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Exhibition Research Lab

The very early scope of mine concerning my position at the Exhibition Research Lab was initially to expand my artistic as well as theoretical knowledge based on the learning trajectory of the lectures. On Present time and space though, being able to observe the whole course of the lectures, the latter successfully came to be established itself as also a communal artistic initiative, as formed by the lectorator Tatjana Macic and the students of the KABK.

To begin with, I would firstly like to introduce the general framework of the Exhibition Research Lab itself, while later on, I will proceed to state my own viewpoint in regard to the course. In the following essay, therefore, lies the attempt of mine to re-examine my own position in the process of the exhibition making.

As seen early in the start of his essay, “On Curatorship”, Boris Groys seems to set a differential pole between the curator and the artist, when mentioning what the main position of the two are. It seems though rather peculiar when attempting to define the role of an exhibition since the latter consist of the outcome of an object having been made by the artist. Therefore, the word in itself, meaning the action of displaying something, consists of the outcome of that something having been formed by the artist. As such, the origin of the work of art or else what the object is, concerns not solely the person by which the object is being displayed (as in the 19th century), yet also the essence of the work.

To seek therefore or else define what the exhibition making is, it seems necessary to define, that something, which the word encloses, the work of art in itself. The work of art entails the artist to be the touchstone for the object to be structured. Similarly, the artist consists of the origin of the work in itself, while in both cases there is a third denominator for them to be linguistically as well as visually established, art, which is equally present in the artwork.

On the other hand, linguistically, the curator's main standpoint looks the possibility of operation as it is

being confined as a caretaker of a work of art. Nonetheless, a further, as well as a treacherous attribute of his work, seems to be that of displaying an artwork inside a gallery space or museum by transcending the status of an object into a work of art. As seen especially during the 20th century (i.e. in Documenta 5 by Harald Szeeman in 1972, wherein there was an overwhelming range of works on display for the sake of a better understanding of contemporary art practice) the curator's task appeared to have been repositioned from the action of displaying to that of making art through exhibiting an artwork. Nonetheless, the artist's criticism similarly started to be taking place as an opposing belief towards the "status quo" of the curatorial authorship and the museum's functional role.

As such, a complementary example to the history of exhibition-making could be also seen in the Musée d'art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles, as both created and curated by Marcel Broodthaers. Having been inspired by the student revolts in France, in May 1968, Marcel Broodthaer's fictional museum (1968-1972) as formed by the use of crates, postcards, and writings appears as sociopolitical criticism to both society, though mostly to the administering norms of institutions at the time.

Having been structured along 12 guises, one of the works worth mentioning is the department of Eagles, in which Broodthaer's displayed three hundred artworks all bearing the sign of the eagle (as having been congregated of a plenitude of locations, private collections, and museums). Broodthaer's, therefore standpoint towards the display of the specific icon, embodies on the hand the notion of authorship (as seen in museums administration role) while on the other hand employs the fundamental term of historicity or else historical distance.



Marcel Broodtaers

Musée d'art Moderne,

Département des Aigles Section des figures, 1972

Photo: Maria Gilissen

Exhibition Research Lab could be similarly defined as endorsing a dissimilar exhibition setting based on the present sociopolitical circumstances, in which the artists were both the creators as well as the curators of the final publication. As in the Xerox exhibition, “As Real As You Want” concealing notions of the present material limitation, though also that of physical prohibition, lead to being defined into an ephemeral as well immaterial exhibition format.

Works cited

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