, how the Associates, artists and participants experienced Tate Exchange and the challenges and opportunities for Tate. In this first year, we found out about the conditions that foster change for participants that range from active participation and making to people feeling their ideas, views and contributions are valued and which lead to some participants experiencing a greater sense of belonging and improved wellbeing (Wilmot, 2017). Findings such as these enabled us to start to gain a picture of how art can make a difference to people's lives. And importantly the ongoing nature of the evaluation allowed staff and Associates to identify, reflect on and address issues and problems as the programme developed over the three phases. Tate staff's learning from Phase One, for example, was instrumental in shaping the Associates' programme for Phase Two.

However, we also discovered that 'the process of evaluating a new, large-scale, multi-stranded and multi-partnered initiative is difficult, complicated, time-consuming, at times frustrating and potentially overwhelming.' (Pringle, 2017: 6). We

found that enabling those involved with the programming to step back and formally evaluate was difficult at times. This was mainly due to time constraints, but it was also about people being able to shift their intellectual focus from programme delivery to data collection, analysis and reflection. We observed a great deal of 'reflection-in-action' (Schon, 1983) with Associates, artists and staff facing new, interesting and at times troubling phenomena, reflecting on their actions and drawing on their tacit knowledge to make judgements and resolve issues. However, the shift from this largely implicit process to employing explicit evaluative methods proved challenging to some. It became apparent that guidance and support needed to be provided to those who were lacking in skills and confidence in relation to evaluation, as this is an area where programmers and others can still feel ill-equipped and therefore occasionally resistant. Perhaps most significantly we learnt that evaluation itself is an experimental process; we have learnt from this first year and are applying our learning to the evaluation of the second year of Tate Exchange.

What has Tate Exchange revealed?

Tate Exchange, as with all arts education and participatory projects demonstrates that evaluation that is seeking to interrogate and reveal ongoing development and learning is necessarily broader reaching and more involved than is commonly recognised. Yet the rewards are significant. Moving beyond evaluation that restricts itself to accounting for impact or advocating for 'success' enriches a project

through supporting and empowering all participants to critically reflect on their experiences and bring about ongoing change. At the same time embarking on an evaluation of this scale and ambition requires commitment and significant resources of time, money and effort. It necessitates changes in practice, risk-taking and trust, all of which should be aligned with the ambitions of any participatory and education project, but which nonetheless can be challenging for some to embrace and enact.

Furthermore, committing to an essentially developmental approach to evaluation has value in terms of organisational and participant learning, yet arguably is less valued in wider policy scenarios wherein a new managerialist approach to the arts remains dominant. With its contested focus on efficiency and accountability in the arts (see for example Glow and Minahan, 2007), managerialist approaches can be seen as contributing to the privileging of the 'scientific' modes of evaluation identified above. There is a growing trend towards the adoption of scientific methodologies driven not least by pressure from government for hard evidence of the value and benefits of the arts[6]. Increasingly the language of scientific rigour and of systematic and objective methodologies that obtain reliable and valid knowledge is permeating the arts and education. Underlying this is the assumption that value-free scientifically based research and evaluation will provide truthful and conclusive evidence. Apart from the critiques of this approach identified earlier, a further downside of this belief in a transcendent technological rationality is that any knowledge not generated through a scientific approach is deemed to be less useful or reliable. It would

appear that at present in the UK at least there is a drive by policy makers toward more a scientific evidence-based epistemology with an associated distrust or even dismissal of more human-centred interpretive and developmental evaluation.

Thinking forward

The three perspectives – evaluation for accountability, knowledge and development - outlined above represent diverse ways to think about evaluation and highlight the implications in terms of the role of the evaluator, the chosen research methods and the status of the evaluation findings and conclusions. Not one perspective is 'right' and, without exception the examples referenced here stress the greater need for any evaluation to be focused and thorough, whilst being appropriate to the arts activities in question.

Considering this, it is useful to take the following into account when devising an evaluation strategy:

1. The nature of the project to be evaluated: scale and complexity, time span.
2. The aims and objectives of the project to be evaluated.
3. Who the evaluation is for and what their requirements are: funders, participants, policy makers, project organisers, all the above.
4. What are the aims and objectives for the evaluation: to inform policy, to shape practice, to celebrate achievements, to empower the participants.

5. What the budget for evaluation is: when would the evaluation commence, who would undertake it, what resources can be made available for it?

Each of the different approaches can be used in conjunction with each other. The critical issue in ensuring that an evaluation is effective is to match the methodology and techniques to the nature and requirements of the activity, its supporters and its potential audience and to recognise that evaluation can contribute in positive ways to the project itself.

Notes

1 The construction of art practice as research is a well-established phenomenon (see, for example, Sullivan, G. (2005)). Indeed, Karen Raney considers that 'research' has to a large extent replaced 'expression' as a model for art practice' (Ibid, 2003: 5). In this configuration art's rationale shifts away from the singular portrayal of the artist's inner thoughts and emotions toward more cross-disciplinary and hybrid approaches involving artists investigating and articulating specific issues.

2 Action Research has been described as 'a form of disciplined enquiry, in which a personal attempt is made to understand, improve and reform practice' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000: 226). Involving individuals in a systematic programme of problem-setting, ongoing reflection and application within practice, Action Research is intended to enhance awareness and understanding whilst addressing the original problem. For an example of Action Research as applied to gallery education practice see Taylor, B (2006) 'en-quire: Learning through Action Research' in *engage 18*.

3 Tate Exchange was also launched at Tate Liverpool at the same time, with a separate but connected evaluation process taking place there simultaneously.

4 In Year One of Tate Exchange there were 54 Associates. They include charities, universities, health organisations, galleries and other arts organisations.

5 The full evaluation report is available online at http://www.tate.org.uk/research/research-centres/tate-research-centre-learning/tate-exchange-evaluation.

6 In their wide-ranging study of cultural value Geoff Crossick and Patrycja Kaszynska found at least three examples of hierarchies of research methodologies and evidence judged according to their reliability and effectiveness, one of which was commissioned by the UK Department for Culture Media and Sport. In all cases RCTs were placed at the top and qualitative research at the bottom.

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