

CURATORIAL AGENCY

Tags:

#curatorial agency

author

translation

postcolonial critique

Curatorial agency is a concept that is indebted to the recent critical rethinking of the curator's role in the context of the contemporary art scene, culture and society. Drawing on Alfred Gell's concept of "art as agency" *curatorial agency* assumes that the curator is no longer considered to be a mere mediator or presenter of already existing artistic concepts and projects, nor is to be dubbed the "author" of the exhibition. The curator is rather assumed to be an active societal agent that contributes towards a cross-disciplinary and cross-referential "translation" and reciprocal understanding of art between different artistic, cultural, ethnic, class, gender and sexual camps and moreover, towards improvement of society in general.

The potentiality of art and curating assumes certain transformative powers that emphasize the affordance of art for social change. In this respect curatorial agency cannot function as an independent theoretical concept as long as it is not embedded as the major cultural policy concept in certain cultural and ethical contexts. Therefore it is always thought of in relation to the urgent calls for cultural translation of lesser known art and cultural and aesthetical traditions that are inevitably linked to the postcolonial critique and theory of decolonization of institutions.

Thus the concept of curatorial agency also opposes hegemonic curating that is often imposed on to “subaltern cultures” in contexts that are stereotypically regarded as underdeveloped in terms of the art and curatorial scene.

Most importantly, curatorial agency is an ethical position that also entrusts its intellectual and theoretical capacities to curatorial knowledge production, art for social change and collaborations among curators, artists and activists.

Further Readings

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Suzana Milevska, “The Return to Kalokagathia: Curating as Leverage in the Ongoing Dialogues between Aesthetics and Ethics.” *Philosophies*, Special Issue *Curating and Ethics*, Edited by Jean Paul Martinon, 2020, 5(4), 29; <https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies5040029>, Published: 12 October 2020.

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curating
in
context



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