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**INTERACTION OF ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND
CURATORIAL ATTITUDES THROUGH EXHIBITION
MAKING**

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**INTERACTION OF ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND
CURATORIAL ATTITUDES THROUGH EXHIBITION
MAKING**

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APPROVAL

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Gülistan Kenanoğlu

05/01/2023



to my family...

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INTERACTION OF ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND CURATORIAL ATTITUDES
THROUGH EXHIBITION MAKING

ABSTRACT

Curatorial forms are in continuous change and transformation within developing artistic practices closely related to its era's political, economic, and social structure. Curatorial forms and artistic practices have constant communication, and it is not possible to draw a border between them. The forms of artistic productions and curatorial works have had a positive impact on some exhibitions. Some exhibitions have contented with the existing trends and turned them into an exhibition form. Apart from using existing trends, the critical point is how curators deal with art practices and how they express them in an exhibition form. The basic questions about art, such as what art is, what it is for, and what it does come to light by suggesting a non-western approach to the art world, which was western centered for a long time, by documenta fifteen. The discussion of reality and its representation has always kept its place in art history and has also started to take its place in curatorial practices. The curatorial approach emerges as an attitude that includes concepts such as practice and collectivity rather than being considered as a profession. This study aims to examine the changing models of curatorial forms in the case of habitus and artistic practices as concepts by analyzing major exhibition models and their curatorial forms. The ways curators transform artistic practices as the aesthetic understanding of the age will be discussed through the way they understand the practices of the artists. This research examines the impact of the interaction of artistic practice and changing curatorial forms through exhibition-making by approaching curation as an attitude. As a result, the discussion will lead to the legacy left to the future in curatorial discourses and how to move practices, social systems, collective knowledge production, friendship networks, and sharing economy forward after documenta fifteen.

Keywords: Artistic Practice, Collectivity, Locality, Habitus, Reality, Representation, Curatorial Forms, Exhibition Making, Postcolonial Studies

SERGİ YAPIMI YOLUYLA SANATSAL PRATİKLER VE KÜRATÖRYEL TUTUMLARIN ETKİLEŞİMİ

ÖZET

Küratöryel formlar, çağının politik, ekonomik ve toplumsal yapısıyla yakından ilişkili olarak gelişen ve sanatsal pratiklerin paralelinde sürekli bir değişim ve dönüşüm içerisindedir. Küratöryel formlar ve sanatsal pratikler arasında sürekli bir iletişim vardır ve aralarında bir sınır çizmek mümkün değildir. Sanatsal üretim biçimleri ve küratöryel çalışmalar bazı sergilerin gelişimini olumlu etkiledi. Bazı sergiler ise var olan trendlerle yetinip onları bir sergi formuna dönüştürmüştür. Mevcut trendleri kullanmanın dışında önemli olan nokta, küratörlerin sanat pratiklerini nasıl ele aldıkları ve bunları bir sergi formunda nasıl ifade ettikleridir. Sanatın ne olduğu ne için olduğu ve ne işe yaradığı gibi sanata dair temel sorular, *documenta fifteen* ile uzun süre Batı merkezli olan sanat dünyasına Batılı olmayan bir yaklaşım önererek gün ışığına çıkıyor. Gerçeklik ve temsil tartışması sanat tarihindeki yerini her zaman korumuş, küratöryel pratiklerde de yerini almaya başlamıştır. Bu noktada küratöryel yaklaşım bir meslek olarak görülmekten çok pratik ve kollektivite gibi kavramları içeren bir tavır olarak karşımıza çıkıyor. Bu çalışmanın amacı, belli başlı sergileme modellerini ve bunların küratöryel biçimlerini analiz ederek küratöryel formların değişen modellerini habitus ve sanatsal pratikler bağlamında incelemektir. Küratörlerin, çağın estetik anlayışı olarak sanatsal pratikleri nasıl dönüştürdükleri, sanatçı pratiklerini anlama biçimleri üzerinden tartışılacaktır. Bu araştırma, küratörlüğe bir tutum olarak yaklaşarak, sanatsal pratik ve değişen küratöryel formların sergi yapımı yoluyla etkileşiminin etkisini incelemektedir. Sonuç olarak küratöryel söylemlerde geleceğe bırakılan mirasın ve pratiklerin, toplumsal sistemlerin, kolektif bilgi üretiminin, dostluk ağlarının ve paylaşım ekonomisinin *documenta fifteen*'den sonra nasıl ileriye taşınacağı tartışmasını açacaktır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Sanatsal Pratik, Kollektivite, Yerellik, Habitus, Gerçeklik, Temsil, Küratöryel Formlar, Sergi Yapımı, Post-kolonyal Çalışmalar

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
ABSTRACT	vi
ÖZET	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
1. INTRODUCTION: Interaction of Artistic Practice and Curatorial Studies	1
2. Historical Perspective on Curatorial Discourse from the 1960s onward	6
2.1 The Demystification of the Curatorial Role	7
2.2 Expanding Curatorial Forms and Exhibition Making	7
3. Practice and Collectivity as a Medium of Exhibition Making	211
3.1 Pedagogic Projects: Learning from Artistic Practices	22
3.2 Do Major Exhibitions Reveal a New Form of Aesthetics?	30
3.3 Documenta Fifteen: Locality. Not Artistic Concepts but Practices	7
3.3.1 Representation Politics: Postcolonial Studies and Aesthetic Exploitation	51
4. CONCLUSION: Legacy to the Future. How to Discuss Reality of the 21st century in Curatorial Discourses	59
4.1 Possible Artistic Production and Curatorial Turn	62
4.2 Legacy to the Future: The Reality of the 21st Century in Curatorial Discourse	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY	71
Cirriculum Vitae	77

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Paul Gauguin, Ia Orana Maria (Ave Maria), Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, 1891.....	3
Figure 1.2 Pablo Picasso, Les Demoiselles d’Avignon, Museum of Modern Art, NY, 1907	4
Figure 2.1 El Lissitzky, Abstract Cabinet, Hannover Provincial Museum, 1928.....	13
Figure 2.2 Frederick Kiesler, International Exhibition of New Theater Technique, Konzerthaus, Vienna, 1924.....	14
Figure 2.3 Herbert Bayer, Field of Vision diagram for Room of our time, 1930.....	15
Figure 2.4 Harald Szeemann, Live in your Head: When Attitudes Become Form, Kunsthalle, Bern, 1969	17
Figure 2.5 Joseph Beuys, Boxkampf for Documenta 5, Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany, 1972. Photo by Erich Puls.....	18
Figure 3.1 Joseph Beuys, One Hundred Days of the Free International University, in Documenta Six, Kassel, Germany, 1977	24
Figure 3.2 Ahmet Ögüt, Installation View of The Silent University, 17th Istanbul Biennial, Müze Gazhane, 2022.....	26
Figure 3.3 Thomas Hirschhorn, Too-Too, Much-Much, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium, 2010.....	27
Figure 3.4 Thomas Hirschhorn, Bataille Monument, Kassel, documenta 11, 2002.....	29
Figure 3.5 İnci Eviner, Co-action Device: A Study, Greek School, 13th Istanbul Biennial, 2013	30
Figure 3.6 Traditional paintings by the Yuendume (aboriginal community in Australia). In the background, Red Earth Circle by Richard Long, in the Grand Halle, Parc de la Villette, Paris, 1989. Magiciens de la Terre.....	31
Figure 3.7 Sarkis Zabunyan, Çaylak Sokak, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1989 ...	33
Figure 3.8 Alfred Barr, Diagram for Cubism and Abstract Art Exhibition, MOMA, 1936	34
Figure 3.9 Stuart McArthur, Universal Corrective Map of the World, 1979	36
Figure 3.10 Christian Boltanski, Instruction in do it catalogue, 1993	38

Figure 3.11 Bertrand Lavier, Instruction in do it catalogue, 1993.....	38
Figure 3.12 Rirkrit Tiravanija, Instruction, Meyerhoff Gallery, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, 2000	39
Figure 3.13 Cecilia Vicuña, Paintings and installation for 59th Venice Art Biennial, 2022	41
Figure 3.14 Members of Persagi, 1940. Photo: Indonesian Visual Art Archive	45
Figure 3.15 Jatiwangi Art Factory (JAF), Ceramic Music Festival, Jatiwangi Square, 2021. Photo Credit: JaF Documentation.....	45
Figure 3.16 Documenta fifteen catalogue, 2022.....	46
Figure 3.17 Documenta fifteen catalogue, 2022.....	49
Figure 3.18 Gudskul banner for Documenta Fifteen, Fridericianum, Kassel, 2022. Photo: Nicolas Wefers	50
Figure 3.19 Frans Francken the Younger, Kunst- und Raritätenkammer (Chamber of Art and Curiosities), 1636.....	53
Figure 3.20 Pablo Picasso, Picasso's works for Cubism and Abstract Art Exhibition, MOMA, NY, 1936.....	54
Figure 3.21 Paul Gauguin, Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going, 1898	55
Figure 3.22 Mbuya (sickness) mask, Pende, Zaire	57
Figure 3.23 Pablo Picasso, the study for Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, 1907	57
Figure 3.24 View of the Question of Funding Hosting Eltiqa Documenta 15, 2022. Photo: Nils Klinger	58
Figure 4.1 Rembrandt, The Slaughtered Ox, Louvre, Paris, 1655	64
Figure 4.2 Francis Bacon, Three Studies for a Crucifixion, Guggenheim Museum, NY, 1963	64
Figure 4.3 Hermann Nitsch, the 80th Action, 2020.....	65

1. INTRODUCTION: Interaction of Artistic Practice and Curatorial Studies

To exhibit is to find allies for the struggle.

Edouard Manet, 1867

Curating is an expanding field of constant changes as art evolves and demands its meaning. It is an attitude far from being just a profession. Curatorial fields evolve in parallel with the artist's productions and the era's political, economic, and social structures. The boundaries between the practices of curators and artists have been blurred with the staggering changes in art history. At the same time, artistic practices influence the way curators work. In art history, reflecting artistic persona on artistic production was usual. Moreover, artistic productions were defined by the artist's authorship. However, with the discussions of authority as a big question mark in art history, the artist's persona and personal productions have also been questioned. Artistic productions begin to go beyond a finished product which is produced according to a certain aesthetic. Artists' collective and practice-based productions cause changes in their roles and what they represent and force them to transcend their persona, which was customary to reflect in their works.

In the late 1960s, Jack Burnham argued that a shift in art sphere had happened from object-oriented systems to system-oriented. Lucy Lippard coined the term de-materialization, denoting a system far from the art object's physicality. In this case, art itself is considered as a set of practices focusing not only on the finished products but the process and its systems. As seen in their practices, curators and artists believed in the existence of practice in their work, the power of collective knowledge production, and friendship networks. In that sense, artists' practices and productions directly affected curatorial forms. Pedagogic artistic projects can be considered as examples. Joseph Beuys is a leading figure in artists' engagement with pedagogic projects. Thomas Hirshhorn's monuments, Ahmet Ögüt's The Silent University, and Inci Eviner's Co-action Device projects are the following projects with pedagogic approaches. At this point, artworks that

don't have audiences emerge; indeed, everyone becomes a part of the project. As the artists turned to pedagogic projects, curators learned from their work and formed a different kind of curatorial approach, like para-curatorial methods. These changes in the production systems give rise to changes in curatorial forms and exhibition models.

The importance of practice and collectivity as concepts being discussed with going out of western-centered art and focusing on local productions on the periphery. Mentioning the western and non-western art world, the concepts of culture, practice, and collectivity come to light. On the one hand, the term practice, as Pierre Bourdieu discussed, is a complete system of social networks and acquisitions. In other words, it defines the relationships that constitute the notion of *habitus*. On the other hand, Edward Hall, who works on cultural studies, emphasizes the importance of the concept of collectivity while describing eastern cultures. Hall defines eastern cultures as high-context cultures with a structure that emphasizes spirituality, rituals, ephemerality, and healing. At this point, when focusing on eastern art, the concepts of collectivity and practice appear with different expansions, and these social systems are being revealed. According to Hall, communications and social relations constitute an action or its meanings. All actions and acquisitions point to practices, that is, the works produced. In this case, beyond the personal existence of the artist, collective accumulations and formations are directed toward local productions. In fact, it is essential in the art sphere to turn to local productions to create a system of collective knowledge production, creating their own economy and friendship network. With the tendency towards local productions, discussions about what and how the productions represent come to light. Direct inclusion of affected groups in the production phase rather than being presented by artists opens another perspective on the discussion of representation and reality. Not only initiatives or local collectives but also the productions of some artists can be evaluated with the discussion of representation and reality.

Discussions on representation and reality have been discussed for a long time. In fact, Pablo Picasso's painting *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)* (1907), which everyone admired, and his numerous paintings, that have the influence of African masks and the primitivist works of Paul Gauguin, as an example *Ia Orana Maria* (1891), create a kind of representation of indigenous cultures by using the colors and patterns taken from these cultures. In art history, it was usual for indigenous communities to be represented by an

artistic persona. This situation actually refers to a kind of aesthetic exploitation. Years later, Ruangrupa, the curator group of documenta fifteen, invited represented groups directly to the stage instead of those artists who created representations of indigenous groups. This situation causes the issue of representation to be reconsidered with the radical questions Ruangrupa asks about art and the art world. What is art? What is the role of the artist and the audience? Where do artists stand as social agents? This is a harbinger of significant change in the case of curatorial forms. Changing curatorial forms will be evaluated within the concepts of eurocentrism, postcolonialism, local production, social systems, audiences' participation, authorship, collectivity, artistic production, and involvement in the 21st century through analyzing numerous groundbreaking exhibition forms in history which are *Magiciens de la Terre*, *do it*, *Manifesta*, *Venice Art Biennial*, and *documenta*. *Magiciens de la Terre* exhibition, curated by Jean-Hubert Martin, invited western and non-western artists to stand against the western-centered exhibition culture of the time. In this case, this exhibition model is important to analyze the way curator Martin discusses the Eurocentric approach and postcolonial situation.

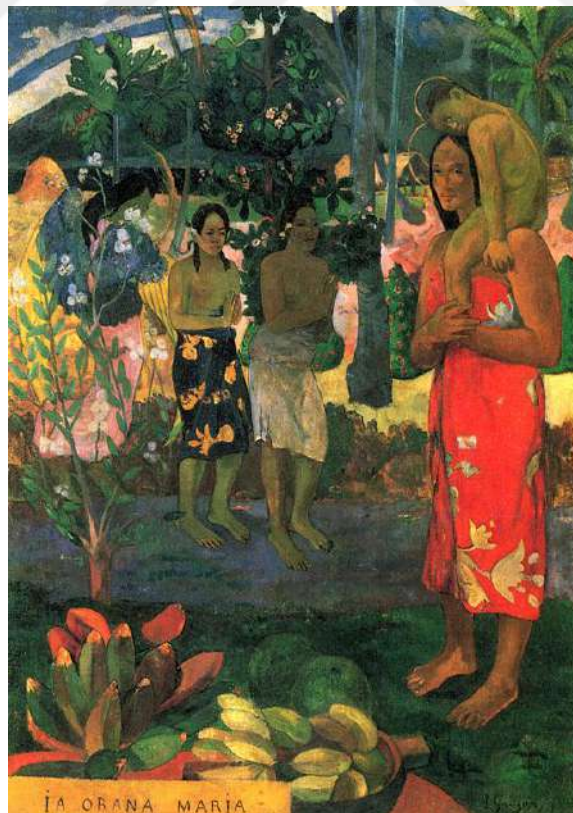


Figure 1.1 Paul Gauguin, *Ia Orana Maria*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, 1891



Figure 1.2 Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)*, Museum of Modern Art, NY, 1907

Do it exhibition is an expanding and ongoing project with the interpretation of instructors curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist. This project came across the question of whether the exhibitions should include artworks done by artists. Obrist reveals different art forms by working closely with artists. By analyzing the do-it exhibition project, it will be examined the way artistic productions affected exhibition-making and curators' practices. Documenta fifteen will be analyzed with the way it emerges as a radical discourse for the 21st century in the case of curatorial discussions and offers a new curatorial approach. This exhibition rejects the artist persona and focuses on the collectives and group productions that emerge organically outside of artistic production. In that sense, the exhibition opens a discussion platform to evaluate the curatorial practices in the case of politics of artistic practice and collectivity on production. In contrast, the Venice Art Biennial, which coincided with the documenta fifteen exhibition, mainly focused on individual artists' production. Considering this contrast, it is seen that the artists working within the framework of certain concepts are producing a representation of the groups affected in their productions. However, in documenta 15's approach and the local groups they invite, it is seen that these productions are made by directly affected groups. The values and meanings of art which have been accustomed to are beginning to change with

this edition of documenta. At this point, the questions of whom art is for and what its purpose is should be discussed once more.

The aim of this thesis is to discuss the effects of the concepts of artistic practice, habitus, collectivity, social systems, and friendship networks in changing curatorial forms considering the non-western-centered art with postcolonial approaches in the 21st century. Moreover, the study will focus on the collective knowledge production systems and politics of practice rather than artists' persona. Artistic production methods, as well as several exhibition forms from the past to the present, will be examined in the context of the changes they have made in the field of curation. The speculative formations of the new model of curation, which is considered as an attitude, will be discussed.

Instead of a conclusion, a discussion will be presented on the curatorial forms that have changed with the interaction of artistic practices. Moreover, the ways in which this situation affects future curatorial discussions and the legacy of these exhibition forms in the future will be discussed through reality and representation with the expansions of the concepts of artistic practice and collectivity. Additionally, this research will draw a framework and conceptualize the curatorial forms in the case of postcolonial studies, representation politics, fetishization, and exposition of tribal objects. The discussion of the inclusion of "the other (geographies, tribes, and cultures)" in art history will be evaluated through Anthropocentric thoughts, which are the reality of the 21st century.

2. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CURATORIAL DISCOURSE FROM THE 1960S ONWARD

Curating comes etymologically from the Latin word *curate*, which means to take care of; in the first place, it had been used as a person who took care of lunatics and minors. Over the years, the meaning of the words *curate* and *curating* have been defined in various ways. Although all the meanings refer to one concept: to take care of and look after. The definition of curator defines as *Austellungsmacher*, which means exhibition-maker and comes from the role of caretaking, which has similar definitions going back to Ancient Rome (George, 2015; Obrist, 2014). At first, in the mid-14th century, the word curator was expressed as guardian. In the 1660s, the ‘curate’ and ‘curator’ were used in the field of libraries, art, and museums. Thereafter, in the 18th century, the word curator was used for taking care of art collections and artifacts. In the 18th century, the first professional *Austellungsmachers* (exhibition-maker) of the Louvre were *décorateurs* (decorators) who dealt with the organization and hanging of artworks (Obrist, 2011). Today, a curator means more than a producer, exhibition maker, organizer, producer, and selector of artworks. On the one hand, as many scholars state, curating is to create intersections between different elements; on the other hand, the curator can be called a person who creates bridges between artists and audiences, expanding the exhibition concept.

The concept of curation does not have a specific definition. From the past to the present, this concept has undergone a constant change. Various concepts studied by artists have changed curatorial forms, including post-colonialism, globalism, cultural differences, multiculturalism, locality, and habitus. In recent years, curation has become closer to contemporary life. In fact, curation defines a field of interaction that is constantly changing and transforming in parallel with artists' production of artworks and has shaped within the framework of changing world conditions in the case of political and economic structures. It can be said that after this change and transformation, a new and different way of understanding curation has emerged. The role of the curator is more than the person who displays exhibitions together with a selection of artists or artworks. Curatorial practice forms a multidimensional field that involves educating, critiquing, editing, and other numerous actions. The curatorship and curator's role has become more porous and adaptive through ever-expanding knowledge production (Watson, 2021). Curatorship

began to be more visible along with their work. Therefore, as Bruce Altshuler (1994) claims that curators expand their borders through curators appointed as creators, and exhibition history starts with the world of advanced exhibitions. In the contemporary art scene, there isn't a single accepted authority in that sense Zygmunt Bauman describes curators as scapegoats after a long list of curators' descriptions which are programmers, exhibition makers, animators, and others. Smith (2012) states that the curator is the handmaiden of the expanding art world and its audience; beyond the conventional understanding of the curator is needed only for the creation of artwork or to display an exhibition. Irit Rogoff describes curation with a deconstructive expression. The curatorial process starts with cogitation, or rather, with critical thinking. Among the various actors of the cultural world, curation offers a more liberating space. While arguing that being physically presented is not the primary goal, Rogoff also mentions the fact that this process is quite self-contained and progresses slowly. In other respects, this process makes one ask questions rather than a process that seeks answers. Moreover, it leaves one alone with these questions.

2.1 The Demystification of the Curatorial Role

In the 18th and 19th centuries, large collections were created worldwide, and the boundaries between the role of art practitioners in the museum began to blur and dissolve (O'Neill, 2012). At the beginning of the 20th century, many approaches were made to amend the traditional understanding of art by practitioners. In their practice, artists proceed with the integration of social and relational situations as part of their artwork. Exhibition making is a way to analyze in a self-critic manner in bourgeois societies by proceeding with the new exhibition practices. The role of curator began to take shape towards the end of the 19th century, and it began to be demystified towards the middle of the 20th century (Georges, 2015). At that time, the terms of *ausstellungsmacher* and *faiseur d'expositions* came to light. The meaning of these German and French terms is the author as an independent exhibition maker (O'Neill, 2012). In the 1960s and 70s, some curators adopted these terms in their actions. Germano Celant, who invented the term Arte Povera, Konrad Fischer, Walter Hopps, Pontus Hultén, Seth Siegelaub, and Herald Szeemann were some of the curators that can be taken as examples. Celant,

Siegelaub, and Szeemann organized numerous international group exhibitions that conceptualized the contemporary art scene with movements such as Fluxus, Arte povera, post-minimalism, and conceptual art.

In the 1950s-60s, spaces that would not interrupt the communication between the audience and artwork were necessary to exhibit the abstract expressionists' paintings; in other words, a neutral space that disconnects the viewer from everyday life. In galleries and museums, everything other than artwork started to be minimized, and this understanding brought the notion of the 'white cube' into the light. The artists started to try new methodologies for their artworks with respect to the understanding of the white cube. In that sense, the white cube was seen as the ideal exhibition space; moreover, a hyper-space that brings new meanings to the concept of space in art emerges as a space that breaks away from this world and focuses only on the art object. White cube adopted a neutral approach isolating audiences from the ephemeral world. Moreover, it serves as an environment of infinite freedom where art objects don't have to look like anything but be themselves. O'Doherty (1986) states that the idea of commoditizing the artwork had been wanted to be eliminated since the 18th century, became even stronger by the white cube with its exclusionary and elitist attitude. As O'Doherty (1986) explained in his words;

"...the modern gallery space as "constructed along laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church....The outside world must not come in, so windows are usually sealed off. Walls are painted white. The ceiling becomes the source of light".

In the late 1960s, institutional critique emerged as a result of the avant-garde that can be called neo-avant-garde (O'Neill, 2012); moreover, Daniel Buren, Michel Asher, Hans Haacke, and Marcel Broodthaers are the pioneers of this movement. Institutional critique often speaks about institutions and the objective existence of art. Moreover, curators learn from artists through institutional critique from the 1960s and 70s conceptual art. Curating is a responsive practice with creative actions, behaviors, and attitudes that goes in parallel with artist practices. By the 1970s, many artists criticize the ideological and physical structures of galleries and exhibition spaces by deconstructing the meaning of the institutions. Andrea Fraser, one of the leading figures in the second wave of institutional critique, believes that art should be understood as art itself and must be evaluated through

gestures, actions, objects, and ideas. In one performance called *Museum Highlights*, she behaved voluntarily like a museum tour guide as she called 'Jane Castleton' and gave an unconventional museum tour which included showing toilets and signs to the visitors. The fictional museum talker Jane Castleton, who represents a function rather than a subject, creates a dynamic relationship between the museum and the public. With a non-relational narrative, she describes everyday objects with an extensive definition and elevated language. Fraser, with her performance, criticizes the institutional, ideological, and capitalist existence of the museum and reveals and deconstructs the museum's structure with administrative and economic aspects. In her practice, she tries to answer the question of what audiences, collectors, and artists are looking for in art projects.

Since the 1960s, the curatorial practice has evolved into a more active, creative, and political direction. Contemporary curatorial discourse can be analyzed through the demystification of the curatorial form from the 1960s, the primacy of the author-curator exhibiting practice of the late 1980s, and the consolidation of curator-centered discourse in the 1990s (O'Neill, 2012). In the late 1960s, Siegelau used the term "demystification" in the name of curation to establish the role and process of the exhibitor in the production of the exhibition (Eds. Rugg, & Sedgwick, 2007) and to describe the conscious and meaningful existence of curators' and artists' actions, in reference to the changing roles in exhibition history (O'Neill, 2012). In other respects, this period can be classified as Brenson mentions as residual, emergent, and dominant. The demystification should be processed in the name of the museum, collector, and producer to understand the art sphere's unrealized structure. In the second half of the 1960s, with innumerable changes in exhibition forms, curators adopted artists' creativity and methods; subsequently, interdisciplinary roles emerged after curatorial and artistic practices dissolved into each other by breaking the traditional understanding. Curators and artists had a collaborative work ethic; supportingly, Siegelau states that the frontiers between these roles got blurred.

The curatorial field attempted to expand its boundaries starting from the 1960s to the 1980s. Curatorial became the central issue of the subject being critiqued. The reinterpretation of the curatorial roles started with the demystification of the curatorial in the 1960s. So, the curator's role as an individual persona and attitudes towards artworks started to be discussed beyond the meaning of artworks displayed in the exhibition.

Supportingly, Beatrice von Bismarck believes that the roles in the art scene transform from artists' unique persona to curatorial roles. Onward 1960s, curatorial roles disposed of their passive role and evolved into an active agent (O'Neill, 2012). To be able to define curatorial roles, it is important to interpret the exhibition display. At the beginning of the 1970s, the logic of the exhibitions being affiliated to an institution had changed; followingly, curatorship took place for itself far from just being related to displaying an exhibition or a show, yet knowledge production, creating a platform for cultural productions can be named as roles of the curatorship (O'Neill, 2012). However, there was a problem for curators at the end of the 1980s that the curator's prominent attitude (to put forward their own ideas and theories) and the aim of being an auteur precedes the work when exhibiting. Therefore, exhibitions get framed around *gesamtkunstwerk* by a single auteur (O'Neill, 2012). This approach to the curatorial field and whether an exhibition is dominated by a single curator is controversial.

The 1990s were the years of curatorial studies, as Julia Bryan-Wilson mentioned, and numerous studies have been made on curating. In 1987, as a result of the demystification and visibility of the curatorial field, the curatorial education program was opened for the first time, so exhibition-making and curation had been considering in more theoretical and critical senses; moreover, in the late 1990s, publications, talks, seminars and other numerous events on curating came to light (O'Neill, 2002; George, 2015). In 1989, Benjamin Buchloh stated that curatorial positions are a crucial part of the artistic world, yet 'to curate' is a transformable verb that can be seen as 'to write' or 'to speak' in other forms. As the curation field became well-known, many studies were made, and publications were published in this field. Moreover, a three-day event series called Rotterdam Dialogues: The Curators was held to create a discussion platform on the curatorial. This event cast an eye on the burgeoning role of curatorial roles in the 1990s. The participants were combinations of super-visible curators: Jan Hoet, H.U. Obrist, and Nicolas Bourriaud; biennial curators are Hou Hanru and Caroline Christov-Bakargiev and younger generation curators who are Jens Hoffmann, Adam Budak, and others. In other respects, Lyon Biennial, curated by Obrist and Moisdon in 2007, hosted 50 invited curators to display their works.

As the role of the curators begins to demystify, the existence and the roles of curators in institutions begin to be discussed. Moreover, curators learn from artists through

institutional critique from the 1960s and 70s conceptual art. Curating is a responsive practice with creative actions, behaviors, and attitudes that goes in parallel with artist practices. Andrea Fraser, one of the leading figures in institutional critique, believes that art should be understood as art itself and needs to be evaluated through gestures, actions, objects, and ideas. Curator was one of the figures dedicated to the institution with discussions, and representations s/he conducts; however, curatorial roles, which was a profession affiliated with institutions, get through a significant change as becoming a dominant single-auteur while discussions on the role of the institutions gained meaning. It later becomes non-institutionalized and creates an independent and experiential field. De-academization and new institutionalization of art dissolved the museum's rigid walls into a flexible, free, and emancipatory art environment so that the experiences perceived in art galleries or museums were changed (Altshuler, 2013). The curatorial discourse always adopts an approach that pushes the boundaries and goes beyond the boundaries while interacting with other disciplines. A good number of exhibitions were curated by leading curatorial figures to play a role against the institutional existence of exhibition-making and create an intimate spatial relationship. Using these non-institutional spaces brought another perspective on exhibition methods and created intimacy. To give examples, in 1974, Harald Szeemann organized a small exhibition about his grandfather in his apartment in Bern. In 1986 Jan Hoet organized a group of exhibitions called *Chambres des Amis* in different apartment flats. Moreover, in 1991, Obirst organized his first exhibition, *The Kitchen Show*, in his apartment.

Curatorship, which is gradually moving away from the role of caretaker, is now a field that has its own practices and plays a critical role in exhibition-making. Curating in the contemporary period has changed the way the audience experiences and perceives art. Onwards the 1990s, the curatorial has been created a unique language to define themselves. It has a more central position with globalization and works together with diverse professions. Currently, curatorial is an articulated and adaptive discipline that adopts various concepts from other disciplines. Moreover, it has numerous roles that cannot be counted.

2.2 Expanding Curatorial Forms and Exhibition Making

Curating is experimental, independent, and critical, starting from the Salon des Refusés to Dada manifestation and ad hoc exhibitions. In the 18th and 19th centuries, hundreds of artworks were hung on the same wall, known as the Salon style, from top to bottom, side by side, and grouped according to their similarities (Altshuler, 2008). Artworks started to take up more space on the wall while the artworks' frames got bigger, and followingly, the spaces between them got bigger. Edgar Degas followed a similar path in his practice (Crisci-Richardson, 2012) as well as Manet states that the artworks should have more space between them (Obrist, 2014). This means audiences have the freedom in order to focus on one work. After the second half of the 19th century, artists played a major role in the transformation of the exhibition format. Traditional forms of exhibition-making began to be destroyed gradually with the understanding of DADA, Constructivism, and Bauhaus movements.

Cultural rituals in the modern world, rhetoric in contemporary forms, and persuasive expressions are defined as exhibitions (Rugg & Sedgwick, 2007). The history of exhibition construction comes from annual and seasonal festivals that took place towards the end of the Middle Ages (Obrist, 2014). Exhibitions are platforms for experimentation rather than creating a space for works to be shown together. It may be necessary to make use of other areas while working on the concept or argument of the exhibition. In this case, exhibitions produce alternative spaces for discussion. An exhibition should have an open end and allow audiences to question it from different perspectives instead of saying the last word. The artwork needs to reveal its meaning in the exhibition platforms. Space and its role are important parameters for artists. However, it is a medium to exhibit the ideas visually and creates a dialogue with the audience.

Exhibition design and installation are important because exhibitions are not only the presentation of works of art but also a form of presenting intellectual accumulation through visual means in a creative and experimental way. Exhibition-making plays a crucial role in curatorial forms, with artists taking an active role in the process. The exhibition forms that developed with the contributions of the artists and the major exhibition forms that we have witnessed in history have directly affected the way curators form an exhibition. Artists and exhibition designers were researching how to use

exhibition spaces and propose new displaying methods. Alexander Dornier, who directed the Hannover Museum between the years 1925 and 1937, which have known as laboratory years in exhibition history, inquired about new experiential forms for exhibition methods from artists (Obrist, 2014). These artists included Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, Friedrich Kiesler, El Lissitzky, László Moholy-Nagy, and others. *Kabinett der Abstrakten* by Lissitzky in 1927 was an exhibition that provided new exhibition methods and changed the audiences' role by altering the art object and their location (Obrist, 2014). Art objects were located on moving panels that gave power to audiences and altered the role of passive observing to curate their own exhibition.



Figure 2.1 *El Lissitzky, Abstract Cabinet, Hannover Provincial Museum, 1928.*

Moholy-Nagy produced a light machine that projects abstract patterns to the wall for the exhibition *A Room of Our Time*. Frederick Kiesler shared his vision about a new system for exhibitions which is affected by De Stijl's elementarist approach. He suggested the L and T method to be used in the exhibition display; thereby, the artworks were placed independently from the walls of the exhibition hall (Staniszewski, 2001). While this method allows for different possibilities in exhibition forms, it is separated from the

architectural details of the exhibition space. Therefore, it moves away from the multi-layered traditional installations that we are used to know from the 'salon style' and carries the works to the audience's space and time. Abstract Cabinet, designed by El Lissitzky, aims to change the passivity of the show from its traditional roots into an active show that one can experience more. In that sense, with their ground-breaking visions, both Kiesler's exhibition method and Lissitzky's Abstract Cabinet became well-known as a contribution to international avant-gardes (Staniszewski, 2001). Herbert Bayer claims that it has been forgotten that exhibition design is a powerful communication tool and has different concepts. The 360-view field of vision diagram brought a new perspective to the display technique. This technique was similar to the methods of Kiesler and Lissitzky as it suggests communication between the viewer, space, and the artwork. Bayer differs from the exhibition method of Kiesler and Lissitzky as it places the viewer on a higher platform from the ground in order to allow the viewer to observe all sides of the exhibition both vertically and horizontally. In addition, asymmetrical spatial formations create a dynamic feeling in space. In this way, the audience of the exhibition was directed to see the installations. Therefore, the space and the materials became the exhibition itself. In fact, Bayer's diagram still influences curatorial and exhibition practices.

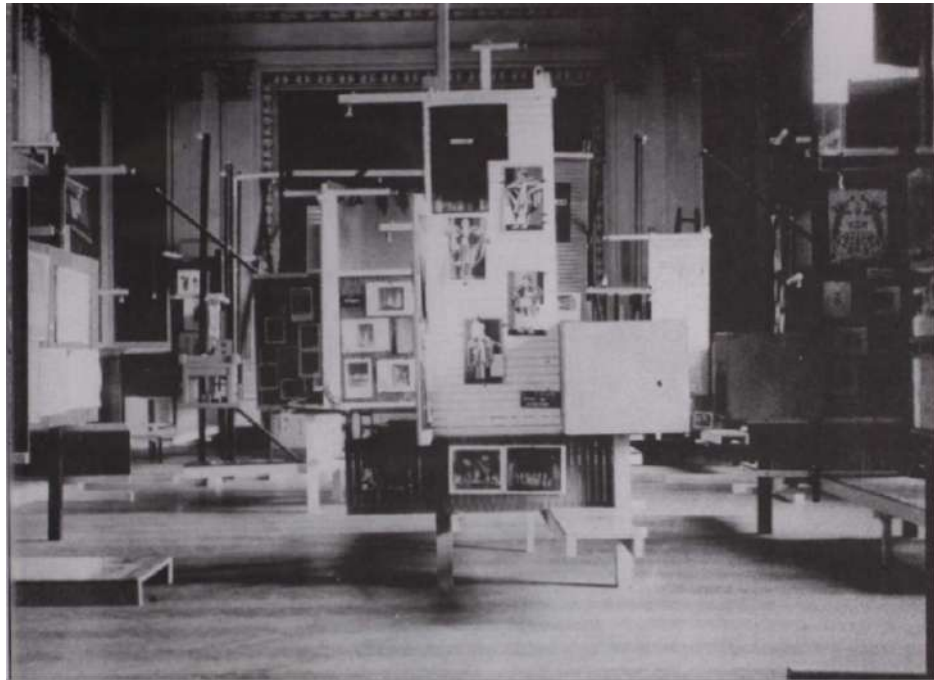


Figure 2.2 *Frederick Kiesler, International Exhibition of New Theater Technique, Konzerthaus, Vienna, 1924*

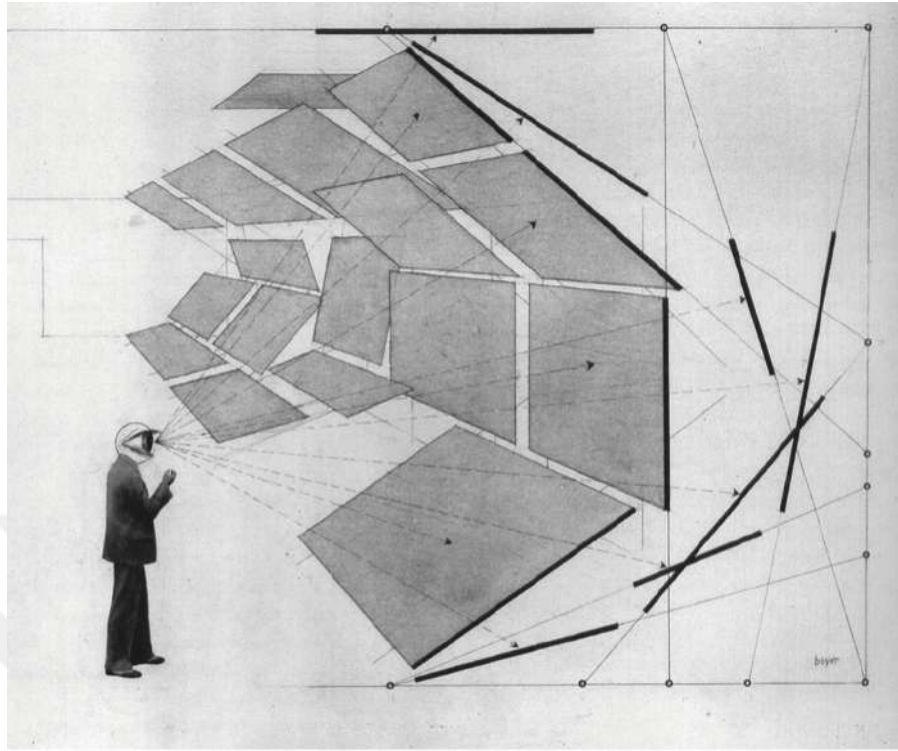


Figure 2.3 *Herbert Bayer, Field of Vision diagram for Room of our time, 1930*

Siegelau proposed publishing a book called the Xerox Book, 1969, as an alternative form of the exhibition. The fact remains that it is the first time someone has proposed to make a publication as an exhibition medium. This printed exhibition is an example to understand that exhibitions can be held outside the museum and exhibition space. The Xerox Book exhibition that he requested 25 pages of work from artists in 1968 is a good example of dematerialization in the exhibition process. Lippard and Siegelau state that visual arts could exist in forms other than painting and sculpture, integrating with social life. Lippard wanted to democratize art and turn art into a practice that could be experienced with city dwellers, to bring it to the cities and to the streets (i.e., outside the museum). While working to dematerialize art, Lippard organized a "suitcase exhibition" in 1968 in Latin America. This exhibition could be packaged and taken to other countries by the artists.

Besides the artists' proposals on new methods of exhibition-making, some curators have great value in changing curatorial forms. The 1990s, in the case of curatorial practices, were the years of flexibility, connective, transformative, hybrid, process-oriented,

discussion-based, and collaborative productions (O'Neill, 2012). The process of artistic production comes before the artworks themselves. Therefore, the curatorial field turned into a performative field that is experiential and self-organized, and exhibitions were composed of collaborative dialogues. During this period, artists and curators worked together and adopted each other's methods. In this case, the exhibitions curated by Harald Szeemann, who changed the conventional methodology of exhibition-making through being the curator of Documenta 5, need to be analyzed. At the beginning of his career, he was the director of the Kunsthalle Bern, which can be defined as a local and traditional institution in the 1960s, and has succeeded in opening new exhibitions for emerging artists in this institution. He was curious about the way artists work. Rather than being a curator like an artist, Szeemann focused on the idea of making a museum with a variability of interventions, artworks, and performances of both invited and outsider artists. Throughout his career, he has explored new ways of displaying all kinds of art, from poetry to painting (Obrist, 2011). He exhibited works from various mediums and genres without a specific arrangement rule with a chaotic connection; however, there is a dialogue between artworks. Szeemann introduces the concept of independent curation by leaving Kunsthalle Bern after displaying groundbreaking exhibitions. In Szeemann's new independent curatorial model, the curator is a creative actor in close communication with the artist and has the definition of suggesting original ideas and structures. He defines the curatorial role as a co-creator working cross-disciplinary. The concept of curator and artist intertwined after Szeemann adopted a practice where the boundaries between the curator and the artist are blurred. Szeemann's exhibitions were not just a gathering of a group of artists yet an effort to create a temporary and complementary world for the audience. Therefore, he approaches exhibition-making as a creative action, an art form, and a bridge between the past and the future. The development of the world after the World Wars and the effort to keep up with the changing world conditions also affected the changes in Szeemann's curatorial role.

The 1969 exhibition *Live in your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* (Fig. 2.4) changes the definition of the role of curator and the way audiences perceive art. This exhibition discussed the role of the curator being transformed from its caretaker role into a more creative act. Therefore, the relationship between art and the audience transforms from a bureaucratic plane into a more creative and horizontal state. All works were exhibited

together, regardless of the artists' location and the art movements that they represent. Szeemann thinks that something needs to be done beyond gathering artists around certain concepts. The curator invited the artists to the 'Attitudes' part of the exhibition to emphasize the importance of acting as an art object. Indeed, experiences and attitudes were exhibited in the exhibition as art objects. In this case, he discusses the exhibition as a discussion platform and workshop space. Moreover, the curator Obrist (2011) mentions that the artists in Szeemann's exhibition took over the institution and turned it into a huge artist studio. It was an exhibition in which the curator responded to the works in the exhibition, and the artists put forward the action they wanted rather than obliging the curator.



Figure 2.4 Harald Szeemann, Live in your Head: When Attitudes Become Form, Kunsthalle, Bern, 1969

The practice of curation was represented as an independent role for the first time in history with Szeemann's curation of *Questioning Reality: Pictorial Worlds Today*, Documenta 5 in 1972, in Kassel, Germany. In this exhibition, Szeemann had an experimental approach in terms of curatorial practices and positioned the curator in the role of the *auteur*. The works of emerging artists of the 1960s were displayed in the exhibition. He addressed the exhibition as a spectacle and as an art form. Installation and performance-oriented arts spread to wider audiences. Joseph Beuys's *Boxkampf* work (Fig. 2.5) was a unique performance to address behaviors as an artform rather than focusing on objects in

Documenta 5. In the exhibition, which is planned as a 100-day event, audiences were able to see happenings, dramas, outdoor artworks, videos, political iconographies, and even non-art works. Indeed, this exhibition was something in between the supermarket and the Wunderkammer. This exhibition enables audiences to form an individualistic journey for themselves in the contemporary pictorial world. It exhibits social and cultural realities through contemporary art.



Figure 2.5 Joseph Beuys, Boxkampf for Documenta 5, Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany, 1972. Photo by Erich Puls

Jens Hoffmann (2015) is a curator who has a theatrical background and brings a new perspective to the field of curating. He defines the curatorial as a liquid, temporary and transformative stage. In his works, he adopts an approach that incorporates the artist's starting points and strategies into his own curation effort. His curatorial practice emerges from creating an experience by focusing on the relation between curatorial and artistic

practices and the effects of artist-led curatorial models. Jens Hoffmann is not the only one who is interested in the relation between artistic and curatorial productions. Supportively, artist Gavin Wade suggested the term of artist-curator in his essay, *Artist + Curator*: (2000), to define the artists who are benefiting from curatorial strategies and exhibition design.

Biennials and mega-exhibitions can be defined as another way of expanding the curatorial field by creating a platform for artists to experiment with their practices. Group exhibitions have a crucial role in their creative practice. Biennials are the way for curators to become globally known and transform individual curatorial roles into a more collective and collaborative practice. Onwards the 1990s, biennials have been changing the curatorial positions in the global art world; in fact, they caused a curatorial turn. Moreover, biennials result in discursive production through expanding their boundaries by providing a new role to the curators rather than exhibition making. Elena Filipovic states that biennials and mega-exhibition form a new kind of space for exhibitions; Filipovic defines this situation as a global white cube. This new white cube, as Filipovic defines it, gives the art world the opportunity of expanding and multiply its boundaries. Biennials turn into a particular institution as a temporal process. On the one hand, a biennial is a space to create a dialogue where different views and practices come together and offer a large-scale platform that brings together the national and international art world with an elevated understanding of space out of a white cube; on the other hand, it can be defined as a group of curators temporarily working together. Curators in the contemporary art world define biennials as an intercultural dialogue while struggling with their aesthetic and political definitions. The biennales reached out to a new type of audience with its inclusion of different platforms (O'Neill, 2012). Biennials have importance in curating, reflecting the globalizing world, and presenting it as a theme. They dramatically became a crucial part of cultural tourism and the economy and built a global network. Onwards 1989, biennials mastermind the art scene on a global scale. Biennials and art fairs proliferated in various locations around the world in the 1990s, and a new understanding of art emerged with the proliferation of biennials (O'Neill, 2012). Therefore, artists were asked to work with the venues and activities; in fact, the concepts of originality, authenticity, and singularity intertwined with a unique experience. Biennials and large-scale exhibitions, in which curators elevate their knowledge and

experiences to another level, can be defined as laboratory environments with respect to their experiential workspaces and space for aesthetic liberation. Bourriaud states that artworks compose of lifestyle and realization of daily ephemerality rather than following utopian and imaginary realities in their form.



3. PRACTICE AND COLLECTIVITY AS A MEDIUM OF EXHIBITION MAKING

In the late 1960s, curatorial practices evolved into a more performative and art-related practice beyond its caring and mediative historical roots (O'Neill, 2012). Many artists adopt curatorial methods for their practices. Jack Burnham pointed out that we are witnessing the transformation of the art scene from object-oriented practice to system-oriented practice. This transition affected artistic and curatorial practice in the way that they should allow different expansions on the context, creating a platform for new discussions and readings on their practices. Moreover, artistic and curatorial projects became experimental and creative. Conceptualization and Lucy Lippard's term dematerialization have importance in contemporary art (Green, 2018). However, artworks should be dynamic and open to different expansions. The integration of material and social situations has created a continuous, changing, and evolving curatorial approach. This evolving practice emerged with the intertwining of the curatorial and artistic roles rather than a mere change in these roles. Artistic practices begin to emerge as a means of curatorial practices. As curatorial and artistic fields intertwine, artistic practices gain greater importance. These changes in art history occur to seek a different aesthetic understanding from non-western art. To understand the practice, Bourdieu's concept of habitus comes to light. Habitus is a concept that consists entirely of social networks. Bourdieu believes that curatorial means the accumulation of cultural values of art and artists. Exhibition design is a curatorial tool and a part of curatorial strategies that exercise tacit knowledge and interpretation of artistic practices. Exhibitions always have a narrated story and conceptualization. In this context, in the art of the 20th century, exhibitions are often mentioned rather than artworks but practices. Curator-as-artist came to light as a role that concomitants to artistic practices.

The practice of curation creates a space for artists to question the limits of art in the process. As Green (2018) states in her book *When Artists Curate*, artists do not accept the distinction between artist and curator that emerged at the end of the 19th century. Artistic production and curatorial studies have an immersive relationship and have a form of inseparable unity. The expanded definition of curation provides an environment that goes hand in hand with the artists' practice of producing art.

Some critics mention extended art curatorial practice as paracuratorial as the word para, originally means expanded, adopted from French literary theorist Gérard Genette. Therefore, paracuratorial has been identified as the zone of transaction and created an argument that emphasizes art being either discourse or semiotic (Green, 2018). Curators, with their methodological attempts, follow artists in research-based projects. Curators, who follow paracuratorial methodology, focus on activities rather than intentions.

Steven Parrino combines exhibition-making with the concept of practice, and he focuses on context rather than the final form. By designing the entire exhibition with its text, displaying methods, and opening, Parrino expresses his artistic persona in his exhibitions. Therefore, he takes the exhibition-making process into consideration as an artist studio. The context comes first rather than forms in his exhibitions. At this point, his curatorial understanding was shaped by the way he uses his artistic practices in exhibition-making. Goshka Macuga is another important figure in order to understand the importance of practice and collectivity in exhibition making and curating. She sees exhibitions as a medium to express hybridity and ambiguous relation between curators, artists, and researchers. Network, collaboration, and social alliance go hand in hand in her exhibitions; that's why curator Grant Watson defines Macuga's curatorial practice as the 'principle of friendship.' Collectivity has great importance as well as artistic practice. General Idea, a Canadian artist group, forms the practice of curatorial activism with their collaborative way of producing in different mediums, from displaying an exhibition to self-publications and re-enactments.

3.1 Pedagogic Projects: Learning from Artistic Practices

There are numerous key art projects and artistic practices to understand the way artistic practices affect curatorial studies. Along with these artistic practices, the visions and missions of the curators also undergo a transformation. The art world has adopted new practices with the pedagogical projects of some artists. At this point, an alternative occasion has emerged beyond the exhibition of the art object in the white cube or within the museum's walls. From the 1920s onward (as O'Neill states in one of his essays, the 1920s and 1950s were known as the laboratory years of the artists), as Claire Bishop and Rudolf Frieling have mentioned, the interactive participation of the audience has been

through event-based shows and laboratory style exhibitions. Therefore, artists, curators, and designers aim to change the passive audience role into an active receiver and to create a relationship between the audience and art objects. Pontus Hulten, director of Stockholm's Moderna Museet 1958-73, reformed the inclusion of various events as debates, talks, concerts, and other programs in exhibition format to increase the active participation of audiences (George, 2015). El Lissitzky, Marcel Duchamp, and Piet Mondrian worked on how the audience could be involved in the artwork.

Contemporary art became more integrated with society. The understanding of curatorial practice in the 21st century refers to socially engaged attitudes and to the experiential and creative process. Curatorial practice is about exploring new methodologies with expanding programs, including lecture series, workshops, traveling libraries, performances, artistic and curatorial residencies, publications, and screenings. Irit Rogoff designates curatorial practices as an interface between artistic experience and cultural practice, for instance, activism, teaching, and exploring. In this sense, it is necessary to examine the contributions of Beuys, who believes everyone is a latent artist, and Hirschhorn, who embarks on Gramsci's idea that every human being is an intellectual, to this process in order to better understand these pedagogic projects as well as Ahmet Ögüt and İnci Eviner. In this context, being an artist or intellectual is not about being a sculptor or a painter; however, it is the human urge to have creativity and productivity. To have a better understanding of how pedagogic projects affect art history and, therefore, the curatorial field, Ögüt's *The Silent University* (2012 - ongoing), Beuys' *Free International University* (1969), Hirschhorn's early monuments and Eviner's *Co-action device* will be examined. These projects have non-exclusive audiences and offer a participatory process for comers. However, in all these contemporary examples, the artists position themselves not as an expert but as amateur enthusiasts. In these projects, artists position themselves somewhere in the middle by questioning the hierarchical order between the schoolmaster and the student and combining the place where both can stand in a horizontal state, as Jacques Rancière discusses the question of equal intelligence students and schoolmaster in "The Ignorant Schoolmaster." Therefore, these artists transform their experience into a learning environment for themselves as well as others.

Joseph Beuys is an important figure in art history to understand the pedagogic projects. The *Free International University* project of Beuys (Fig. 3.1), who said being a teacher is

my greatest work of art in 1969, combines education and art with an interdisciplinary curriculum. This project creates an open creative platform that includes economy, culture, and sociology. In other words, it nurtures souls dedicated to realizing each person's capacity to be a creative being. Beuys questions this project's fine line between education and one-person performance and renders this distinction dysfunctional. This platform, which intersects art with social life and politics, argues that people's creativity should also be used as a form of capital and that communication can be established in this way. Providing a completely open space for participants, the Free University project brings together artists, journalists, sociologists, economists, and lawyers. Beuys was too progressive and provocative in his conceptualization of public art events in the 1970s, as the participants' work was criticized and physically interfered with. Beuys seemed to reinforce the impression that discussion is not a didactic tool but a direct mode of communication: "I want to get to the root of the issue, the thinking behind it," he stated (Bishop, 2012).



Figure 3.1 Joseph Beuys, *One Hundred Days of the Free International University*, in *Documenta Six*, Kassel, Germany, 1977

Ahmet Ögüt is an educator and a conceptual artist who uses various mediums such as photography, video, installation, and others. Ögüt interprets the urgency of social and political issues through humorous gestures. He has been working for years with and without institutions and is interested in the ideological structure of spaces rather than their physical structure. Ögüt changed the ideological structure of institutions with his project. The Silent University (Fig. 3.2) was first initiated in 2012 by artist Ahmet Ögüt during a residency program in collaboration with the Delfina Foundation and Tate. It is an information exchange platform run by a group of consultants, lecturers, and research assistants with units located in many European countries. Education is a closed social process; however, it is an open and participatory process with this project and transforming it into an efficient exchange of information. The participants also learn from each other. Therefore, Ögüt's The Silent University project turns into a structure that transforms the whole process and provides an alternative space to the learning and teaching activities, as it was intended as projects held by Hirschhorn, Beuys, and Eviner. The Silent University covers participants who have a certain academic status in their home country but cannot use these skills or vocational training for various reasons. In fact, it is crucially important that Ögüt, with this project, includes the outsiders and the invisibles to the project. Participants worked together to develop conferences, discussions, events, resource archives, and publications at the institution. This project intends to respond to the idea of silence in the adaptation process of refugees with performance, group work, and writing practices. This situation tries to make visible the loss of information experienced during the silencing of asylum seekers. In these projects, where art uses education as a tool, he makes the audience a part of this process rather than conveying this educational experience. While this performativity creates a university faculty with its lectures which include the topics of experimental film, Persian Music, human trafficking, computer science, and democracy in Ögüt's project, it appears as a publication in Hirschhorn's and as a classroom in Beuys's and Eviner's. While these projects include the primary audience as well as the secondary audience, these projects are important because they create the space for all participants to experience something from this process. Ögüt's project can be expanded by adding and subtracting in various ways and can develop a more productive network of relations.



Figure 3.2 Ahmet Öğüt, *Installation View of The Silent University, 17th Istanbul Biennial, Müze Gazhane, 2022*

Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn stands out with his large-scale social projects in the form of monuments related to political unrest and offers alternative ways of thinking. He represents the role of the artist as a practitioner, a curator, and an organizer, displays temporal spaces such as classrooms, libraries, workshop areas, and exhibitions, and he generally works with local communities, immigrants, and children on the outskirts of the city. Too-Too, Much-Much installation (Fig. 3.3), and monuments dedicated to his favorite philosophers, Spinoza, Deleuze, Bataille, and Gramsci, are examples that need to be examined. Activities created by Hirschhorn form a spatial dialog with its atmosphere in the human scale. Deleuze's concept of *m'exposer*, meaning both exposing and showing oneself describes the Hirschhorn artistic philosophy. With reference to his other works, Bishop emphasizes the interest in his works being a device for collaborative production, active presence, and participatory practice. Then, the importance of context comes to light (Bishop, 2012). Hirschhorn uses art as a means of encountering the world. His installations contain critical discourses, and he stands out with his political works even though he claims in his interview with Tate that he is not a political artist. The artist, as can be seen in his other works as well, creates experimental spaces which adopt non-exclusive audiences. DIY aesthetic in his works appeals to audiences from all walks of

life. The main approach of the artists' work can be summarized with the motto of 'Energy: yes! Quality: no!'. Plywood, aluminum foil, cardboard, packing tape, and other ephemeral materials are the signature materials that Hirschhorn uses in his installations to emphasize the consumption practices of the contemporary world. The presence of excessive images and objects in his works leaves audiences alone with the realities of the contemporary world and addresses to the depersonalization of consumers' experiences. The curation of space and the objects he places in his installation are apparent in his art practice. Hirschhorn, in his practice, adopts curatorial forms and practices in the installation of his large-scale works. As he adopted curatorial practices, he also contributed to the curatorial field with his work.



Figure 3.3 *Thomas Hirschhorn, Too-Too, Much-Much, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium, 2010.*

The Bataille Monument is the third edition that committed to French philosopher and intellectual Georges Bataille in Hirschhorn's monument series honoring his four favorite philosophers: Spinoza (in Amsterdam, in 1999), Deleuze (in Avignon, in 2000), Bataille

(in Kassel, in 2002), and Gramsci (in the Bronx, in 2013). Bataille Monument (Fig. 3.4) took place in Kassel, Germany, in 2002 as part of the Documenta 11 curated by Okwui Enwezor; however, it is located out of the dedicated site, in a housing complex with working-class Turkish residents of the Friedrich-Wöhler Siedlung area in order to have an all-inclusive process. The monument is an open system consisting of a Bataille library, a Bataille exhibition curated by Christophe Fiat, a sculpture made of plastics, cardboard, wood, and tape, collaborative workshops, a website, a television studio that broadcasts the daily briefs, a stand for foods and drinks, and a shuttle service took audiences to Bataille monument from the main Documenta 11 site (Buchloh, 2004). Hirschhorn uses everyday materials such as foil, cardboard, magazine cutouts, plastics, packing tape, cellophane, and many others in his work as a political statement. The usage of ephemeral materials enabled him to build large-scale structures in a short time. Therefore, he creates a temporary space yet not anchored to a specific location. Hirschhorn says that one of the important points in the process of choosing the venue for this monument is to find people who can help with the project, which in that sense would be on the outskirts of the city. Bataille Monument was located in the Friedrich-Wöhler district, where socio-economically disadvantaged people live, and is far from the venue dedicated to Documenta 11. It requires the audience to be patient and spend time to reach the area. However, according to the artist, this journey was also a part of the exhibition. During the project, including installation, display, and dismantling, with the local residents, he stayed in the exhibition area with reliance on the power of being present in the area (Gardner and Green, 2017). The human-scale monument had many functions for its audiences, such as a website, television studio, snack bar, workshop areas, and others. Beyond that, as Hirschhorn states, this monument is not a social project, a question of representation, but just an art project. Moreover, Hirschhorn argued that art should exist for its own benefit rather than being a political tool for the benefit of others.



Figure 3.4 *Thomas Hirschhorn, Bataille Monument, Kassel, documenta 11, 2002.*

İnci Eviner is constantly expanding her artistic practice with her performative research methods and educational experience. When talking about pedagogic projects, it's not possible to not mention the way Co-action Device changed and affected art-making practices. *Co-action Device: A Study* (Fig. 3.5) is a project that was realized with a group of students and young artists for the *13th Istanbul Biennial Mom, am I barbarian?* Curated by Fulya Erdemci, in 2013. The 13th Istanbul biennial took place during the Gezi protests in Turkey. The conceptual framework of the biennial got shaped in an effort to create an agonistic space rather than following antagonistic politics. Questioning the institutional boundaries of art education, the Co-action Device project emerges as a field of resistance parallel to the Gezi resistance. In this complex political environment, the project inevitably acquires a political identity. The work has a multi-layered structure that has many different branches. As in this work, Eviner often creates spaces inside space and times over time in her works. In the Co-action Device project, participants rely on their bodies to communicate between their minds and the world, and they are left alone with their bodies. While discussing the possibilities of a utopian education model, she frees the participants of the project, leaving them to their free-will, bodily movements, gestures, and facial expressions (Diken and Tuncer, 2021). The device asks questions, but

an answer is not always expected. The project aims to reconsider the understanding of art education and to create an alternative and collaborative environment where the possibilities of art production are questioned. The words to be spoken turn into action, which can answer the questions.



Figure 3.5 *İnci Eviner, Co-action Device: A Study, Greek School, 13th Istanbul Biennial, 2013*

3.2 Do Major Exhibitions Reveal a New Form of Aesthetics?

After the demystification and clarification of the curatorial roles, the curatorial appears in the roles of institutional, museum, and independent curator. In fact, curators still proceed to experience new methodologies and concepts. In the 21st century, biennials and mega-exhibitions can be mentioned as wide-ranged fields to experience these new concepts and methodologies. The forms of biennials and mega-exhibitions are changing, transforming, developing, and expanding through time, as well as the curatorial understanding. Alongside these changes, curators produce new ways of bringing the terms and new major concepts together. The understanding of artistic production is essential; followingly, the

curator's take is important. As a result of these changes, curators dredge up and form the major concepts. In fact, exhibitions have importance in order for society, artists, and collectors to acknowledge each other. Altshuler (1994) mentioned the importance of key exhibitions in history to be able to comprehend curatorial transformations. In this respect, some groundbreaking exhibition forms will be investigated, such as *Magiciens de la Terre*, *do it*, *Manifesta*, *Venice Art Biennial*, and *documenta*, to understand whether these major exhibition forms reveal a new form of aesthetic. *Magiciens de la Terre* will be analyzed in case of postcolonial controversies and its stance in inviting non-western art to the art scene. *do it* will be analyzed with its structure that questions the role of the artists and the audience with the logic of *do it yourself*. *Manifesta* will be analyzed with its nomadic structure rejecting a center. 59th *Venice Art Biennial* will be examined in case of inviting unpopular concepts and unknown artists away from art canons. Finally, *documenta fifteen* will be examined in the case of collective curating as well as the curator group's invitation for affected groups to the scene rather than inviting artists who will represent these affected groups. All these exhibition forms ask essentially the same questions. What is art? What is the role of the artist and the audience? Where do artists stand as a social agent?



Figure 3.6 *Traditional paintings by the Yuendume (aboriginal community in Australia). In the background, Red Earth Circle by Richard Long, in the Grand Halle, Parc de la Villette, Paris, 1989. Magiciens de la Terre.*

Magiciens de la Terre, which is a groundbreaking exhibition with its radical approach, was exhibited at the Centre Georges Pompidou and Grande Halle de la Villette in 1989. This exhibition emerges as a stance against the attitude of the western world that ignores non-Western art and artists. Half of the participants consist of western artists, while the other half consists of artists from outside the west. In this exhibition, artists are presented with their own personas apart from their geographies. With this exhibition, curator Martin brought a different perspective to post-colonial debates and questioned Eurocentric supremacy. At that time, many exhibits did not feature non-western local cultures. Many exhibitions that included non-western cultures tried to aestheticize them and represent these cultures from a westernized perspective. At the same time, this exhibition criticizes the usual forms of exhibition and the hierarchical structure of the artist selection system. It also highlights the lack of opportunity to think and talk about non-Western cultures in the art world. Artistic production cannot exist only in the western world. This exhibition reveals the violence of the western world on non-western societies. It has started a never-ending debate between western and non-western societies. One of the participants of the exhibition was Sarkis Zabunyan. Living as an Armenian in Turkey until 1963, Sarkis took part in Magiciens de la Terre with his installation named Çaylak Sokak (Fig. 3.7). The installation brought together items collected from the street where Sarkis was born and raised, from the house where he grew up, and from his relatives who lived on that street. Sarkis's presence in the discussion of the other in Turkey undoubtedly finds its place in this exhibition that opens up debates on non-Western and post-colonial. He represents the other and a group that is not included and must be seen. Thus, Sarkis's presence in Magiciens de la Terre becomes a striking reality in the discussion of the other. Sarkis, in an interview with Enis Batur (1989), says that;

On my return here, Çaylak Sokak was an exhibition where I put my roots here under a magnifying glass. This exhibition tells how I came from, where I came from, which family I came from and how the concept of working came to be, how I first worked when I was 7-8 years old, and hammered nails as an apprentice with my shoemaker Uncle Simon...



Figure 3.7 *Sarkis Zabunyan, Çaylak Sokak, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1989*

Magiciens de la Terre exhibition offers a new discussion on post-coloniality and Eurocentric supremacy and asks critical questions radically, such as how to define artists and their role as social agents. Of course, it is not always possible to give an answer to such questions. However, exhibitions like these are an indication of a new turning point in the art world. “The common statement that artistic production can only exist in the Western world can be blamed on the arrogance of our culture,” writes Martin in the exhibition catalogue. This exhibition is like an atlas-like catalogue, which is a manifesto against the western world, culture, and art. In addition, there is a map for each artist in the exhibition with their biographies, information about their works and their geographical locations. Many authors who contributed to the formation of this catalog take an attitude against the domination of the Western world. One of the catalogue writers, Pierre Gaudibert, wrote that he condemned the symbolic violence of the western world, while Mark Francis emphasized the understanding that keeps non-Western artists out of museums. Years after its opening, this exhibition is still the subject of endless debates about western and non-Western art. Hou Hanru mentions in an interview that the Magiciens de la Terre exhibition cannot be reduced to a simple discussion between

western and non-western artists and the art world. In fact, this exhibition causes different questions to be asked. What is an artist? What is the artist's role in society as a social agent? It causes us to ask such questions repeatedly. This exhibition changes the artist's role from producing work to a person who analyzes the differences between individuals and society and offers different options. Apart from the *Magiciens de la Terre*, exhibitions referencing the historical period were displayed at different times, as interpreted by Bruce Altshuler. These exhibitions are the Armory Show (1913), the first Dada Show (1920), the Ninth Street Show (1951), and *China/Avant-Garde* (1989). Moreover, Cubism and Abstract Art exhibition displayed in the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in 1936, Alfred Barr created a diagram to describe the development of cubism and abstract art between the 1890s and 1930s (Lowry, n.d.). Barr believes that the source of the abstract is transhistorical and multicultural. In the creation of this diagram, Barr addressed Japanese prints, Near-Eastern Art, and Negro sculptures which are important non-Western elements.

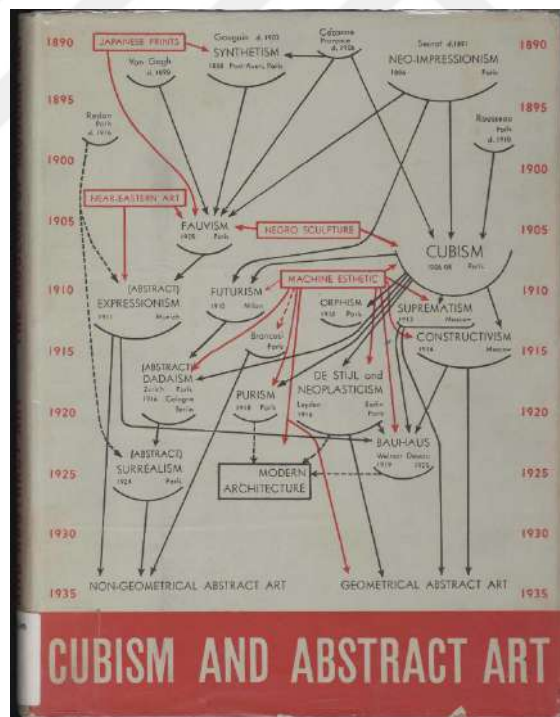


Figure 3.8 Alfred Barr, *Diagram for Cubism and Abstract Art Exhibition*, MOMA, 1936

Curator Martin caused a significant change in curatorial practices with his anthropological approach, which he built this exhibition on intercultural relations and anthropological and cultural understanding. The exhibition covered topics such as the

sociology of art, postcolonial studies, and the history of globalization. It also raises questions such as the representation of the other, how selection criteria are organized, and how ethnocentric choices can be avoided in exhibitions. The exhibition was subjected to intensely negative criticism, with artists coming from five different continents who were building a bridge between the western and non-western art world. Most of the discussions take place without visiting the exhibition and without adequate reading since the exhibition did not receive many viewers (less than 300 000 viewers) and its catalog was not translated into English. *Magiciens de la Terre* actually departed radically from the traditional display forms of the French academy and put the personal context at the center of curation. Martin treats geographical maps as magical practices. The concepts of dream, magic, and mystery started to be used with geographical maps in this period. This exhibition heralded a new transformation, while France in the 1980s could not cope with ethnocentrism. A new perception emerged in France in the 1980s, which is nearly 20 years after the exploitation of African countries.

Stuart McArthur brings a new perspective to the world map by drawing a new world map centered around Australia. At this point, it cannot be ignored what this map describes. With this map, the concepts of western and non-western undergo an unexpected change. Beyond the European-centered maps, a map where Australia is located in the center has brought a new interpretation to the discussions of western and post-colonialism. Maps that take Europe as the center, which is a kind of representation of the world, have more meanings beyond its representation. With this exhibition, as in McArthur's Australia-centered map, curator Martin was showing that he accepted a new center outside the west in the western-centered art world. Indeed, *Magiciens de la Terre* provokes postcolonial debates and stands against geopolitical hierarchies. At the same time, it extends beyond the borders of the west to new geographies.

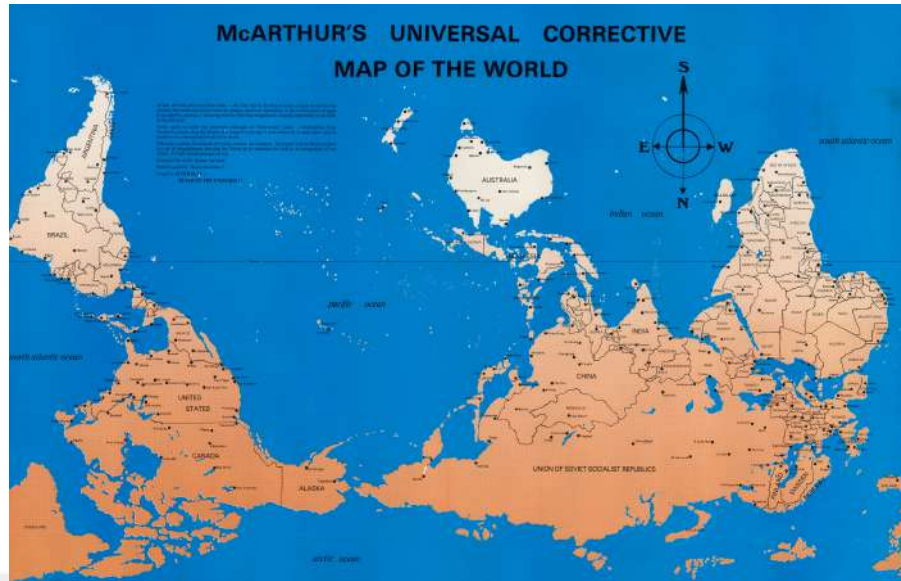


Figure 3.9 *Stuart McArthur, Universal Corrective Map of the World, 1979*

Hans Ulrich Obrist, who is an art critic, art historian, and curator, has crucial importance in curatorial history and its development. The curatorial understanding of Obrist develops alternative forms for curatorial practices through conversations and dialogues. However, he believes that everything starts with a conversation and does not hesitate to try new experimental methods (Obrist, 2014). He has a close relation with artists and mostly commissions artworks. At the start of his career, he did exhibitions in his kitchen, an exhibition called *The Kitchen Show* in 1991, in a suitcase, a hotel restaurant, a hotel room, and other unexpected spaces. Also, he proposes participatory shows such as open submission exhibitions for artists who fit the criteria to submit work. Exhibitions reproduce a new life form to surround them. As if it is a dialogue between curators and artists. In Obrist's curatorial practice, curating is a bridge that connects artists, institutions, communities, and others. According to Obrist, curators follow artists, but it is not a very general attitude that artists follow curators.

One of the well-known exhibitions Obrist curated is *do it*, which was inspired by Marcel Duchamp sending instructions from Argentina to his sister to assemble one of his ready-mades, and by John Cage's music of change and Yoko Ono's work. Lots of artists contributed how-to instructions to do things in the gallery or elsewhere (Obrist & Rıza, 2014). *Do it* is an expanding ongoing exhibition program with the interpretation of instructors curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist since 1993 and started with twelve texts by twelve artists. In 1994, the first version of do-it took place at the Ritter Kunsthalle in


Klagenfurt, Austria, and traveled to other cities. The exhibition, which has developed over the years, has easily adapted to different mediums with the developing and changing conditions of the periods. It was included in the online environment with e-flux in 2004 and has continued its existence in different mediums such as do it-museum, -home, -Tv, -seminar, -outside, -party, and in recent years UNESCO children. The program came across the question of whether the exhibitions should include artworks done by artists. In this respect, it provides an open space for artists and non-curators to take part in curating. This open-ended exhibition project has a process that extends over time in case of saying the last word. Instructions, sketches, and theories generate the exhibition rather than just being a physical show. The exhibition form and its curatorial methodology are evolving, transforming, and expanding through time with the changing conditions of the time. Therefore, the project provides a new curatorial understanding with its diverse and free form. It has a fluid reality and persists for years. As Obrist defines himself as junction-making in his curatorial approach, his role in *do it again* is a mediator and unifying element.

Do it aims to develop a more flexible and open-ended exhibition format. In the formation of this exhibition, Obrist is actually inspired by the instruction-based works of Christian Boltanski and Bertrand Lavier. Boltanski (Fig. 3.10) and Lavier (Fig. 3.11) participated to do-it exhibition with their instructions which refer audiences to create action-based works. Similarly, Rirkrit Tiravanija's instructions (Fig. 3.12) lead audiences to produce a work. The do-it-yourself logic is caused by the fact that the works that are the result of the instructions sent by the artists are seen as works of art. The existence of instructions in art, which began under the leadership of Duchamp, can be seen in the works of the Neo-Avanguardists in the 1960s-70s. At the same time, it also references the avant-garde structure that aims to separate the work from the artist. In the exhibition project, which has been going on for more than 20 years, conceptual and minimalist art and Fluxus practices, which are aiming to eliminate the distinction between art and life, also take part. Obrist, as a curator who works closely with artists and commissions work, questions the role of the artist and artwork in this exhibition. He adopts a curation that expands his practice by learning from artists and carries it to performative fields. This exhibition has a structure that develops within itself and produces new forms. Do it has traveled almost all over the world. In fact, this exhibition, with its ever-changing and moving structure,

provides an opportunity to reflect on alternatives to the circulation of art. It has an open exhibition model with a cumulative structure that is learning, not teaching. It progresses in cooperation with the local communities, artists, and audiences of the region where it is exhibited. At the same time, the communities involved create their own instructions, additionally. With this attitude, do it exhibition stand against the dominant and hierarchical structure of galleries and museums. It creates a space of freedom within the museum by rejecting the institutional structure of the museums rather than overpassing the institutions.

BOLTANSKI, Christian

Les Écoliers (The Schoolchildren) (1993)



Ask the photographer who usually takes the end-of-term photos at the school nearest to the exhibition venue to take individual portraits of all the pupils in one of the classes. These photos, varying in number, are to be enlarged to an 8 by 10 inch format and glued onto a sheet of cardboard.

Arrange the photos on the wall in several rows, leaving a 3 inch gap between each photograph. On the back of each photo, stamp the name of the photographer who took the photo, as well as my own name (the wall label should feature both my name and the photographer's name).

At the end of the exhibition, give the photos to the children portrayed or to their parents.

Figure 3.10 *Christian Boltanski, Instruction in do it catalogue, 1993*

BOLTANSKI, Christian

Instruction (1993)

[1] GET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S PHOTO ALBUM [2] GIVE THE NEIGHBOR YOURS IN EXCHANGE [3] ENLARGE ALL THE PICTURES TO 8 X 10 [4] FRAME THEM SOME SIMPLE FASHION AND HANG THEM ON THE WALLS OF YOUR APARTMENT [5] YOUR NEIGHBOR SHOULD DO THE SAME WITH YOUR ALBUM

Figure 3.11 *Bertrand Lavier, Instruction in do it catalogue, 1993*

This exhibition proposes a new form of curatorial work with its constantly changing and transforming structure. In this case, the role of the curator, artist, and audience in the exhibitions is questioned. In addition, the artist's productions and what the artist represents are other questions to be asked. The involvement of the audience in the process as much as the artist and the curator allows do it to turn the audience away from the passive observer role and into active participants. In this process, the audience themselves produce something as an artwork.



Figure 3.12 Rirkrit Tiravanija, *Instruction*, Meyerhoff Gallery, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, 2000

This exhibition, which stands against the homogeneous structure of the globalizing world and, therefore, the art world, is beyond traditional exhibition models with its structure that includes and multiplies the differences of the place it goes to. The author adopts the concept of mondialite, introduced by the poet and philosopher Eduardo Glissant. The term mondialite refers to a global dialogue that adopts differences rather than dissolving them into one formation. According to Althuler, the do-it exhibition brings together two strategies used in conceptual art. These are instructional art production and the randomness of art production.

Manifesta is a nomadic exhibition series that emerged in Europe to focus on communication between art and social conditions. Each edition took place in different countries of Europe and reflects developments in the field of contemporary art and culture in Europe. Manifesta, unlike the other biennials, offers a new curatorial approach by proposing a nomadic structure and creating a national artistic environment for art practitioners. The art world that Manifesta brings together focuses on the cultural understanding of Europe. Manifesta, which carries the traces of the culture in the different places it takes place, has a structure that stands in front of the center with its nomadic identity. Moreover, it supports multiculturalism and cultural diversity rather than homogenized structures which come to light after globalization. It usually stays away from the popular spots known as the centers of artistic production. All editions of Manifesta took place in the periphery. Besides the exhibition, Manifesta organizes additional programs such as art school, publications, seminars, and meetings. In this way, it progresses in a structure that does not have a center and tries to connect with the locals. Each edition brings together art professionals and emerging artists from various countries, striving to focus on minority groups in Europe and their cultures. With these aspects, Manifesta stands against the usual structure of many exhibitions. Connecting with the locals and focusing on minority cultures undoubtedly reveals a lot of hidden potentials and can be used for its exhibition models and curatorial forms. Manifesta acts as a mediator and aims to create a new cultural network and map. From the very beginning of the exhibition, its theme formed around the concepts of togetherness and creating collaborative networks.

Manifesta 2006 (scheduled to be displayed in Nicosia) was canceled due to political discussions. Exhibiting was a controversial move in the complex local political situation where there was a mosque call to prayer and church bells at the same time. The curating team of Anton Vidokle, Florian Waldvogel, and Mai Abu El Dahab must impartially feed off this political environment. The conceptual framework of Manifesta 6 was created as an interdisciplinary, independent, and international school in reference to Black Mountain College. It was desired to create a space to create a discussion environment on the contemporary art education system. One of the reasons for Manifesta six's cancellation was that the idea of establishing a school in the Turkish-controlled part of the island was

not very permissible for Greek Cypriot sponsors (Zenakos, n.d.). In fact, the cancellation of Manifesta 6 brings back the discussions on the “inclusion of the other” to the art world. Thus, it raises questions such as where art stands in society and what art is for once again.

Venice Art Biennale is one of the oldest and most well-known art exhibitions in the art world. The curator of the 59th Venice Art Biennial, Cecilia Alemani, organized all the meetings and reviews through online channels as a result of the health crisis all over the world (Covid-19). The curator couldn't see the artworks, or visit other countries, yet she pursued intimacy in the artworks and within the artists. Including professional talks and interviews with artists. The biennial partly is the result of remote working. With the global health crisis, people crawled into their shells; moreover, distances caused by the pandemic affected the biennial in a way. The curator seeks to reveal core concepts outside of western trends in art. These dialogues reveal the alternative meaning of intimacy by questioning post-human thought, hybrid beings, challenging figures of man and woman artists, and the responsibilities of human beings to the world. The ambiguity of body, disobedient bodies, and dualism between humans and nature are the major themes that discussed within the biennial. Surrealism reemerges in this biennial, and the curator brings together artists who paint from different aspects and uses traditional materials in untraditional ways. Cecilia Vicuña, one of the invited artists, displayed her paintings and installation (Fig. 3.13) in search of intimacy.

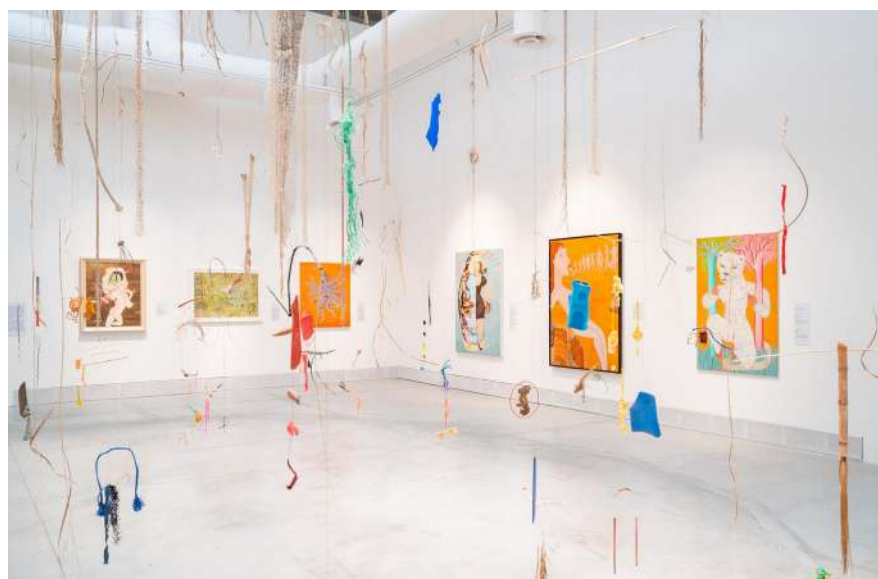


Figure 3.13 *Cecilia Vicuña, Paintings and installation for 59th Venice Art Biennial, 2022*

The curator seeks artists who have strong imaginations yet are away from the popular trends of the 1960s. Canvases, paintings, and color, which are never aging traditional materials, are the grounds that artists reverberate their inner world and represent themselves. However, it is not an unexpected outcome that canvases, patterns, latent figures, and paintings came side by side in order to meet the curator's aspiration to look for intimacy. In fact, an understanding through art and artists in which traditional materials are used. Therefore, artworks that have never been exhibited before with unpopular themes and intimate objects away from the canonized history of art were displayed. With the global health crisis, people crawled into their shells and distances caused by the pandemic affected the biennial in a way. The curator seeks to reveal core concepts outside of western trends in art. There is an effort to propose another method for curating within the exhibition; however, biennial partly is the deficient result of remote working. After all is said and done, this biennial could not propose a form other than the traditional biennial display.

Some important exhibitions that have a place in art history were examined in this chapter. Therefore, the way these exhibitions affect curatorial forms was discussed. At this point, it is important to ask whether major exhibition forms always suggest a new aesthetic understanding in art history. Curators, artists, and art practitioners are experimenting to find an answer to this question. Not all exhibitions can achieve this. While some exhibitions cause significant changes in history, some exhibitions cannot go beyond the exhibition form that was created by collecting existing concepts. However, these attempts should be made even if they cause failure or repetition. As mentioned, some of the important exhibitions have led to the emergence of topics that are still being discussed today, while some exhibitions are just repetitions. As a result, it is very important to understand how contemporary debates will get shaped by what has been learned from these exhibition forms.

3.3 Documenta fifteen: Locality. Not Artistic Concepts but Practices

Documenta, which emerged with the aim of bringing the post-Hitler German avant-garde to light with an experimental approach, has a political stance as of its formation (Documenta website, n.d.); in fact, to follow documenta is to follow the current issues of

the time. Documenta fifteen once more followed the same path radically to embrace the future full of unexpected possibilities. The art world, which progressed from a western perspective until documenta fifteen, collapsed when ruangrupa brought another understanding to the art world as a non-western collective. Rejecting major artistic concepts and focusing on practices, the exhibition radically re-asks many questions about art. What is art?, for whom, and what is it made for?

Many exhibition forms and artist practices, which have changed curatorial forms, have been examined so far. The concepts of practice and collectivity have taken their place in the work of many artists and curators. The way curators formed the concepts for their practices and exhibitions has been discussed, and it was understood that the art market proceeded with a western-centered understanding. Some exhibition forms and artistic practices have done things to stand against western-centered art. In the 21st century, the formation of curatorial forms and productions in the field are being discussed over the concepts of practice, collectivity, and social system rather than the artistic persona and existence of art professionals who are accustomed to art history. One of the issues that should be discussed in the search for curatorial form is that art goes beyond representation and reflects reality. However, documenta took a more radical approach to this situation with a new curatorial form. The exhibition invited collective groups that put forward the representation and reality policies of art to the stage. Beyond the artist's personal productions, documenta fifteen endures its existence as a result of the progress of local groups with their friendship practices. How does art relate to the locals? As Ruangrupa, in an interview, state;

“You felt energetic and inspired. You met your friends. That’s the art” (Subramanian, 2022).

Documenta fifteen has an inclusionary understanding of art having various functions, especially in non-western canons. Moreover, it is interesting how non-western cultures exist in art production. In Eastern cultures, art can have healing power, an understanding with authentic roots, and takes on social functions. It wants to reveal the universal multicultural understanding. Multiculturalism is a political discourse. So post-colonialism is. Curators start to realize what’s going on in the art world apart from art being a decisive center for the west. In this sense, collectives which contain a major part of the non-western

art world, and their works gain importance. The curator of documenta fifteen is also a collective called ruangrupa.

To understand the crucial effects of ruangrupa on curating documenta fifteen, the art history from the perspective of Indonesia needs to be analyzed. Onward the beginning of the 20th century, Indonesian artists have been trying new practices in art production and working with local formations. Conscious collectivity has taken its place as an important concept in modern Indonesian art since the 20th century (Kent, 2022). There are countless art organizations and societies that work with concepts such as community, collectivity, and locality. Moreover, these formations adopt these practices. In the 1930s and 50s, Indonesian artists began to work on the needs of society. In the 1990s, in the art history of Indonesia, there were many formations that worked on collectivity, locality, and artistic practices. To name a few of them; *PERSAGI*, the first national modern art organization established in 1938 and means The Association of Indonesian Draughtsmen, *LEKRA*, which means The Institute for the People's Culture and established in the 1950s, *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru*, which means New Art Movement and established in 1975, and *PIPA*, established in the second half of 1970s (Kent, 2022). The common features of these organizations are working together with society and fostering interdisciplinary and experimental studies taking the concepts into consideration rather than form. They stand against elitist art and adopt a pluralistic understanding of art. At the same time, they benefit from everyday life practices in the production of art. In addition to that, Basuki Resobowo, one of the painters of the PERSAGI (Fig. 3.14) art group, argues that the drawing and the presence of a teapot do not have the same meanings, as Foucault argued in his book *This Is Not a Pipe* (Kent, 2022). In the late 20th century, Resobowo's argument shows that discussions on the reality and its representation took place in eastern art as well as in western art. These discussions paved the way for abstract art in Indonesian art. Concepts such as *gotong-royong* (mutual cooperation) and *sanggar* (creative communities) were used to reveal the community values of anti-colonial formations. The persistence of the PERSAGI art movement and the terms like *gotong-royong* and *sanggar* in art have supported the development of collective Indonesian art. In the 1980s, Indonesian artists pursued social research and started working with non-governmental organizations and collectives. Jatiwangi Art Factory (Fig.3.15) is a good example to

describe the collectives working locally. Babacan Siliwangi Residents Forum, whose activities ended in 2013, is another example of the collective artist group in Indonesian art history.



Figure 3.14 *Members of Persagi, 1940. Photo Credit: Indonesian Visual Art Archive*

Figure 3.15 *Jatiwangi Art Factory (JaF), Ceramic Music Festival, Jatiwangi Square, 2021. Photo Credit: JaF Documentation*

When looking at the art of Indonesia since the 20th century, as seen in the examples, it is understood that Indonesian art consists of works based on collectivity and practice.

Thus, Indonesian artists have developed a local, political, and social existence by using art. At this point, it becomes clear where the roots of the Lumbung context based on documenta fifteen come from. Ruangrupa is another formation that creates its own ecosystem in Indonesia besides the collectives mentioned.

Documenta fifteen forms its conceptual framework around the Indonesian word ‘lumbung,’ which means communal rice barn. It refers to a building in the Indonesian countryside where a community gathers and stores their harvest and is a pool for common use in the future. Initially, this term aimed to refer to creating a joint financial resource for the artists of documenta fifteen by the curator group. Therefore, Lumbung proposes a new type of ecological and economic model in parallel with the terms of collectivity, communal resource sharing, and equal allocation. They aim to create a collaborative and interdisciplinary culture and art platform. Ruangrupa takes the forest into consideration as a form of knowledge and welcomes participants to learn from the forest and nature.

Lumbung is the starting point of the documenta, and documenta is the first edition of a series of projects to continue. In this exhibition, artists do not teach but spread their knowledge.

The curator group believes that more comprehensive associations will be needed to change or be a part of major changes, even if they have been a collective since the beginning of their formation in 2013. In this way, they create their own ecosystems on various scales. The conceptual diagram to create their ecosystem and growing networks can be seen in Documenta fifteen catalogue (Fig. 3.16). The first ecosystem they created, called The Gudang Sarinah Ecosystem, consists of a warehouse and is used for almost all meetings, events, and other gatherings. They shape documenta as part of their practice and journey.

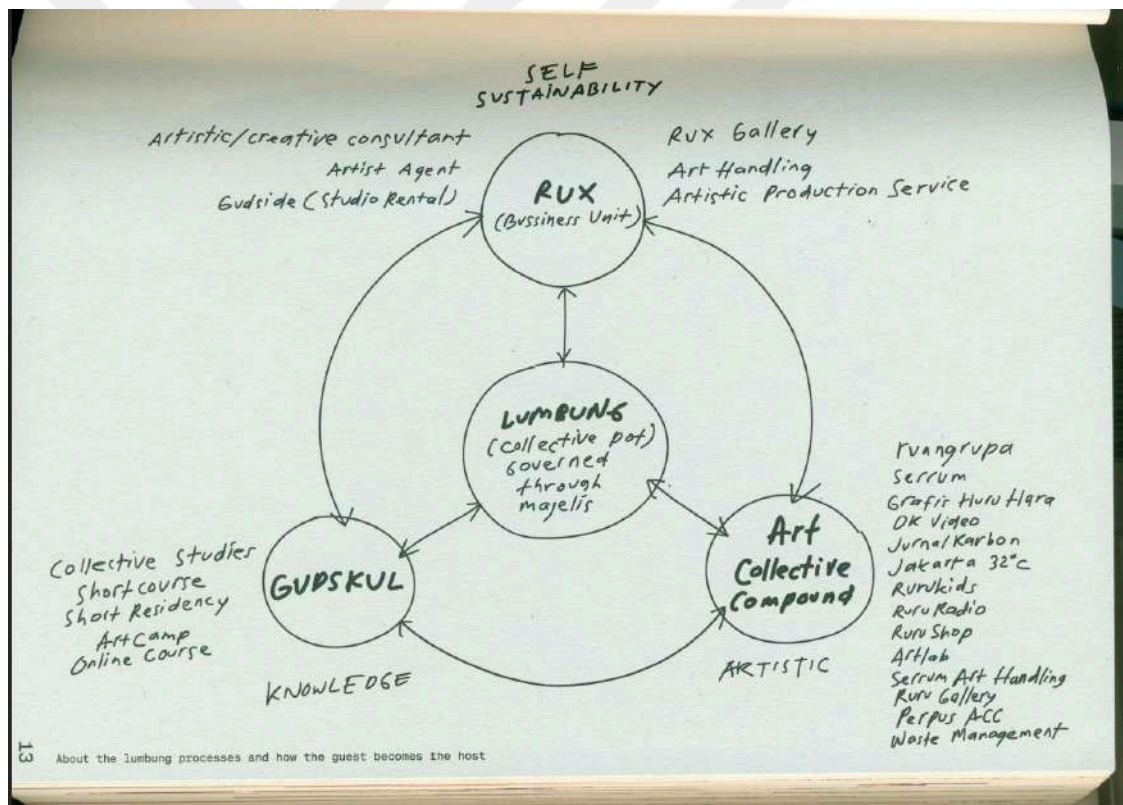


Figure 3.16 Documenta fifteen catalogue, 2022

Documenta fifteen is just the first edition of a long-term project that started earlier and will continue afterward. The curator team, ruangrupa, invited different artists and collectives to the exhibition as extensions of their formation. Initiatives that progress with

a working principle of *lumbung* were also invited to be included in the artist team. These initiatives have become *lumbung* inter-local members. Increasingly, *lumbung* artists, initiatives, and collectives are included in documenta, opposing the curatorial practice that puts the curator at the center. Ruangrupa approach Kassel as a platform where they can collaborate with local initiatives and collectives. As part of the exhibition, the curator group forms an area called *ruruhaus* in Kassel to make space for initiatives, visiting artists, and participators. This attitude arises from the practice of using the living room and dining room as exhibition spaces in Indonesia. Within the exhibition program, studies have been carried out on creating new communication, networks, and sustainable structures with initiatives. At this point, understanding what artistic practices mean plays a very important role. Documenta fifteen has a structure that creates its own economy. This structure is inspired by the term *gado-gado*, which comes from Indonesian cuisine and means a dish with a bit of everything. *Majelises* is the platform that defines as a learning environment where *lumbung* members discuss their problems and exchange ideas. *Majelis* meetings had to be maintained online due to the pandemic. *Majelis* are meaningful tools for promoting the local and perceiving differences. Groups, which are divided into smaller *majelises* within themselves, create their own rules and decisions. Workshops are organized to create a local ecosystem with a practice and context-based approach. Documenta continues to exist in different areas. Some of them are *lumbung kios* located in different parts of the city, *lumbung.space* which is an online platform, and *lumbung press* physical media. *Lumbung kios*'s purpose is to establish a decentralized network and host the products of artists. In this way, documenta explores different ways of communicating with larger groups. *Lumbung.space* proceeds non-extractively and co-governed by its users, summarizing the overall structure of documenta.

Art is not a field limited to definitions and disciplines. On the contrary, art is a structure that is intertwined with life. Art has vital, social, and economic roots to life. As it is explained in the Documenta fifteen catalogue (Fig. 3.17), socially integrated art has emerged in line with the experiences of the communities and the needs of the people. This situation suggests a more horizontal form of communication outside of the conventional understanding of art and has a participatory structure. It works independently of the presence of a leader or an artist. This is an attitude that is far from the aesthetic and artistic understanding of western cultures. The role of the spectator is more dominant in west's

understanding of art. In this context, ruangrupa proposes a new understanding of aesthetics and art making, which eliminates the role of the observer. As the observer role is removed, the observers become part of the work itself. This understanding, of course, has a structure that is far from concepts; it is more around practices and contexts. Documenta fifteen creates a practice-based formation away from popular concepts and themes. The artists, initiatives, and collectives selected in this exhibition also come to the fore with their practices aimed at developing and contributing to their own communities. In fact, the way artists maintain their practice in their own region is important. The curator group asks the artists they choose to continue the projects they are currently working on rather than commission a new work or exhibit an existing work. Instead of producing a new artwork, the curator group asking invited artists to continue their existing works references the harvesting context in documenta. The accessibility and sharing of artworks are a transformation in itself. Beyond that, it is important what artists bring to Kassel as well as what they take to their local communities and how they transform their ecosystems after documenta fifteen. In this sense, artists, collectives, and initiatives have tried different ways. Some moved their practice to Kassel, while others expanded their presence and adapted their ecosystems to Kassel. With the emergence of Covid, there were changes in documenta fifteen's plan, and some programs started ahead of their time. During this process, talking to the artists about how they are coping with this process has provided an important opportunity to understand their survival strategies.

The structure of documenta fifteen follows a clear and unruly path. In this way, the exhibition organically grew and ramified. Thus, there always is a possibility to create a space for unexpected changes in the exhibition process. It is an exhibition that is dynamic and has a structure that responds to the needs of the participants. The necessity of following an alternative way for exhibition display and placement has emerged as a result of artists not working with a concept or a specific place in documenta fifteen. Functions began to play an important role in the installation of the exhibition. The placement of artworks according to functional needs and spatial usage creates an organically formed exhibition. This documenta fifteen has turned into a structure that reveals exchange and friendship relations beyond an exhibition.

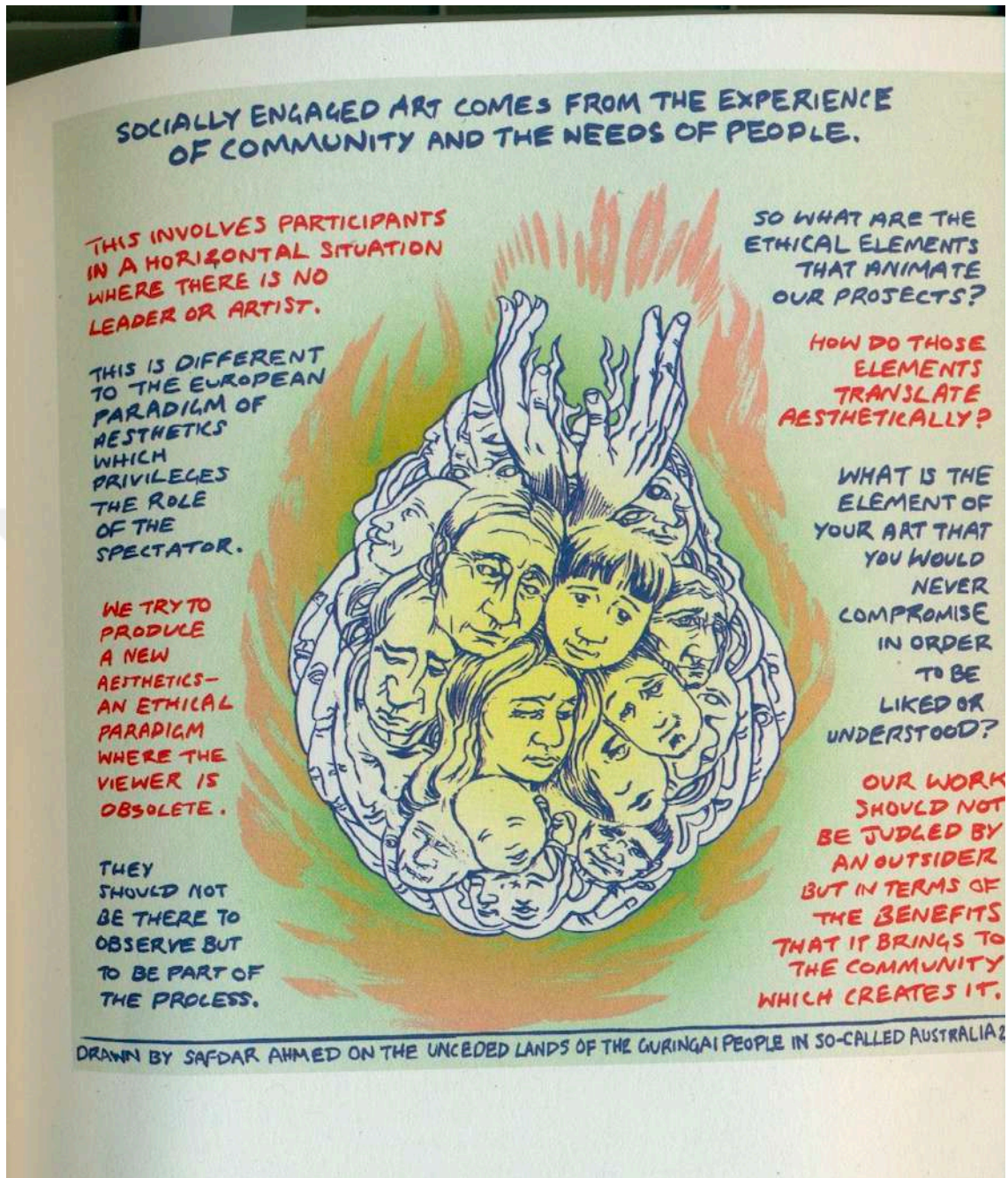


Figure 3.17 *Documenta fifteen catalogue*, 2022

In *documenta fifteen*, the term *sobat-sobat*, which means friend in Indonesian, was used as art mediators to enable the transmission and exchange of information between artists and visitors. *Sobat-sobats* are the most active and creative groups of the *lambung* system, and most of them were residents of Kassel. In this way, knowledge-sharing proceeds grew organically from the local to the global context. In *documenta fifteen*, the term *meydan*, which defines public space in Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages, was used as spaces

that are accessible to all and where people can come together to discuss and celebrate (Ruangrupa Website, n.d.). The formation of meydans takes place with the support of local communities, initiatives, and cooperation in Kassel.



Figure 3.18 Gudskul banner for Documenta Fifteen, Fridericianum, Kassel, 2022.

Photo: Nicolas Wefers

Documenta fifteen emerges with a radical discourse for the 21st century. It rejects the artist persona and talks about survival strategies besides collective and artistic productions. In fact, the rejection of the artistic persona questions the place of art in society and questions what the benefit of art is. Documenta fifteen goes beyond the limits of the previous document with this new proposed structure. It saves art from the capitalist system by creating its own economy away from individuality. Therefore, it creates a network through non-Western local collectives. Unlike the traditional exhibition forms, documenta fifteen does not follow popular concepts but believes in the existence of the practices. It questions the restrictive existence of institutions in the art production environment. Art acts as a practice that reminds us of the shared value of being collective by eliminating central identities in art. It eliminates representation by working with groups affected by the ecological and climate crisis directly. These discussion topics and terms welcome audiences of Documenta fifteen by standing near the entrance of the exhibition space (Fig. 3.18).

Documenta fifteen proposes a self-contained system that follows the principles of ecological, social, and economic sustainability. Collectivity and locality are of great importance in the exhibition. Documenta fifteen creates a different energy system beyond the exhibition by proposing curating as an attitude that cannot be separated from life. Art is rooted in life. The work of the curator group revolves around not concepts but practices such as friendship, solidarity, and community. This exhibition, which deals with art as a system, opens a discussion platform on the effects of the art environment, biennials, galleries, and art institutes on the production of artists. The question of whether the art environment and artist productions can be emancipated from the influence of institutions and art galleries. In the 21st century, documenta fifteen asks questions such as what art is and what an artist's production is, and how these productions affect curatorial spaces by maintaining their political and radical stance.

3.3.1 Representation Politics: Postcolonial Studies and Aesthetic Exploitation

Instead of representing indigenous cultures, ruangrupa directly bring their collective thinking and lifestyles to the exhibition. Thus, they invite different forms of sociability and locality to the stage and bring up postcolonial debates, and discuss the concept of locality. The issue of representation has been studied by many scholars and artists in the 20th century. When Foucault says that this is not a pipe, it is a picture and a representation of a pipe, and Warhol creates copies of Brillo boxes, they are concerned about not the image but what they represent. Picasso used African masks in many of his works. This approach had a different aesthetic understanding far beyond traditional realism and naturalism in the art world dominated by the West.

The way primitive objects are displayed and conceptualized in the exhibitions is an important issue to be considered. Even if they are intended to be used for different purposes, these objects can often appear as fetishized objects. In fact, when discussing the fetishization of tribal objects, it is necessary to examine the Cabinet of Curiosities as an example in the context of colonialism and representation. This act of collecting interesting objects from different geographies, on the one hand, refers to the subject of colonialism. Objects that are admired and found interesting in the visited geographies become a display object when they are taken from there and come to European lands.

There is no interaction with the culture, nor can it be said that the objects represent the cultures they came from. At this point, we encounter the problem of cultural representation and the fetishization of objects. The objects exhibited in these cabinets are now an object of exposition and fetish for the audience, stripped of their culture and possible meanings. Snickare with his words states that,

"The desire for rare collectibles, in its turn, was a driving force behind the launching and funding of colonial enterprises" (Mauney, 2022).

As Snickare and other thinkers have argued, the colonial approaches of the whites were embodied by the Cabinet of Curiosities¹. In 1636, Frans Francken the Younger displayed his founded and exotic objects under the name of Kunst- und Raritätenkammer in Chamber of Art and Curiosities, as can be seen in figure 3.19.

¹ In the 16th and 17th centuries, it was common to collect and display interesting objects in the Cabinet of Curiosities (also known as Wunderkammer, Wonder room, or kunstkammer) in Europe. These cabinets were the places that included collections of extraordinary decorative objects in a categorized way. These categories were naturalia, which includes mineral, rock, preserved animal, and plant specimens, and artificialia, which includes man-made objects (Mauney, 2022). Ferrante Imperato's *Dell'Historia Naturale* in Naples, 1599, and Ole Worm's *Musei Wormiani* in 1655 are the earliest illustrated examples of cabinets.



Figure 3.19 *Frans Francken the Younger, Kunst- und Raritätenkammer (Chamber of Art and Curiosities), 1636.*

In order to avoid misleading topics in the fetishization of these objects, it is necessary to understand the importance of these questions; What do these tribal figures represent in modern art? Do they bring with them what they represent, or are these representations Westernized and become a figure of modern art? As Rasheed Araeen (1989) also mentioned in an article in third text to criticize *Magiciens de la Terre* exhibition, it is often directed according to the value of the commodity and what the global world dominates. A similar situation can be encountered in the Cubism and Abstract Art exhibition. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the value of the commodity and its role in the global arena rather than the fetishization of the commodity. Tribal objects continue their existence as figures who have witnessed history beyond just the models depicted. Tribal

objects, and therefore art, are considered ritualistic, decorative, therapeutic, and apotropaic in their own societies (Hal, 1985). The abstraction of these tribal objects, when evaluated from the perspective of Picasso and Gauguin, actually references the avant-garde and formal experiential quest in history. It goes beyond just a representation and strives to include the invisible in art history. Cubism was, of course, influenced by these essays, as Picasso's African masks reference cubist forms. Gauguin's approach to the colors he used in his paintings from a different angle after his trip to Tahiti directed the post-impressionist works. When the works displayed in the Cubism and Abstract Art exhibition (Fig. 3.20) and the diagrams which Barr created to analyze the development of important movements in art history are examined, it is understood how the art movements in history got shaped. In addition, in a letter to the *College Art Journal*, writes; “It is worth noting, briefly, the two great waves of discovery: the first might be called cubist-expressionist. This was concerned primarily with formal, plastic, and emotional values of a direct kind. The second wave, quasi-surrealist, was more preoccupied with the fantastic and imaginative values of primitive art” (Bar, 1950).



Figure 3.20 *Pablo Picasso, Picasso's works for Cubism and Abstract Art Exhibition, MOMA, NY, 1936*

In Picasso's early cubist work, tribal objects, angular shapes, and other elements took place. *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907) is a work that connects modern and pre-modern and carries primitive images. After Picasso, many European artists were inspired by African culture. Again, Gauguin had a primitive style in his works after he lived in Tahiti for a short time. Picasso, Gauguin, and other artists created a kind of representation of Indigenous cultures by using the colors, patterns, and styles they adapted from these cultures. Picasso, Gauguin, and others actually transformed the cultures in which they were influenced in their search for a new form and color instead of just creating a representation of Indigenous cultures. As can be seen in Gauguin's painting named *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* in figure 3.21, he contributed to improvement of post-impressionism with the bold choice of colors and two-dimensional forms.

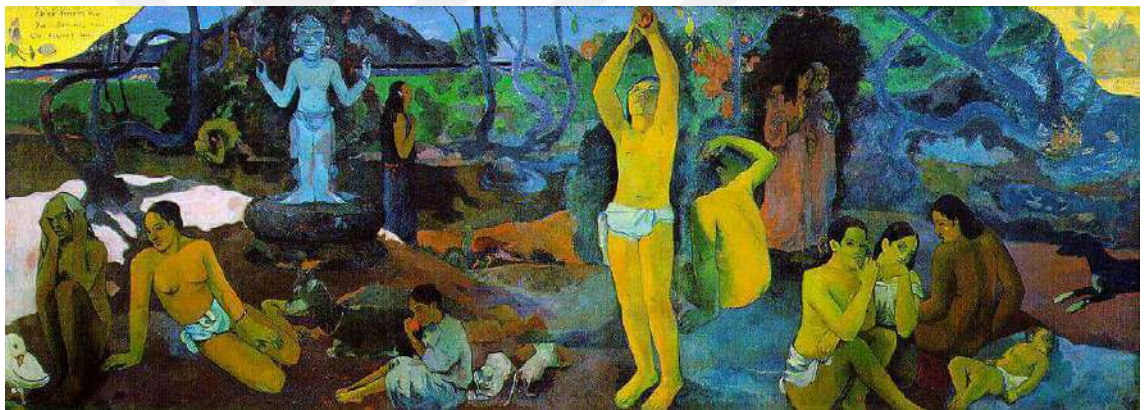


Figure 3.21 *Paul Gauguin, Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going, 1898*

African (tribal) objects carry a language, a philosophy within themselves, and create their own cosmology. Tribal objects and figures carry a sub-reality and go beyond their appearance rather than just being aesthetic objects. Indigenous cultures and their tribal objects paved the way for the development of modern art, as seen in the examples of Picasso and other artists (Diagne, 2020). Indeed, these objects have different meanings with the local ties they establish in their own lands. In Diagne's (2020) words; “The way they were actually created, and designed, was already an aesthetic gesture.....But to carve the mask is to say something beyond simply the fact that the mask

is going to appear in this or that religious ceremony. The carving itself is an aesthetic gesture that is incorporated in that artistic meaning, is incorporated in the object”.

Picasso transformed African masks and presented them from his own perspective. However, there is an important question that needs to be asked here what does it mean when they return to their homeland after being transformed by the artists? Influenced by African masks painting of *Les Femmes d'Alger* produced different meanings with the aesthetic knowledge Picasso learned and transformed from these masks. The similarity of an African mask and Picasso's study for the face of *Les Femmes d'Alger* can be seen in figure 3.22 and 3.23. At this point, it cannot be said that Picasso and Gauguin approached Indigenous cultures with a colonial approach in terms of the forms and colors they transformed from. In this example, a pluralistic approach is encountered beyond the fetishization or colonization of tribal objects. Beyond the representational debates, it is a respectful action that Picasso presented invisible cultures in the art scene to the other world. At this point, *ruangrupa*, in *documenta* fifteen years later, rejected this aesthetic exploitation and the domination of the western center and found a way to communicate with these cultures. In this sense, *ruangrupa*'s efforts and the issues they discuss are issues that have been up to date for years. Of course, this brings the issue of representation and its discussions to life.



Figure 3.22 *Mbuya (sickness) mask, Pende, Zaire*

Figure 3.23 *Pablo Picasso, the study for Les Femmes d'Avignon, 1907*

There are different ways of making art in different societies. However, these practices are not always easily accepted. Sometimes they are left out because they are not suitable for the aesthetic criteria or existing art-making models of the time. Ruangrupa opens new platforms in the art world by curating documenta fifteen (a view of the exhibition can be seen in Fig. 3.24) to show that these different ways of making art are possible. Moreover, they support different art-making practices rather than trying to fit existing art models. Different ways of making art pave the way for different practices in making art. Ruangrupa proposes a variable, controversial and co-governed structure. Lumbung is a model that can continue beyond document fifteen, change, and adapt according to needs. It exists in various scales, with rhizomatic forms of communication. Lumbung should be able to continue its life in different regions, with different structures, strategies, and localities, as ruangrupa wants to create. If the different meanings and ways of making art in different societies are being discussed, it is clear that different ways of realizing them should be considered as well. Ruangrupa proposes a variable, controversial and co-governed structure. In this sense, ruangrupa leaves the art world an ever-expanding and transforming, and self-learning horizontal platform where one can discuss, modify,

expand, and discuss different ways of making art. This platform is a seed for the future and will continue to exist with its expanding structure in local art environments. This exhibition form allows you to make your own lumbung!



Figure 3.24 *View of the Question of Funding Hosting Eltiqa Documenta 15, 2022.*

Photo: Nils Klinger

4. CONCLUSION: LEGACY TO THE FUTURE. HOW TO DISCUSS THE REALITY OF THE 21ST CENTURY IN CURATORIAL DISCOURSES?

Artistic practices and productions have influenced curatorial forms and shaped the way curators create concepts. In 1960, with the demystification of curatorial roles, curating turned into a more autonomous and creative field. Lippard's concept of dematerialization and Burham's transition of art from object-oriented to system-oriented expanded the borders of curatorial studies. Object-oriented art has left its place to systems, behaviors, and practices. There have been very important exhibitions and artistic works that have changed the direction of curatorial studies in art history. *Magiciens de la Terre* opened the door to non-Western art and welcomed artists from western and non-western cultures. Martin believes that some artists are invisible because they do not follow the conventional rules of the current art world's system. In this exhibition, the curator plays the role of an actor who warns society against these changes in the globalization process of the developing and changing world. When *Magiciens de la Terre* was exhibited, historian Patrick Boucheron was talking about the need to divert our western perspective and make history through different readings, as he stated in his book *L'entretien du monde*. After 1989, besides the radical questions posed by the exhibition, different fields of work and curatorial and artistic roles appeared in biennials, art fairs, galleries, and museums. After the Armory show and *Magiciens de la Terre* exhibitions were displayed, the increasing number of biennials, artists working with different cultures, and nomadic curators in the art world caused art to overflow from the center and spread to the peripheries. *Do it* is another crucial project. Obrist, as a curator who works closely with artists, tended towards more performative fields in curation. It is an ongoing exhibition project that brings new approaches to curation and exhibition. Moreover, it creates a platform for art practitioners and exhibition participants away from hierarchical structures. *Do it* displayed in different countries with the participation of numerous artists. In this case, local artists, and collaborations, coming from the places where the exhibition is displayed are also included in the exhibition process. The questions of what art is and the role of the artist is come to light with its structure that create a platform for artworks away from the autonomy of the artists. Obrist, in his curatorial practice, is learning from artists and working closely with

them. This shows that curatorial studies and artistic practices directly influence each other.

Manifesta proposes an exhibition model that conducts research on minority cultures in Europe with its nomadic and non-central structure. With a structure that does not accept a center, it stands somewhere between art and society. Unlike other biennials, which are large-scale exhibitions that nurture the national and international art scene, Manifesta works more vernacular, focusing on the culture of Europe. Manifesta, which creates a local network and strong communication with society rather than following popular topics in the art scene, maintains its existence in the peripheries. The curator of the Venice Art Biennial, which coincided with the pandemic period, pursued intimacy. However, the curator, who could not visit any country or artist's workshop due to the pandemic, was beholden to this situation. But beyond that, the curator focuses on secluded works by non-canonized artists. At this point, the decision to go after the unpopular is admirable.

However, in addition to the above-mentioned exhibitions, some artists' practices in history have also expanded the curatorial areas. At the same time, these artists, with their practices, have caused effective changes in the field of curatorial studies. Onward the 20th century, the pedagogic projects of artists and their socially integrated participatory artistic projects are the works that need to be examined. Starting with Joseph Beuys, pedagogic projects stand against hierarchical structure by using art as a tool to create socially engaged and participatory art projects. Beuys is an important figure. The Free International University project, exhibited at documenta six, created an open platform that includes interdisciplinary fields. By all means, with this project, Beuys brings a different perspective to the authoritarian and individualistic role of the artist and hierarchical structure in art. Beuys tried to create a connection between art and society. In other respects, Hirschhorn, with similar concerns, aimed to create a horizontal and participatory structure which can be seen in the very first monuments of him. His large-scale structures and turning the audience into active participants in his projects establish strong communication between art and society. Ögüt, with similar approaches to Hirschhorn and Beuys, works on participatory art practices away from the hierarchy. Silent University, one of his well-known projects, changes the institutional structure of the Delfina residency program. At this point, while discussing the communication between art and society, questions on where institutions stand at this point come to light.

İnci Eviner's Co-action Device project stands somewhere between performative research methods and educational experience. In addition to being a strong example of participatory art, it also discusses forms of artistic production together with the problematics of art education. In fact, Eviner's project exemplifies a multi-layered structure, asking the right questions to understand documenta fifteen, which discusses alternative ways of artistic production beyond the canonized and westernized art world. To summarize, Beuys's The Free International University, Hirschhorn's early monuments, Ögüt's The Silent University, and Eviner's Co-action Device propose a non-didactic proposition that question the role of art, artists, and participants in the process of artistic production.

All these projects actually form the basis of the questions asked in documenta fifteen. On the one hand, the artists, with their practices, paved the way for the changes in the curatorial field; on the other hand, they gave direction to the already changing understanding of making art. The common features of these exhibitions are that they follow an unconventional curatorial approach and displaying methods. In this sense, these important exhibitions mentioned above and the important developments in the Indonesian art scene, that nurtured the ruangrupa, have prepared the audience for documenta fifteen. By all means, ruangrupa took the curatorial discussions to a completely different place with the strategies they developed. However, the most important thing is how we will process concepts such as collectivity, locality, friendship, and sharing in the field of curation and what kind of impact documenta fifteen will have on the future.

Documenta proposes exhibition-making as a way of life and discusses it through relationships of locality, practice, and friendship. It opens ways of making art independent of institutions, galleries, and biennials. Moreover, most importantly, it radically re-asks the questions of what art is and who it is for. Inviting local groups to the stage, documenta chooses artists according to their own economy and ecology. Each artist or group of artists invites another artist to the documenta. In this way, they create an artist network that grows and stratifies. It is a system that stands against the power of a curator who chooses the artists alone and breaks this hierarchical structure, and proposes horizontal communication. In this case, the question of what the role of the curator is in today's art scene needs to be asked again from a different perspective. After documenta fifteen, the questions of what kind of research the curator conducts and what s/he learns from these

practices, locality, and friendships should be discussed again and again. Can this new form of the locality of documenta preserve this distinctive structure it offers to the art world? How this system will progress after documenta is the critical point.

4.1 Possible Artistic Production and Curatorial Turn

There are ways in which artworks speak that aren't necessarily loud: they can whisper and still have great power...If we have an open mind, Western art doesn't have to be seen in opposition to art from elsewhere.

Okwui Enwezor

Documenta fifteen is a striking example that shows there is a world outside of the well-known western-centered art and that there are different ways of producing art. These different practices of producing art are not visible today because they do not fit the trends of the existing art world. Documenta fifteen revealed these possibilities and opened doors for other productions. For this customary form to change, documenta leaves seeds for the future.

In Eastern cultures, art is practiced in different ways. Western art, which is tied to the artist persona and art professionals, changes form in the East and references rituals, myths, social networks, healings, needs, ephemerality, and new types of economies. Eastern art is believed to have healing power. Art, which comes from the Greek words *ars* and *techne*, includes the actions that are not presented by nature with the ability of people to invent but that have emerged as a result of human action (Schiner, 2004). At the beginning of humanity, art had nothing to do with aesthetics. Art was a magical weapon used in the struggle for survival in human society (Fischer, 2010). In the 21st century, art is actually looking for ways to get rid of the domination of the West and return to its roots. As Fischer said, art turns into an action that opens up ways for them to survive in the struggle for society. As documenta fifteen suggested. Saying that art is born out of necessity pushes it towards a different social system other than the West. These questions need to be asked once more with an Eastern artistic perspective through the concepts of practice, locality, friendship networks, and others; What is art? Does it contribute to society? What kind of communication do society and art have?

Curatorial knowledge production emerges as a result of political, social, and cultural debates. In order to increase the accumulation of curatorial knowledge and expand this field, new ways, economies, and collective combinations need to be tried. The impact of artistic practices and their development in the field has crucial importance in curatorial fields. Beyond the western-centered, individualistic, male-dominated, and object-oriented art practices, documenta fifteen offers a platform that is participatory and reactionary. In this edition of documenta, ruangrupa proposed a community with a democratic and pluralistic approach. In their curatorial practice, completely different and non-traditional methods were used. Therefore, the curating practice began to be considered in a pluralistic and participatory structure, away from individuality and hierarchy. Other members of Lumbung have joined the curation field by accepting a shared ownership structure as well as a shared economy. In this case, ruangrupa with the lumbung members performs a collective curation attitude. The practice of making art is a form of resistance. Ruangrupa moved its cultural heritage to Kassel and connected life and art in a strong manner.

Onward the beginning of the 20th century, there have been important developments in the field of art in Indonesia. In addition, many collective formations maintain their works in artistic fields. Indonesian artists and collectives have tried alternative ways of artistic production. Working closely with local groups, Indonesian artists have created a system based on conscious collectivity, locality, practices, and shared economy. Many groups have formed to continue their work in these contexts, but not all collectives have survived up to the present. When these practices and the collectives that survived in the 20th century are examined, it is seen that there is another kind of art understanding that does not center the Westernized art productions. Therefore, the needs of society have turned into an important element of these collectives in their production. They suggest a form other than elitist art and aesthetical concerns. PERSAGI, LEKRA, The People's Culture, Gerakan Seni Rupa Batu, PIPA, Jatiwangi Art Factory (JAF), and Babacan Siliwangi Residents Forum are groups representing modern Indonesian art that experience and use alternative ways of art production in the 20th century. They pursue experimental and interdisciplinary studies and give importance to concepts rather than forms. Ruangrupa, the curator of documenta fifteen, is also a formation like the collectives mentioned above. The formation and development of these collectives and groups is a thriving branch of

the arts in the non-Western periphery, and they planted the seeds for many of the issues discussed today in documenta fifteen, years before the exhibition. Besides that, Indonesian painter Basuki Resobowo opened a discussion on the absolute existence and representative image of a teapot, creating a space to talk about reality and representation. At the same time, Foucault's argument of "this is not a pipe" increases the tension between reality and its representation.

The issue of representation and reality is a subject that has been discussed for many years in the history of art and is still being discussed. Going back before modern times, *The Slaughtered Ox*, painted by Rembrandt in 1655 and can be seen in figure 4.1, tries to explain the weight of a slaughtered animal body with its thick layers of paint and brush strokes. Likewise, in the painting *Three Studies for a Crucifixion*, painted by Francis Bacon in 1963 and can be seen in figure 4.2, he creates a representation of animal flesh in a different style but with the same nudity. Bacon revealed reality with all its nakedness, as Rembrandt did. Unquestionably, these paintings were very bold and impressive. However, in Hermann Nitsch's performance with a slaughtered bull called *the 80th Action* (Fig. 4.3), it is seen that he goes beyond representation and reveals reality using real meat. Nitsch gives us death itself. In that sense, Nitsch's attitude of revealing reality by working with actual animal flesh rather than its image can be matched by the ruangrupa inviting directly affected groups to documenta fifteen.



Figure 4.1 Rembrandt, *The Slaughtered Ox*, Louvre, Paris, 1655

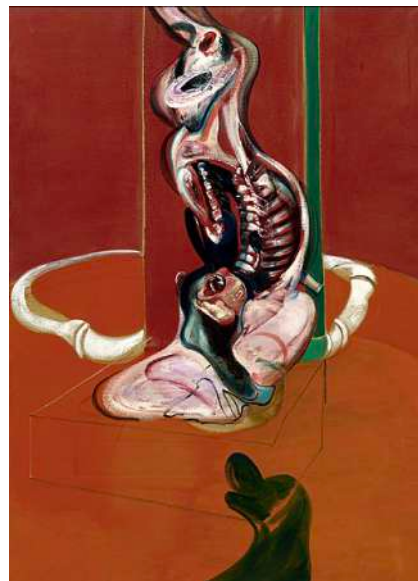


Figure 4.2 Francis Bacon, *Three Studies for a Crucifixion*, Guggenheim Museum, 1963



Figure 4.3 *Hermann Nitsch, the 80th Action, 2020*

Besides, Gauguin's primitive paintings and Picasso's *Les demoiselles d'Avignon* and African masks are actually representations of groups from which patterns and colors are taken. In addition to these examples, artworks, which Indigenous societies represented by western artists, especially those influenced by Picasso, are frequently encountered in the history of art. The representation of the image that has a double-sided duality can be encountered; however, its absolute existence cannot be reached at this point. The use and westernization of colors, patterns, and practices of Indigenous societies by western artists have developed a system of aesthetic exploitation. By all means, when the art history from the perspective of Indonesian or non-Western societies analyzed, it is possible to come across that the represented groups are themselves included in this art medium or object. However, years later, with *documenta fifteen*, Indigenous societies or societies affected by the climate crisis took part in the exhibition instead of being represented. It is important that represented people exist in an exhibition of great importance in the art community. In fact, it will be decent to come across non-Western art without having to rummage through the archives to understand or see it. *Ruangrupa* is one of the above-mentioned collectives, and they brought their culture to Kassel along with them, bringing a completely different breath to curatorial studies and the understanding of exhibition making.

Documenta is an exhibition that shaped its time by performing radical changes and discussions. To understand the inclusion of Nigerian curator Okwui Enwezor in documenta eleven as the first non-European curator in documenta history is an important part of understanding documenta fifteen. In 2015, Enwezor, by curating the 56th Venice Art Biennale with the title of All the World's Future, became the first African-born curator in the 120-year history of the Venice Biennale. His curatorial work is often nurtured by unexpected encounters between art, popular culture, and documentary. Okwui always takes a stance against the European and American-centered art world in his works. He approaches these issues from a different perspective, working on lesser-known cultures and diasporas in the world. In this context, he has been quite influential in the context of post-colonial studies of contemporary art. Therefore, Okwui curated Documenta 11 with a group of curators to break down the single exhibition-auteur model. In other respects, Okwui fractured the singularity and homogeneity of the mega-exhibitions. Okwui and Bauer define Documenta 11 as a temporarily adopted country and a space of refuge. In other respects, Bauer uses the term *third space*, which is adopted from Edward Soja. Documenta 11 is another important study to understand postcolonial studies and globalization in art. With his curatorial approach, Enwezor sought to redefine the structure of art institutions according to the model of decolonized and globalized art. In addition to Kassel, it spread this exhibition to 5 different platforms. These platforms were located in Berlin, Delhi, the West Indian Island of St. Lucia, Lagos, and finally, Kassel. Events such as the 9/11 attack and the refugee crisis, which took place during the years Documenta 11 was preparing for the exhibition, made people think that racism had returned to Europe. This situation expanded the discussion areas of the exhibition.

Enwezor was interested in contemporary art outside of the North Atlantic (Gardner, and Green, 2017). This exhibition is not the first postcolonial art exhibition that Enwezor directed. In the mid-1990s, in New York, Enwezor, together with Salah Hassa and Chika Okeke-Agulu, founded the Journal of Contemporary African Art and set up their first exhibition, In/sight: African Photographers (Gardner and Green, 2017). The methodology of Documenta 11 started to be planted with the In/sight exhibition. At that time, he was inclined to practice co-curator and discuss the different modes of non-Western (in this case, African art) art. This exhibition is more than simply opposing North Atlantic

hegemony. Curators like Enwezor have argued that already existing but marginalized artists can be supported. As Enwezor points out in the Documenta 11 catalogue in 2002,

Today's avant-garde is so thoroughly disciplined and domesticated within the scheme of the Empire that a whole different set of regulatory and resistance models has to be found to counterbalance Empire's attempts at totalization. Hardt and Negri call this resistance force, opposed to the power of the Empire, the multitude.

Curatorial studies and artistic practices cannot be separated from each other. When examining many exhibition forms that affect the history of art, it is seen that some of them propose a new aesthetic form in the curatorial field and lead audiences into different discussions. It is, of course, possible to discuss Documenta fifteen in this way today, thanks to the development and continuous change of major exhibitions and artists' practices in art history. Curatorial forms were also directly affected by these changes. Some exhibitions and artists have been using existing trends, while the curators have worked on different concepts and art practices. Documenta fifteen replaces artists who represent affected groups or Indigenous people with the represented groups by changing the western-centered understanding of art. Therefore, terms such as collectivity, practice, and sharing, which are frequently encountered in art, also take their place in curatorial studies. In this case, curators should continue to work parallel with artistic practices, collectivity, locality, friendship, and other concepts that come to light with documenta fifteen. Curating emerges as an attitude that reflects practices rather than being a profession. The layers and meanings of terms such as practices, social systems, friendship networks, sharing economy, collective knowledge production, and conscious collectivity, which are the legacy of Documenta fifteen to the future, should be expanded and used in the art world and curatorial studies.

4.2 Legacy to the Future: The Reality of the 21st Century in Curatorial Discourse

Curators have been trying different methods in their approaches and expanding the boundaries of their disciplines which can be examined through their works. With the dramatic changes in curatorial practices, curators take on a more active and creative role leaving behind the passive caretaker role. As curators take on more active and creative

roles, they begin to exchange new roles and work more closely with artists. Nowadays, it is quite challenging to distinguish the roles between curator and artist. To understand the changing curatorial practices, it is important to understand how artistic practices affect curatorial strategies and methods. In this case, an interactive environment has come to light between curators and artists, with their roles and approaches being exchanged. With these interactions and the anonymous role of curatorial, new curatorial models are emerging. The demystification and clarification of curatorial roles in the 1960s, the curator-as-author exhibition model in the late 80s, and the enhancement of the curator-centered discourse in the 1990s were the contributions to the roles of curatorial changes. The idea that exhibitions are works related to institutions in the 1970s, the emergence of institutional criticism with Andrea Fraser, the discussion of the spatial structure, and the emergence of the independent curator role with Szeemann had groundbreaking effects in the curatorial field. Above all, this practice has been shaped and deeply affected by changing world conditions which are social, economic, and political. The subjects conceptualized by the curators also have been changed and transformed within this framework. Therefore, the concept of curation turns into a field that is open to interaction and does not have a specific definition that constantly changes in parallel with the productions of the artists of the period.

In this paper, the questions that are frequently discussed and of great importance from different perspectives through some important artists and major exhibition forms were examined in the case of curatorial history. These questions are what art is, who it is for, and where artists as social agent stand. Moreover, pedagogic projects in art history were examined and reviewed through these basic questions to understand the way curators learned from the artists and their practices. Ruangrupa, the curator group of documenta fifteen in 2022, and their curatorial approaches were evaluated in line with the analyzes obtained in this research. The concepts of practice, collectivity, and locality, which were adopted from the curatorial practice of ruangrupa by taking curatorial development progresses from a path based on artist practices, systems, and attitudes into consideration. In this context, a discussion platform was created to have a better understanding on the inclusion of the "the other," which was examined in all exhibitions and throughout the paper, and the transformation of the other into an object of fetish and exposition.

Postcolonialism comes to light as an important concept in this discussion. The discussion on postcolonialism roots back to the Cabinet of Curiosities from the middle of the 16th century, and it is important to understand the quest of Picasso and Gauguin on form and color in their primitive-themed works. Moreover, the postcolonial discussion comes to light again with the exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre*, and finally, in the 21st century, it is possible to talk about it with practices *ruangrupa* provided with *documenta fifteen*.

Ruangrupa, as a non-western artist collective, brings another understanding to the curatorial field, which already is ready to expand its boundaries. In this context, when *documenta fifteen* and the curatorial practice of *Ruangrupa* are examined, it is clear that they rejected major artistic concepts and artistic persona but focused on practices, collectivity, and social systems. In *documenta fifteen*, *Ruangrupa* were interested in different ways of artistic production, which can be considered as a non-western approach with their mythic, ritualistic, therapeutic, etc. Therefore, they questioned the relation of art to the locals and worked with local groups with a friendship principle. *Ruangrupa* rejects the artistic persona and talks about survival strategies with local collectives and initiatives and asks radical questions, as before, what is art? for whom and what is it made for? Beyond the western-centered, individualistic, male-dominated, and object-oriented art practice, *Ruangrupa* proposes a new kind of curating. The other important point in *documenta fifteen* is that *ruangrupa* invited affected groups to the exhibition rather than artists who will represent this group. The controversy over the inclusion of "the other" in the reality of the 21st century in art history brings approaches to the Anthropocene, which points to a world dominated by people. The problems encountered in the age of Anthropocene, as in the discussions of colonialism and representation problems, are the result of classification, superiority, speciesism, and deficiencies in communication with the other. In this context, we must leave aside our racist, nationalist obsessions and adopt a more adaptive approach. So is in the curatorial field. In the 21st century, the curatorial field suffers from the search for a new and different form. The curatorial should continue to change by expanding its boundaries through what it learns from the artists and their practices and major exhibition forms. Curatorial forms should go further with the terms adapted from *Ruangrupa*. Terms such as practices, social systems, friendship networks, collective knowledge production, and conscious collectivity, which are the legacy of *Documenta fifteen* to the future, should be expanded and used in the art world

and curatorial studies. The curatorial field needs to create a platform that is reactionary, democratic, multivocal, and has a pluralistic approach. Therefore, curating emerges as an attitude that reflects practices; yet collective curating may be the new form of curating. As a result, as Fischer (2010) states, art turns into an action that opens up ways to survive in the struggle and follows the needs of society as it was before. As it should be in curatorial studies!



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Exhibitions

- Cubism and Abstract Art Exhibition, curated by Alfred Barr, MOMA, New York. 1936
- Documenta fifteen, curated by ruangrupa artist collective. Kassel, Germany. 2022
- Do it, curated by Obrist, H. U. First edition in Klagenfurt, Austria. 1994-ongoing
- Manifesta. Different cities of Europe. 1996- ongoing
- Magiciens de la Terre, curated by Martin, J. H. Centre Georges Pompidou, and Grande halle de la Villette, Paris. 1989
- Milks of Dream, curated by Alemani, C. Giardini, and Arsenale, Venice. 2022

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Internship and Work Experience

Independent Curator and Architectural Designer, Studio Spaces Between / Co-founder, November 2020- present

Graphic Designer, A46, July- November 2021

Junior Architect, CCEA MOBA, November 2019 – August 2020

Intern Architect, CCEA MOBA, August- November 2019

Intern Architect, Aboutblank Architecture & Urban Design, June- August 2018

Exhibitions and Research Projects

Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living, Yedi: Journal of Art, Design & Science (submitted)

Izmir Akdeniz Biennial, Creative Team Leader, Izmir, 2022- present

Becoming Tree: What do trees tell us?, Exhibition / Artist-curator, Atlas Pavillion, Kültürpark, Izmir, 2022

Designing into Future: Bad Romance, Virtual Residency Program / Artist Researcher,
5th Istanbul Biennial, 2020

Dreaming a Dream, Exhibition / Artist, A4 Atölye, Diyarbakır, 2020

Herzlich Willkommen, Exhibition Design, Hainfeld Care and Assistance Center, Wien,
Austria, 2019-2021

Brichovice, Exhibition Design, Gallery of Fine arts in Ostrava, Czechia, 2019-2020

Consume It! Produce It!, Nominee, Prix de Geneve pour l' experimentation

Architecturale, Pavillion Sicli, Geneva, Switzerland, 2020

Consume It! Produce It!, Installation / Designer, AGU Campus, Kayseri, 2019

Transparent Frontiers, Video Installation / Designer, AGU Campus, Kayseri, 2018

Courses Assisted

Courses Assistant, Graduate Courses / Faculty of Art in Design, Kadir Has University
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Publications and Presentations

Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living, Yedi: Journal of Art,
Design & Science (submitted)

Consume It! Produce It!, Speech-giver, AuraForum 6: Tasarımcılar Buluşuyor
(Designers Meeting), AURA Istanbul Youtube, 2021

Bağlaç, Speech-giver, KHAS Corner, Istanbul, 2018

Competitions and Grants

Habitat Haliç, Istanbul Senin Competition / 3rd prize, Assistant Architect, 2020

Bad Romance, IKS V 5th Istanbul Design Biennial / Selected Designer, 2020

Bağlaç (Group work), Turkey Architecture Yearbook / Selected Project, 2018

X over Y, Arkitera Travel Scholarship / Finalist, 2018

Displacement of the City, RIBA President Medal Student Selection / Nominee, London, UK, 2018

Workshops Attended

Workshop Moderator, 2021 Izmir, Turkey

Ec[g]o System Workshop, Common Futures Reloaded / Good Design 6, Izmir

Workshop Moderator, 2018 Kayseri Turkey

Mein Bauhaus Workshop, Abdullah Gül University Campus, 2018

GAS Diagram Workshop, Kayseri Chamber of Architect, 2018

Cinema Nights / Founder, AGU Cinema Night Club, September 2014 – September 2015

Workshop participant, 2018 & 2017 Kayseri, Turkey

Betonart Summer School, Bağlaç, moderated by OKTAA

Transparent Frontiers, AGU Design Week'18

Foldable Pavillion, AGU Design Week'17

Workshop participant, 2018 Istanbul, Turkey

School of Schools, IKSIV 4th Istanbul Design Biennial

Workshop participant, 2015 Istanbul, Turkey

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