

# Who Needs 'Exhibition Studies'?

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If there is, indeed, something we can call 'Exhibition Studies', it is institutionally weak and fairly circumscribed. Most often 'exhibition studies' crops up as a welcome support for other, more vocational courses. This is the case, for example, in the Exhibition and Curatorial Studies department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museums and Exhibition Studies MA at the University of Illinois at Chicago or the MA Exhibition Studies at Liverpool John Moores University, which are all primarily focussed on exhibitions of contemporary art. The course I used to lead at Central Saint Martins in London, a Master of Research in Exhibition Studies, is the only one, to my knowledge, that specialises in studying the exhibition as both a historical and philosophical problem, without a component of curatorial praxis tied to it. I hasten to add, however, that this is not meant as an endorsement – to be 'the only one' is hardly something to be proud of if there is no need for one to exist at all. While I continue to teach exhibition studies and necessarily contribute in that way to shaping this field, this text responds to some of my concerns about the way it is 'shaping up'.

The appeal to the exhibition as a field of 'studies' – in a manner inaugurated by 'area studies' and popularised by countless other thematically constructed scholarly discourses such as 'cultural studies', 'gender studies', 'animal studies'... – already implicitly suggests a critical refusal of disciplinarity, or at the very least, an ability to function across disciplinary borders.<sup>1</sup> However, given that the most direct disciplinary restraints to the study of exhibitions would have historically come not just from Art History, but perhaps most directly from either *Museum Studies* or *Curatorial Studies*, the will to further 'undiscipline' this knowledge seems paradoxically entangled with a desire for further disciplinary differentiation. As such, it is a move that demands some scrutiny – in what follows, it is the negotiation of these borders that is scrutinised.

The first problem is, of course, the elusive nature of what 'an exhibition' is. If (as we tried to think of them at Central Saint Martins) exhibitions are moments when 'art' meets its 'publics' and we remain conscious, on the one hand, of the problematic history of how 'art' and 'publics' have been constructed in relation to power, and on the other, of their continuing resistance to being

easily subsumed under such categorial constructions, then the question remains recalcitrantly unsolvable. An 'exhibition studies' that starts from that question commits itself to ongoing critical speculation on it. But even if we accept a working, 'common sense' definition of the exhibition, the difficulty does not go away. Exhibitions are resistant to scholarly research and retrospective appraisal. They are short-lived, taking place in particular locations, and when they travel they inevitably transform themselves as they do so. If the 'experience' of an exhibition is an essential part of what they are, accounting for multiple, shifting experiences after the fact is a thankless, impossible task.<sup>2</sup>

Taking recourse to formal analysis is made difficult by the fact that they are hard to document faithfully. Moreover, they have for the most part been scarcely and erratically documented, and only the recent surge of interest in them is starting to change this habit.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore not surprising that until quite recently most writing on exhibitions was carried out by critics rather than art historians. Indeed, the very genre of art criticism emerges as the appropriate kind of response to public art exhibitions. But to the extent to which the 'exhibitionary complex' – the ensemble of disciplines and techniques of display that simultaneously ordered objects for public inspection and the public that inspected them – remained as an unscrutinised background, criticism continued to pay much less attention to the exhibition form than to individual artworks.<sup>4</sup> It is perhaps fitting, then, that it is to Lawrence Alloway – who thought of criticism as 'short-term art history'<sup>5</sup> – that we owe one of the earliest works that can be retrospectively claimed for this emerging field, *From Salon to Goldfish Bowl*, his history of the Venice Biennale published in 1968.<sup>6</sup> There, he offers a compelling justification for studying exhibitions:

*We tend to relate [artworks] to humanism rather than to the competitive area of fairs and shows. ... Our preference has been for works of art as symbols of permanence rather than as complex structures subject to numerous interpretations. However, art is physically and conceptually mobile, which means that it can be seen in various contexts. As it is subject to the communications network of our time, physically and in terms of reproductive processes, some of art's talismanic solidity is reduced by the increase in connectivity. A work that was executed for a chapel and stays there, can be connected with fewer art works and environments than a work that is movable. ... There are many studies of artists, schools of art, media and iconography, but not much has been written on the distribution of art. The groups that artists formed in the past to organise their own profession have been thoroughly investigated, but their more recent means of contact with an increasingly large public have been less discussed. The tendency is to study the work of art as an object, rather than as part of a communications system.<sup>7</sup>*

Instead of art history's traditional focus on the circumstances that surrounded the work's production, Alloway argues for approaching the artwork through its variable and defining encounters with its publics.<sup>8</sup> This is in line with Alloway's view of art as a network existing within a wider 'communications system',<sup>9</sup> but significantly for our purposes, it also makes clear that studying the exhibition is important or interesting because it allows us to expand outwards from the

artwork, to think of art as something *other, or more than* an (art) object. And it is this broadening of the scope that seems to necessitate a transgressing of disciplinary borders.

However, much has changed since Alloway published his pioneering work in 1968. In the wake of the proliferation of academic courses on curating in the 1990s, the study of exhibitions has received an unprecedented amount of attention. The majority of significant art historical works that existed until then were clustered around the nineteenth century, the time of the emergence of public exhibiting institutions.<sup>10</sup> Museological writing, while more abundant, paid scant attention to specifically artistic exhibitions, and the most critical strands associated with new or critical museologies had tended to turn their gaze outside the museum altogether.<sup>11</sup> To the above, we could add the genre of books aimed at illustrating techniques of display that often situated themselves within architecture or design, casually straddling the line between the commercial and scholarly applications.<sup>12</sup> Within this context, the publication in 1976 of Brian O'Doherty's *Inside the White Cube* constitutes a watershed moment, problematising the 'exhibitionary complex' of contemporary art institutions – the novelty of this intervention justifies its enduring appeal.<sup>13</sup>

But as the *authorial* profile of curators has grown in step with academisation, so has interest in the exhibition.<sup>14</sup> Understood in itself as an artistic medium, the exhibition has increasingly become the focus of contemporary art criticism, occasionally at the expense of individual artworks. Monographs on exhibitions are now routine. Important early works like Bruce Altshuler's *The Avant Garde in Exhibition* (1994) and Mary Anne Staniszewski's *The Power of Display* (1998) opened the way for art historical studies either of a sweeping nature, like Isabel Tejada's *El montaje expositivo como traducción* (2006) and Charlotte Klonk's *Spaces of Experience* (2009), or centred on particular authors, periods or institutions, such as Kristina Wilson's *The Modern Eye* (2009).<sup>15</sup> As a genre it has proved appealing enough to accommodate the publication of coffee table anthologies.<sup>16</sup> Early anthologies like *Visual Display* (1995) and *Thinking About Exhibitions* (1996) also opened the way for more theoretical reflections on the exhibition form.<sup>17</sup> Despite my necessary bias, I think it is fair to suggest that the *Exhibition Histories* series produced by my colleagues at Afterall constitutes the more sustained effort to navigate the line between attention to the social and historical character of particular exhibitions and theoretical reflection that remains less wedded to *art* history. This proliferation of literature has been accompanied by a steady stream of research projects, articles, PhD theses, conferences, symposia... And to all of the above we need to add a growing interest on the part of institutions in revisiting their exhibitions archives and, in some fortunate cases, making them more widely available, a tendency that has developed in tandem to the ongoing enthusiasm for reconstructing or re-staging exhibitions.

But however abundant these publications might be, they are also heterogeneous enough to suggest tensions within this emerging field of 'studies', even if for the most part they have remained implicit. Indeed, the broadening of

focus that Alloway advocates has not survived this boom in the literature. In this way, for example, in the introduction to the influential volume *Thinking About Exhibitions*, mentioned above, the editors explicitly distance themselves from museological concerns, making the case for an exhibition-specific study on the following basis:

*The literature relating to museums tends to minimize instances of protest and scandal and often isolates the implications of the architectural or spatial surround. The discourse also ignores the increasingly varied sites and forms for constructing, experiencing and understanding exhibitions outside museums. A tendency to stress the seemingly fixed characteristics of permanent displays has deflected attention from the ever-growing number and diversity of temporary exhibitions and the structural and historical relationships of these more ephemeral events to long-term displays.*<sup>18</sup>

Hence, the exhibition here does not offer a zooming out from the art object, but a zooming in from the museum. But, moreover, if discourse about the museum tends to minimize instances of ‘protest and scandal’, we are encouraged to read the temporary exhibition as precisely the site of those instances. The temporary show is portrayed as more socially transgressive (scandal) and politically active (protest), than the museum can afford to be. The exhibition is diverse and ephemeral, erecting, as it were, its own site; the museum display is fixed, permanent and rigidly constrained by its architectural setting. Here, as it is often the case, language vacillates between the metaphorical and the literal use, so that architectural attributes can be said to stand for, say, political ones. These subtle premises inform a great deal of writing on exhibitions, and by extension, on exhibition-makers, those freelance or independent curators whose freedom or independence is – needless to say – not guaranteed by their subcontracted condition. This simultaneous dismissal of museological concerns coupled with the vindication of the curator as a figure singularly capable of ‘escaping’ the institution from within has been nothing if not ambiguous, resembling as it does, an earlier Greenbergian trope about the avant-garde escaping bourgeois society. Amongst other things, it has allowed for the socially transgressive and politically active aims of the so-called New Museology, which aimed at the wholesale transformation of the institution, to be largely obliterated from the curriculum of courses on curatorial studies.

Hence, before we turn to them, I would like to think of their earlier precedents, courses in museology, which were motivated not just by a desire to establish ‘professional standards’, but, quite often, by a desire to question and break with institutional conventions. The earlier debates over the need to differentiate between museography – as pertaining to technical and practical skills necessary for museum work – and museology – which took the institution of the museum itself as an object of study and critical reflection – revealed this need to depart from the mere transmission of current ways of working. As early as the 1920s, but with renewed impetus after the Second World War, it was proposed that the training of museum professionals should take place not in the museum itself, where the methods, habits and policies of a particular institution would become naturalised, weakening the students’ institutional

imagination, but in the university, where a theoretical approach that allowed for more speculative reflection on the institution could be complemented by occasional placements and visits to different professional settings.<sup>19</sup>

While the work of Georges Henri Rivière in Paris is most often associated with this desire to renew museum practice, these proposals had gathered initial force not in the metropolitan centres of Europe or North America, but in Latin America and Eastern Europe.<sup>20</sup> The Facultad de Filosofía y Letras of the Universidad de Buenos Aires offered courses in museology from 1923, quickly followed by similar ones in Rio de Janeiro, as early as 1938. The influential school of Brno (Czechoslovakia) established a chair in museology as early as 1922. This is not a moot point, as part of the need to rethink the museum came from the sense that an institution designed in Europe in the nineteenth century did not meet the needs of communities elsewhere and that the mere propagation of this model was not compatible with wider decolonial projects.<sup>21</sup>

And yet, since 1969, Georges Henri Rivère and Yvonne Oddon at the Paris offices of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) had been tasked with devising a standard curriculum for museum professionals with the intention that UNESCO would eventually be able to support a network of training centres distributed worldwide, a project only fragmentarily realised.<sup>22</sup> By 1966, the split between museography and museology would be taken to have been sublimated by the establishment at Leicester University in Great Britain of the School of 'Museum Studies'. This new model of training reinforced the idea that improving the work of museums demanded not just a refinement of techniques and methods, but a theoretical understanding of the institution itself, a reflection on the aims and stakes of the museum. This meant that, going beyond their particular disciplinary specialisations (from biology to history or contemporary art), museum workers were required to educate themselves on *every aspect* of a museum institution. Significantly, this was felt to be a more pressing need as more institutional roles within the museum became differentiated and specialised. Geoffrey Lewis, then director of the School of Museum Studies at Leicester, writes in 1987:

*Should museum studies training now embrace all the various specialisms involved as well as the many disciplines traditionally associated with museums? Or should training compartmentalize the many specialisms comprising museum work rather than embrace the whole operation? Museum work is team work and, to provide cohesion within the museum as an institution, its members should know and understand not only their own role but that of their colleagues as well. The same argument also applies to the cohesiveness of the museum professional at large. There is a distinct body of knowledge relation to the museum phenomenon and museum practitioners, whatever their role, need to be aware of this theory and develop their practice accordingly.*<sup>23</sup>

It is remarkable then, that by the early 1990s contemporary art curators were sidestepping these aims to establish an entirely different training route.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, 'curatorial studies' is a bit of a misnomer: almost without exception courses in 'curatorial studies' refer not to curatorial training tout court – that

would have been the earlier mission of ‘museum studies’ – but to the training of *contemporary art* curators. There is a pervading sense that in establishing these courses what was at play was not so much an explicit opposition to museum studies as a certain obliviousness to it. In this way, for example, the curatorial course at the *École du MAGASIN*, established in 1987, describes the rationale for its foundation as follows:

[The *École du MAGASIN*] *provided the institutional setting of an art centre for a new type of pedagogical program, one that was aware of the nascent schools of thought linked to contemporary curating. Up until that time there were few such programmes regarding contemporary curating in general. In France for example, there was no official field of study on the subject – curating could be learned only by experience.*<sup>25</sup>

What they call ‘contemporary curating in general’ refers more precisely to the curating of contemporary art. Indeed, they go on to cite Harald Szeemann as the model of curator they were aiming to form, making no mention of available museological routes to training, which in France at that time would have included at least the long-established *École du Louvre*.<sup>26</sup> This sense that museum studies did not respond to the needs of contemporary art curators was not unique to Grenoble. Describing the genesis of the ‘MA Visual Arts Administration: Curating and Commissioning Contemporary Art’ at the Royal College of Art, London, its first director, Teresa Gleadowe, has similarly explained that it was jointly funded by the RCA and the Arts Council of Great Britain in order to ‘fill a perceived gap in the training of curators of contemporary art’, drawing from the experiences of the curatorial pathway of the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York and, indeed, *L’Ecole du MAGASIN* in Grenoble.<sup>27</sup>

Since then, courses in contemporary art curating have become ubiquitous, obscuring the question of their necessity. However, their epistemic specificity is far from settled.<sup>28</sup> If there is a virtue to them, it might reside, precisely, in their stubborn resistance to ‘settle’, with emphasis often put on learning a broadly conceived ‘critical theory’ alongside more practical work, which often includes the collective staging of an exhibition. In this way, for example, the fairly typical example of the Royal College of Art course – now renamed as an MA in ‘Curating Contemporary Art’ (banished from the title is any mention of ‘administration’) – includes at the time of writing seven different units in its curriculum. Alongside a core course for the whole of the School of Arts and Humanities (which provides a broadly conceived humanities syllabus), students are offered Critical and Historical Studies, Curatorial Thinking, Curatorial Practice, Research in Practice, a Graduate Project (which normally consist of a collectively staged exhibition) and an Independent Research Project or dissertation. By keeping the units so loosely defined, enough flexibility is given to accommodate both changes over time and diversities of approach to practice; running through it is an emphasis on ‘theory’, which is not always or primarily a ‘theory of curating’. Within Great Britain, this is a curriculum that resembles most closely of all those of studio-based Fine Art courses.

Indeed, the genealogy of the new curator has been recurrently constructed on the basis of a growing affinity to artistic practice. The question of whether curators are artists or artists can be curators is quite possibly over-represented in the literature. All the more so if we take into account that in the wake of conceptual art the question has long been settled: anything and everything (including, of course, an exhibition) can be art (at least in principle).<sup>29</sup> Quite often the emergence of the contemporary art curator – understood as a ‘new’ figure that breaks both with any reliance on museum studies and with older professional conventions – is explained as the result of ‘catching up’ with artistic practice in general and an internalisation of so-called ‘institutional critique’ in particular.<sup>30</sup> Understood in this way, critical curatorial practice has emerged as a canon in the making that, like the institution it critiques, is largely male and largely based in the Global North, allowing for a mode of (self-)historicisation based on direct transmission and influence that can appear myopically self-referential and circumscribed. This is a problem not just because the process of canonisation itself was part of what institutional critique sought to challenge,<sup>31</sup> but because it serves to establish an artificial binary between artists and museum workers, with critique circulating only in one direction and curators being able to navigate that divide only after establishing a phantasmatic ‘autonomous zone’ within the institution. Gone is also the commitment to a holistic understanding of the institution.<sup>32</sup>

I would like to return now to our initial question. If, as Alloway suggested, we should be thinking of art beyond the limits of the art *object*, that is to say, we should be thinking of art *in* exhibition, coming into being as it encounters its successive publics and connects with wider networks, then the danger is that by turning the exhibition into the art object itself those limits are merely reinstated at a different level. An Exhibition Studies that is conceived as ancillary to Curatorial Studies is most at risk of falling into this trap.<sup>33</sup> The bad habits of the old art history can come back through the back door, with the curator slotting seamlessly in the space vacated by the Romantic artist and a power-blind canonicity safely restored to its former glory. This is particularly dangerous given the already canonising nature of exhibitions themselves. Despite the fact that, as we like to tell our students at Central Saint Martins, Exhibition Studies is a ‘global native’ (which is really just a fancy way of saying that it comes into play after postcolonial studies) this has hardly been reflected in the writing of this field.<sup>34</sup>

In this way, for example, Bruce Altshuler’s highly informative and lavishly illustrated two-volume anthology *Exhibitions that Made Art History* (2008 and 2013) includes a total of 49 exhibitions, all but four having taken place in Europe or the United States, a proportion that is barely more balanced in Jens Hoffmann’s equally lavish *Show Time* (2014).<sup>35</sup> Understood in this way, Exhibition Studies turns into a subgenre of traditional art history, so that, leaving dominant art historical narratives untouched, scholarly attention is paid to those exhibitions that, indeed, *made* Art History as we know it. Art historical methodologies are left intact and Art History is expanded by furnishing it with a subhistory of ‘innovative exhibitions’ and maverick curators that reinforce an

extant sense of what constituted ‘the new’ and ‘genius’ at any given point.<sup>36</sup> If this is what Exhibition Studies can bring to the field, I am not sure that there is indeed any need for it.

Despite all this, I would not, or not yet, write off the value of Exhibition Studies. But we need to get rid of any desire for a ‘common sense’ understanding of what an exhibition is. What we take to be common sense is most often aimed at maintaining the status quo, an Exhibition Studies that is truly a ‘global native’ is not compatible with that aim.<sup>37</sup> In the early 1970s, museum workers from the Global South refused to accept common-sensical notions of the museum, promoting an exercise in institutional imagination that transformed the range of what was possible, allowing for other kinds of museum to be conceived, even if not always realised.<sup>38</sup> The Exhibition Studies I have tried to defend is not indifferent to this history but understands itself in transgenerational and transdisciplinary alliance with it. It starts from the idea that there is nothing self-evident about exhibitions. They are not necessarily organised by museums and galleries with a curator in charge, with an opening and a closing date, some artworks, wall labels, maybe a catalogue or even a public programme of events. *Exhibitions* are moments when *art* meets its *publics*. A mode of inquiry that focusses on this encounter while disregarding common-sensical notions of all three terms is urgently needed, the question of where it finds its disciplinary home remains open, but that is what I have in mind when doing Exhibition Studies.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> On the proliferation of ‘studies’ and their relation to ‘discipline’, see the special issue of *Revue d’anthropologie des connaissances*, ‘Les Studies à l’étude’, vol.11, no.3, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> In this respect, I find much to agree with in Brandon Taylor’s somewhat ungenerous review of Charlotte Klonk’s *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), which attempted to achieve such a feat, see ‘Here, Too, Confusion Reigned’, *Oxford Art Journal*, vol.33, no.2, 2010, pp.249–52.

<sup>3</sup> See W. Grasskamp, ‘To be continued: Periodic Exhibitions (*documenta*, for Example)’, *Landmark Exhibitions, Tate Papers*, no.12, Autumn, 2009, available at <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/12/to-be-continued-periodic-exhibitions-documenta-for-example> as well as the study *Folding the Exhibition*, Barcelona: Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), 2014, <https://www.macba.cat/en/essay-folding-the-exhibition>.

<sup>4</sup> See Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth Century Paris*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985. I use ‘exhibitionary complex’ in the sense developed by Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, Oxford: Routledge, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> James L. Reinish, ‘An Interview with Lawrence Alloway’, *Studio International*, vol.186, no.958, September 1973, p.63.

<sup>6</sup> Lawrence Alloway, *The Venice Biennale 1895–1968: From Salon to Goldfish Bowl*, New York: Graphic Society, 1968.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.14–15. It is worth noting how Alloway’s account goes against the grain of another, more nostalgic tradition that spans from Quatrèmere de Quincy via Paul Valéry to some contemporary defences of site-specificity for which art’s ‘mobility’ always entails some kind of a loss (of its ‘proper’ home, of its roots, of its social links, etc.).

<sup>8</sup> This was, of course, an aim shared by the social history of art, a somewhat different case for it is made convincingly in Donald Preziosi, ‘The Question of Art History’, *Critical Inquiry*, vol.18, no.2, Winter 1992, pp.363–86.

<sup>9</sup> See also L. Alloway, ‘Art and the Communications Network’, *Canadian Art*, no.100, January 1966.

- <sup>10</sup> The work of Martha Ward, Patricia Mainardi, Stephen Bann, T.J. Clark and Timothy Mitchell merit a special mention in this respect.
- <sup>11</sup> The anthology edited by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1991) merits special mention.
- <sup>12</sup> George Nelson's *Display* (New York: Whitney Publications, 1953) is perhaps the clearest example here, but the genre is much larger (if not always as brilliant). On the waning attention to this genre, see Martin Beck, 'The Exhibition and the Display', in Lucy Steeds (ed.), *Exhibition*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014, pp.27–33.
- <sup>13</sup> See B. O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (San Francisco: Lapis Press, 1986). The essays that compose the book had been published by Artforum ten years earlier, in 1976.
- <sup>14</sup> On the shift from curator to author, see N. Heinich and M. Pollack, 'From Museum Curator to Exhibition Auteur: Inventing a singular position', in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (ed.), *Thinking About Exhibitions*, London: Routledge, 1996, pp.231–50.
- <sup>15</sup> Bruce Altshuler, *The Avant Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century*, New York: Abrams, 1994; Mary Anne Staniszewski, *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998; Isabel Tejada, *El montaje expositivo como traducción. Fidelidades, traiciones y hallazgos en el arte contemporáneo desde los años 70*, Madrid: Trama, 2006; C. Klonk, *Spaces of Experience*, op. cit.; and Kristina Wilson, *The Modern Eye: Stieglitz, MoMA, and the Art of the Exhibition 1925–1934*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- <sup>16</sup> B. Altshuler, *Exhibitions that Made Art History*, vol. 1 and 2, London: Phaidon Press, 2008 and 2013; and Jens Hoffmann (ed.), *Show Time: The 50 Most Influential Exhibitions of Contemporary Art*, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2014.
- <sup>17</sup> Lynne Cooke and Peter Wollen (ed.), *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances*, Seattle: Bay Press, 1995; R. Greenberg, B.W. Ferguson and S. Nairne (ed.), *Thinking About Exhibitions*, op. cit.. More recent contributions in this line include L. Steeds (ed.), *Exhibition*, op. cit., and James Voorhies, *Beyond Objecthood: The Exhibition as a Critical Form since 1968*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017.
- <sup>18</sup> R. Greenberg, B.W. Ferguson and S. Nairne (ed.), *Thinking About Exhibitions*, op. cit., p.2.
- <sup>19</sup> See J.P. Lorente, 'The development of museum studies in universities: from technical training to critical museology', in *Museum Management and Curatorship*, vol.27, no.3, 2012, pp.237–52; H.G. Rodeck, 'The Role of the University in Education Towards Museum Careers', *Curator*, vol.4, no.1, 1961; L. Teather, 'Professionalization and the Museum', in M.S. Schapiro and L.W. Kemp (ed.), *The Museum: A Reference Guide*, Greenwood, NJ: Greenwood Press, 1990, pp.299–328, and the special issue on 'Staff Training' of *Museum International*, no.156, vol.39, issue 4, 1987.
- <sup>20</sup> See J.P. Lorente, op. cit. Georges Henri Rivière, then director of ICOM, devised and delivered the *Cours de muséologie générale contemporaine* to postgraduate students at the Paris I and Paris IV universities from 1970. See G.H. Rivière, *La museología*, Madrid: Akal, 1993.
- <sup>21</sup> The Roundtable of Santiago de Chile in 1972 was a key moment in this respect. See *Round Table on the Role of Museums in Today's Latin America*, Santiago de Chile, 30 May 1972, translated and reprinted as 'Basic Principles of the Integral Museum', *Museum International, Special Issue Key Ideas in Museums and Heritage (1949–2004)*, vol.66, issues 1–4, 2014, pp.175–82.
- <sup>22</sup> The first draft of the curriculum was ready by 1971 and discussed at the ICOM general assembly in Grenoble. See P.J. Boylan, 'Museum training: A central concern of ICOM for forty years', *Museum*, no.156, vol.34, issue 4, 1987, pp.225–30.
- <sup>23</sup> G. Lewis, 'Editorial: Why train museum staff?', *Museum*, no.156, vol.34, issue 4, 1987, p.220. I do not mean to suggest here that these aims were fully realised.
- <sup>24</sup> It is from the end of the 1980 that curatorial courses began to proliferate. To list but a few by year of foundation: MAGASIN-CNAC, Grenoble (1987); Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson (1990); Royal College of Art, London (1992); De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam (1994); Goldsmiths College, London (1996); CCAC Wattis Institute, San Francisco (1999); Columbia University and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2002). While the geography of these courses has now expanded, their blueprint was very much a Northern Europe-US affair.
- <sup>25</sup> 'École du MAGASIN: Curatorial training program', undated brochure, p.2.
- <sup>26</sup> The École du Louvre was set up in 1882 and by the late 1980s it had expanded its remit from practical and managerial concerns to include more museological-theoretical teaching, extending to contemporary art. For this, Georges Henri Rivière's famous *Cours de muséologie générale contemporaine* at the Université de Paris I between 1971 to 1982, established with the support of UNESCO, was instrumental in extending this focus. See Dominique Poulot, 'The French Museology', in D. Poulot and I. Stankovic (ed.), *Discussing Heritage and Museums: Crossing Paths of France and Serbia*, Paris: Website of HiCSA, October 2017, pp.7–30.
- <sup>27</sup> Teresa Gleadowe, 'Curating in a Changing Climate', in *Curating in the 21st Century* (ed. Gavid Wade), Walsall: The New Art Gallery, 2000, p.29.

<sup>28</sup> A good sense of this is given in L. Markopoulos (ed.), *Great Expectations: Prospects for the Future of Curatorial Education*, London: Koenig Books, 2016; and Paul O'Neill, L. Steeds and Mick Wilson (ed.), *The Curatorial Conundrum: What to Study? What to Research? What to Practice?*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016.

<sup>29</sup> This is not to say that paying attention to exhibitions curated by artists or to exhibitions qua artworks cannot render brilliant insights, as attested by the volumes by Elena Filipovic (ed.), *The Artist as Curator*, Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2017; and Alison Green, *When Artists Curate*, London: Reaktion Books, 2018.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, J. Hoffmann, 'The Curatorialization of Institutional Critique', in *Institutional Critique and After* (ed. John C. Welchman), Zurich: JRP|Ringier, 2006, and Paul O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> See Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray, 'Preface', in G. Raunig and G. Ray (ed.), *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique*, London: MayFly Books, 2009, p.xv.

<sup>32</sup> This can have convoluted effects, like the current wave of interest in thematising 'pedagogy' at a curatorial level, most often without any lasting effects or direct agency by educational departments. This retreat to the thematic level is sharply described in J. Graham, V. Graziano and S. Kelly, 'The Educational Turn in Art: Rewriting the Hidden Curriculum', *Performance Research*, vol.21, no.6, 2016, pp.29–35.

<sup>33</sup> This has been an ongoing concern and subject of many conversations at Central Saint Martins and, indeed, my colleague Lucy Steeds has written about this danger elsewhere in terms that I largely share. See L. Steeds, 'What is the Future of Exhibition Histories? Or Towards Art in Terms of its Becoming Public', in P. O'Neill, L. Steeds and M. Wilson (ed.), *The Curatorial Conundrum, op. cit.*, pp. 16–25.

<sup>34</sup> Catalina L. Imizcoz, who graduated from the course in 2016 has published an amended version of her dissertation that focusses precisely on this issue, see 'Extending the Study of Exhibitions across Geographies', *Caiana*, vol.1, issue 10, 2017, [http://caiana.caia.org.ar/template/caiana.php?pag=articles/article\\_1.php&cobj=257&vol=10](http://caiana.caia.org.ar/template/caiana.php?pag=articles/article_1.php&cobj=257&vol=10).

<sup>35</sup> See B. Altschuler, *Exhibitions that Made Art History, op. cit.*, 2008 and 2013 and J. Hoffmann, *Show Time, op. cit.*, 2014.

<sup>36</sup> See B. Altschuler, 'A Canon of Exhibitions', *Manifesta Journal*, no.11, 2011. Responding to Michael Brenson's dismissal of 'Magiciens de la Terre' (1989) on the basis of the lack of 'quality' of its contents, Altschuler suggest that the exhibition as a whole, rather than its contents, can provide the standard of 'quality' leaving untroubled the need for a hierarchical judgment of 'quality'. A precise response to this position is offered in the same issue of the journal by Simon Sheikh: 'On the Standard of Standards, or Curating and Canonization', *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> The problem with 'common sense' is elucidated in Errol Lawrence, 'Just Plain Common Sense: The Roots of Racism', in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *The Empire Strikes Back. Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, London: Routledge, 1982, pp.47–94.

<sup>38</sup> The 1972 ICOM roundtable in Santiago de Chile is a watershed moment in this respect. I have written elsewhere about the obliteration of this history from curatorial studies, see Yaiza Hernández Velázquez, 'Imagining Curatorial Practice after 1972', in *Curating after the Global: Roadmaps for the Present* (ed. P. O'Neill, L. Steeds and M. Wilson) Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019.