Exhibition Game of Thrones

Symposium Remembering as a Constructive Act—Artistic Concepts for Museum Collections

Exhibition
Game of Thrones (Spiel der Throne)

with Konstantin Grcic, Kirstine Roepstorff, Simon Starling, Zhao Zhao
curated by Angela Rosenberg
Humboldt Lab Dahlem, Probebühne 2
June 18–October 27, 2013, Opening: June 16, 2013

Colophon Exhibition

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Symposium
Remembering as a Constructive Act—Artistic Concepts for Museum Collections

with Beatrice von Bismarck, Melissa Chiu, Clémentine Deliss, Martin Heller, Christian Jankowski, Stephen Little, Klaas Ruitenbeek, Jana Scholze
Moderation: Jörn Schafaff
Concept and organization: Angela Rosenberg
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Humboldt Lab Dahlem

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Foreword

Klaas Ruitenbeek and Martin Heller

The Humboldt Lab Dahlem is an important experimental stage for the Humboldt-Forum. That is to say this experimental program and its projects are a source of ideas and building blocks for the new exhibitions being prepared for the Berlin Palace by the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

"Game of Thrones," the exhibition presented here, sought possible forms for the presentation of an early eighteenth-century imperial Chinese throne. The initial idea was to recreate a section of historical palace architecture for the throne and its companion screen, both outstanding examples of lacquer work in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst. The project, however, initiated a fundamental rethink.

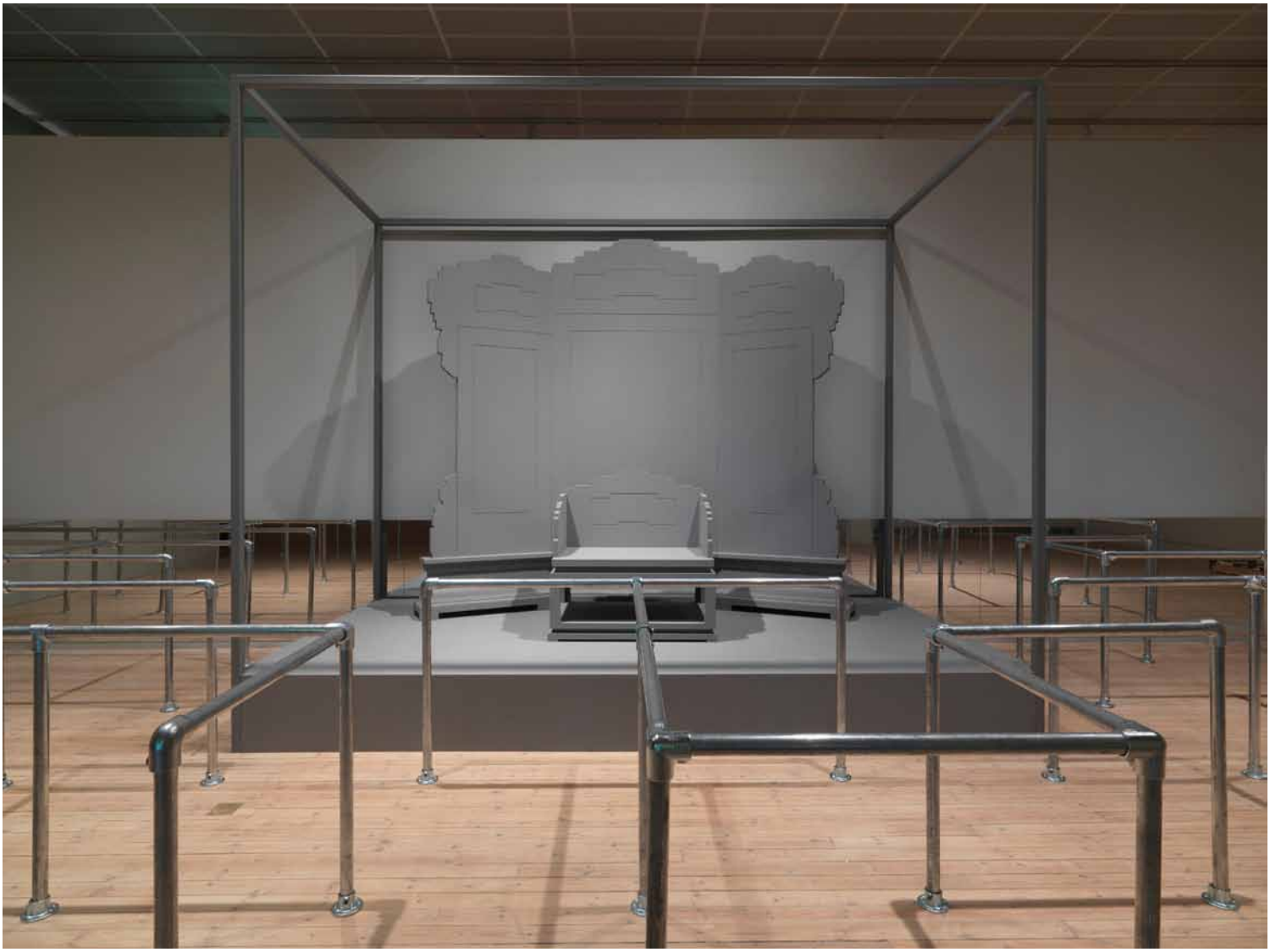
The throne is to form the core of the Humboldt-Forum exhibition-module "Art at the Court of the Emperor Qianlong in the 18th Century." It is to be exhibited in an eight-meter-high hall measuring 560 square meters where the Far Eastern collections of both museums will come into close relationship with each other to exhibit significant aspects of this court art with their Chinese stock. Here the throne symbolizes the person of the emperor and the various functions he performed. In his capacity as military commander the emperor had his victories documented in engravings. He had copperplates produced in Paris and Beijing based on works by European painters at his court, thirty-four of which can be shown—an important record of Sino-European relations in the eighteenth century. At the same time the emperor was the guardian of religion and morals. The huge painting "The Buddha Preaching" that he commissioned from the court painter Ding Guanpeng testifies to this even today. He also distinguished himself as a passionate and learned art collector who possessed the biggest art and curiosity cabinet the world has ever known.

"Game of Thrones," curated by Angela Rosenberg, employed contemporary art to present the throne and its screen. Berlin as an art center, the mandate of strong contemporary artistic relevance, and the fact that recreating historical buildings is neither especially revealing nor original played a central role here.

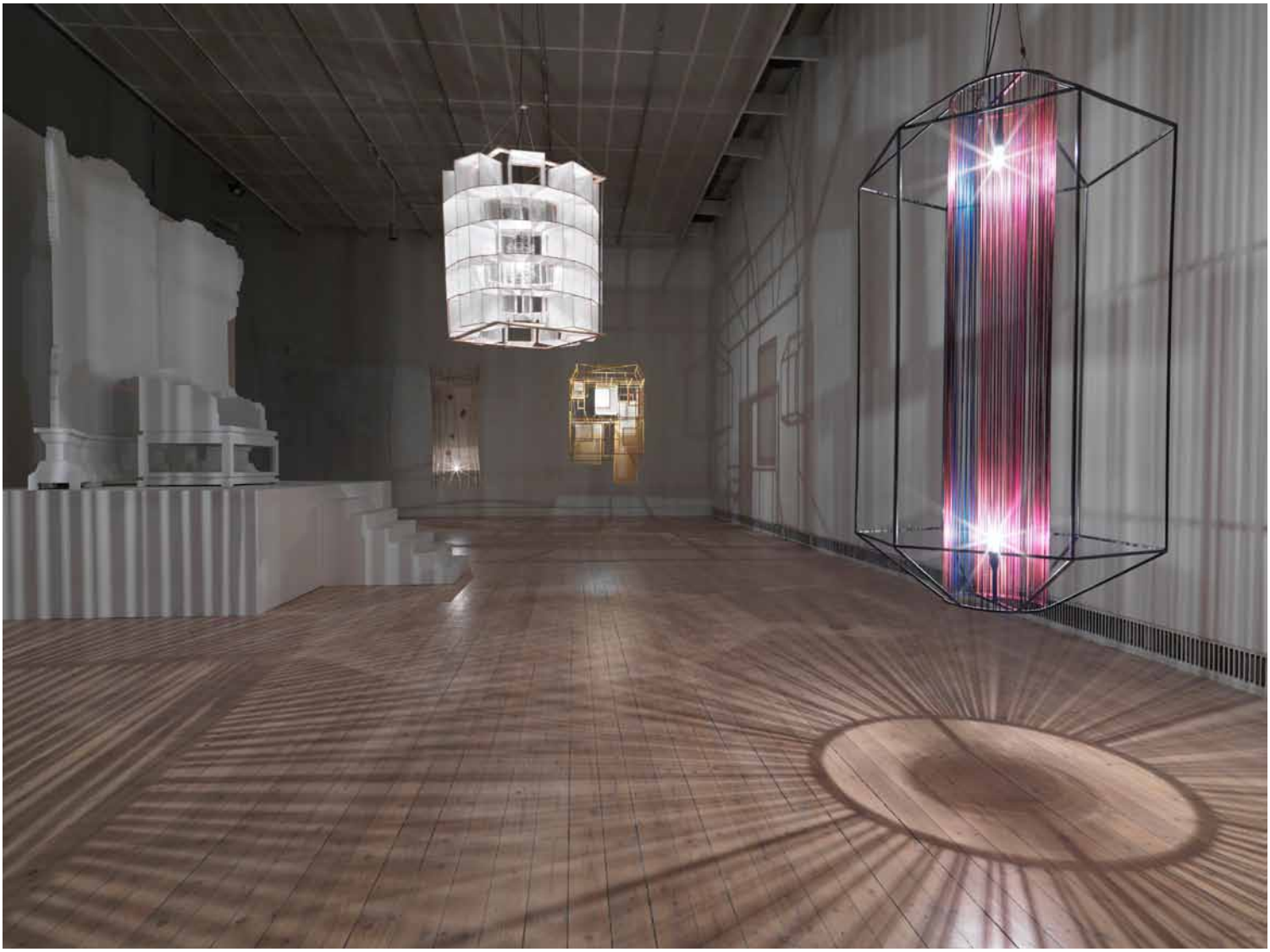
The result was a wonderful exhibition. At the same time it soon became clear that the model throne installations realized for the exhibition by Simon Starling, Zhao Zhao, Kirstine Roepstorff, and Konstantin Grcic could not for various reasons be directly transferred to the new Humboldt-Forum. After asking ourselves what role the subjective artistic gaze and traditional Chinese architecture ought to play in presenting the throne ensemble we decided to seek the collaboration of a major Chinese architect for the overall design of the exhibition hall of Chinese court art.

In mid-September 2013 Klaas Ruitenbeek visited the architect Wang Shu in Hangzhou. Wang became famous among other things for his design of the historical Ningbo Museum and the Xiangshan Campus at Hangzhou Art Academy and was awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2012. To our great delight he was interested and agreed to a collaboration. Typical of Wang's work are, for instance, old, recycled bricks, roof tiles, and spectacular wooden constructions integrated in clear, strong, timeless forms. In this way, something specifically Chinese can be brought to the Humboldt-Forum and at the same time both present and past relevance established. Although the work is still in its early stages, the approach is exceptionally promising and would never have been arrived at without "Game of Thrones" and its productive openness.

Konstantin Grcic, "migong," 2013
© courtesy Konstantin Grcic, photo: Jens Ziehe



Kirstine Roepstorff, "Daughters of the Immortal Mother," 2013
© courtesy Studio Roepstorff, Berlin, photo: Jens Ziehe



Zhao Zhao, "Waterfall," 2013
© courtesy Alexander Ochs Galleries Berlin|Beijing, photo: Jens Ziehe

Simon Starling, "Screen Screen," 2013
© courtesy Simon Starling; neugerriemschneider, Berlin, photo: Jens Ziehe

Imperial throne with screen, Qing dynasty, early 18th century

Exhibition Game of Thrones

Angela Rosenberg

The exhibition "Game of Thrones" (Spiel der Throne) dealt with experimental artistic forms for presenting historical artifacts and the possibilities for exhibition architecture, design, and scenography. Three international artists and a designer working alongside each other engaged with an outstanding ensemble from the collection of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin. The Chinese imperial throne and its accompanying screen, products of the imperial workshops in the Kangxi era (1662–1722), were at the center of Konstantin Grcic's, Kirstine Roepstorff's, Simon Starling's, and Zhao Zhao's deliberations. The artistic experiment "Game of Thrones" moved away from reconstructing architectural palace details toward explicitly substantive spheres of reference. The idea in the context of the Humboldt Lab was to create modes of access to the exhibits that would facilitate sensuous, associative experience and discursive spaces that reach into our present. These were made accessible as models in an almost absurd-seeming juxtaposition of four throne rooms. The setting for these imaginary throne situations was four abstract, original-size replica throne ensembles. Painted monochrome white or gray, they functioned as placeholders for the actual throne, which cannot be moved for conservational reasons. The project, named after George R.R. Martin's bestselling fantasy novel "A Game of Thrones," thus adopted an unusual approach to the insignia of power of a country that has long been reduced to exoticism in Europe, and simultaneously inquired into the potential for scenic interpretation in the museum.

Background Research

The exhibition was preceded by a research phase that addressed the presentation of Chinese imperial thrones in palaces, museums, and collections. A selection of textual and image materials documented within the context of the exhibition the architecture and design of imperial palace complexes in China following traditional, canonical models—few of which, however, have been preserved as originals at their original locations.

While palaces in China and big film productions give an ostensibly authentic picture of throne rooms, it is hardly possible to convey such historical architectural contexts in a museum. Instead, thrones are often presented in bare, neutral approximations to the imperial context. Presenting the Chinese imperial throne at the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin, was also not unproblematic, it being impossible to reconstruct its architectural surroundings since its original location no longer existed.

According to its last Chinese owner, the throne ensemble was part of the furnishings of the "en-route" palace in Panshan, a small mountain town some 115 kilometers east of Beijing. The palace no longer exists. The architecture of this imperial residence, like so many others, was based on the traditional architectural program of the Forbidden City in Beijing, only on a smaller scale. The Museum für Asiatische Kunst acquired the throne ensemble in 1972 from Fritz Löw-Beer, a private collector, in whose collection the throne had been since 1928.

The throne displays a conspicuous, framing angular scroll pattern typical of traditional decorative work. The precious mother-of-pearl, gold, silver, and tin inlays on their black lacquer ground illustrate a pictorial program around a central Daoist idea: the attainment of immortality, to which the emperor likewise aspired. The Eight Immortals in Western Paradise await the Queen Mother of the West flying on a phoenix. As ruler of this Paradise, she alone can hand over the coveted "peaches of immortality," which ripen only once every 6,000 years.

Artistic Implementation

Clearly, an exhibit as important and visually appealing as this calls for special presentation. Only how is one to tackle this problem? The artistic interventions by Konstantin Grcic, Kirstine Roepstorff, Simon Starling, and Zhao Zhao treat precisely this question as the occasion to ponder the possibilities for alternative throne-room architectures and to develop approaches that open up new interpretive and educational possibilities for museums. Each of the artists' and the designer's individual proposals created alternative ways of seeing the museological object. Their four distinct approaches—analytic/minimalist, provocative/emotional, poetic/narrative, conceptual/atmospheric—treated the throne as an insignia of power, as the center of absolute power, or staged it as a symbol of violence and injustice. Focusing on

different aspects such as shape, design, setting, history, and symbolism, they facilitated diverse paths of access to the historical object, opening a kaleidoscopic view of history that makes contact with the present.

"migong"

Konstantin Grcic is an industrial designer who designs products often described as reduced and minimalist. He combines this formal rigor with humor, acuity, and elegance. His design presentation of the throne consisted of a walk-in labyrinth based on the angular scroll pattern of the throne ensemble. Grcic took this ornamentation often found in Chinese art as his point of departure to create a kind of "safe space" referencing the nested structure of Chinese palace architecture. Numerous buildings and courtyards or administrative hurdles had to be passed in order to reach the emperor. The presentation of a throne in a museum is not dissimilar. Grcic's installation titled "migong" (labyrinth) confronted viewers with an obstacle that signaled authority, created order, decelerated—and emphatically bade them to join the line. The gesture pointed toward the hierarchical structures of the imperial palace no less than the furnishings of public places, not least of museums. It passed ironic and critical comment on the metaphor, often overworked in the museum context, of creating "broad access" to the exhibit.

"Daughters of the Immortal Mother"

The artist Kirstine Roepstorff works with the principle of collage and utilizes wide ranges of source materials and reference systems. The light objects in her installation "Daughters of the Immortal Mother" brought out the "media" quality of lanterns. Originally invented in China and banned during the Cultural Revolution, lanterns in China are not just decorative in function. Hung outside houses, variously colored and furnished with written characters, they can signal death, birth, or other social events. Their frames of steel, wood, or bamboo covered with ribbons or paper, Roepstorff's objects not only cast light in the room but also shadows. The artist was inspired by figurative motifs from Chinese mythology—phoenix, dragon, tortoise, and tiger—following the Chinese doctrine of the five elements that explores the laws of dynamic processes such as becoming, transformation, and decay. Roepstorff's lanterns produced a dramatic interplay of bright light and harsh shadow that not only illuminated the throne ensemble but also animated and complemented the various figures depicted in the ensemble.

"Screen Screen"

Simon Starling engages in his art with natural and cultural processes of change. He introduces artifacts from different spheres of science, culture, and art history into unexpected relations with each other. In his video installation "Screen Screen" Starling confronted the throne with its own depiction. The artist showcased its rich inlays and the way they reflect and alter the light. His installation also addressed the arrangement of throne and screen, mirroring it in the relation between video projector and projection screen, as well as in the mutual interdependence of their effects. The film sequence explored in close-up the artisanal finesse of tiny details of the throne and screen. Hardly perceptible to the unaided eye, its geometrical structures call to mind the pixels of computer images. The analogy points to surprising correspondences between objet d'art and media technology, but also between traditional and modern techniques of picture production in China, no less than their worldwide everyday impact. The installation was accompanied by classical Chinese music interpreted and played on the qin, the oldest traditional Chinese string instrument, by the contemporary musician Liang Mingyue.

"Waterfall"

The thematic, formal, and media variety of Zhao Zhao's artistic work is an expression of his critical stance toward Chinese politics. In order to question constructed meanings, he challenges social reality and its ideological conventions no less than cultural stereotypes and the dominance of various, mainly European, art-historical categories. In Zhao Zhao's installation "Waterfall" the imperial throne was immersed in a torrent of red wax that hardened into picturesque shapes. By concealing the assumedly artistic form of the throne in a gesture suggesting physical violence, the artist simultaneously renders transparent his own and his artistic context's critique of this relic of the Chinese monarchy. The artist's thoughts as blog entries, together with reactions and commentaries from China, could be read on a monitor. The artist's blog, conducted partly in English translation, enabled Berlin museum visitors to participate in the debate around the museum artifact and its treatment. The dynamics of this democratic exchange contrasted markedly with the seemingly frozen motion of the red wax, which gestured, on the one hand, at the imperial past and its structures of violence, on the other, at the stagnation besetting the current Chinese regime's democratic efforts.

A Filmic Approach

Naturally, one wonders what life in the palace was really like—a subject that for a long time gave rise to speculation since the big traditional ceremonies as well as intrigues and personal dramas all took place within the secrecy of the palace walls. Only later did movies such as Bernardo Bertolucci's monumental history film "The Last Emperor" (1987) or Zhang Yimou's grandiose epic "Curse of the Golden Flower" (2006) depict the lives of China's legendary emperors, their magnificent court ceremonials and extensive palace complexes, putting the subject on stage for a wide public. Meanwhile, the history and depiction of the Forbidden City have not only become part of our collective memory but also significant components of Chinese popular culture.

For the exhibition "Game of Thrones" the artist and filmmaker Daniel Kohl took history movies, selecting sequences that depicted Chinese throne rooms. Deconstructing the narrative flow of the films and the spatial staging of their images, Kohl then recomposed the various film parts, puzzle-like, in an imaginary 3D-space. The filmic gaze directed at the potentates on their thrones is itself the subject of his

looped collage of moving images titled "babao suipian" (mixed snippets). Kohl shows how film techniques, camera movements, and select close-ups are deployed to create dynamic compositions that undermine the distance to the emperor enshrined in the architecture and rigid court ceremonies. This filmic approach to institutionalized imperial power and the celebration of the emperor at its heart parallels the artistic interventions of the exhibition and the paths to the throne ensemble opened up by the artists.

Konstantin Grcic
"migong," 2013
mixed-media installation
mdf (model throne, screen, dais), galvanized steel tubes, tube connectors, mirror
variable dimensions
courtesy Konstantin Grcic

Kirstine Roepstorff
"Daughters of the Immortal Mother," 2013
mixed-media installation
mdf (model throne, screen, dais), various materials (light objects)
variable dimensions
courtesy Studio Roepstorff, Berlin

Simon Starling
"Screen Screen," 2013
mixed-media installation
mdf (model throne, screen), HD video projection with sound
variable dimensions
length: 6:24 min
camera: Christoph Manz
production and editing: Annette Ueberlein
music: "Tien-feng-huan-pei" (The Sound of the Jade Jewelry that Fills the Heavens), "Liang-xiao-yin" (Merry Evening), played by Liang Mingyue (qin), "Yangguan san die—Parting at Yangguan" (recorded 1975), ed. Artur Simon, 2002, in cooperation with the department for Musikethnologie, Medien-Technik and Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Wergo SM 1706 2
courtesy Simon Starling; neugerriemschneider, Berlin

Zhao Zhao
"Waterfall," 2013
mixed-media installation
mdf (model throne, screen, dais), paraffin wax, red pigment, computer, monitor screen
Zhao Zhao's blog: http://weibo.cn/zhaozhaofk?vt=4&st=78ca
variable dimensions
courtesy Alexander Ochs Galleries Berlin|Beijing

Daniel Kohl
"babao suipian," 2013
DVD, color, without sound, loop
length: 3:23 min

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Konstantin Grcic, "migong," 2013
© courtesy Konstantin Grcic, photo: Jens Ziehe

Zhao Zhao, "Waterfall," 2013
© courtesy Alexander Ochs Galleries Berlin|Beijing, photo: Jens Ziehe

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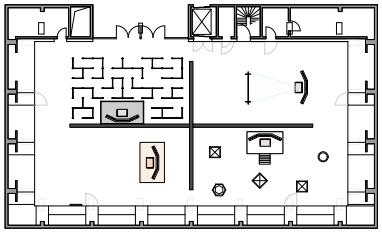
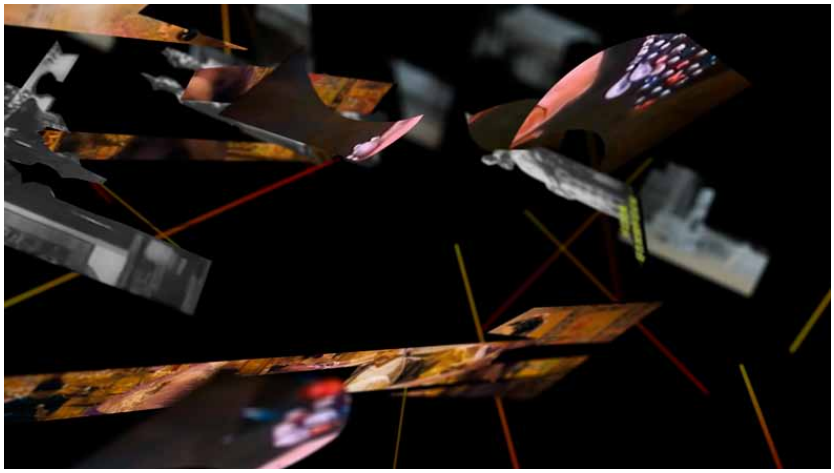
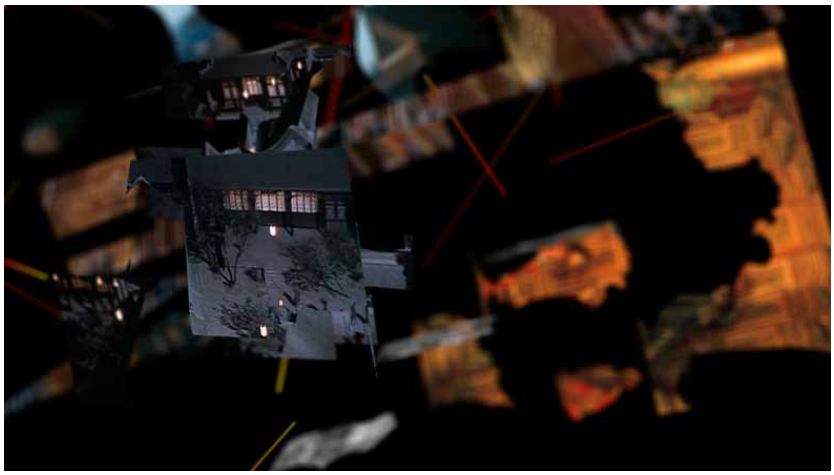
Simon Starling, "Screen Screen," 2013
© courtesy Simon Starling; neugerriemschneider, Berlin, photo: Jens Ziehe

Kirstine Roepstorff, "Daughters of the Immortal Mother," 2013
© courtesy Studio Roepstorff, Berlin, photo: Jens Ziehe

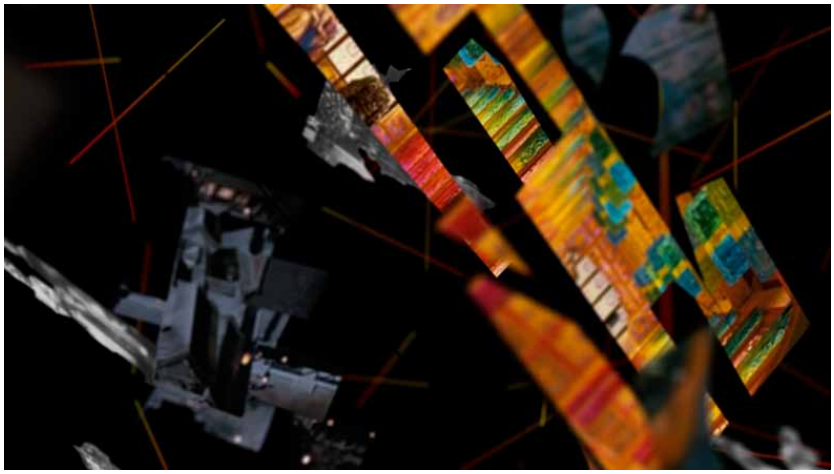
"Spiel der Throne," layout of the exhibition, scala/Günter Krüger, 2013

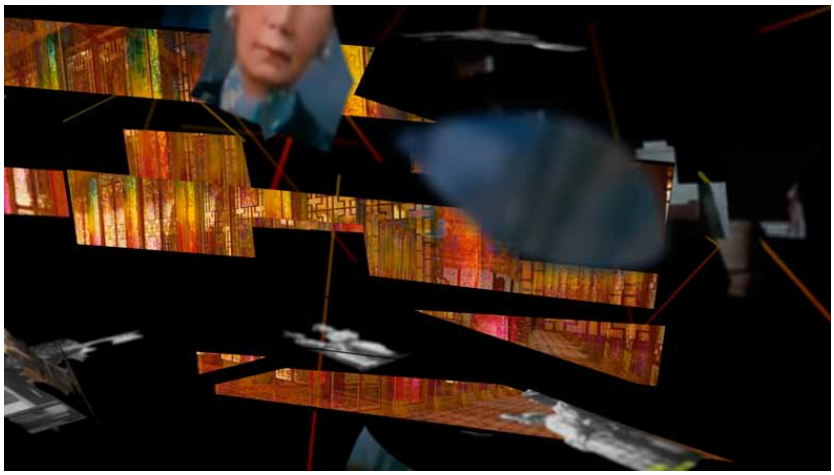






Daniel Kohl, "babao suipian," 2013
DVD, color, without sound, loop, 3:23 min





Symposium Remembering as a Constructive Act—Artistic Concepts for Museum Collections

Angela Rosenberg

"In order to possess the world of culture we must incessantly reconquer it by historical recollection. But recollection does not mean merely the act of reproduction. It is a new intellectual synthesis—a constructive act."
Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man (1944)

How can historical artworks from a distant culture be exhibited today? What parameters—moral, thematic, or of contemporary relevance—are important when presenting such artifacts? How much information is necessary? How much creative speculation is permissible? What opportunities do experimental exhibition concepts by contemporary artists offer?

The symposium "Remembering as a Constructive Act—Artistic Concepts for Museum Collections" of the Humboldt Lab Dahlem took place at the Museen Dahlem – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, on October 19, 2013, and considered current and art-historical examples of exhibitions and interventions. Art historians, curators, and artists addressed the questions which artistic, practice-oriented approaches can reflect and broaden our perception of other cultures, and how in particular non-European collections can be reinterpreted. In this internationally staffed, top-notch symposium five curators and an artist discussed the utopian and problematic question whether there can be a universal approach in dealing with artistic concepts and museum collections. They showed how and which artistic conceptions can contribute to understanding objects and their complex histories. Artistic concepts can function as aids in animating "historical recollection" in Ernst Cassirer's sense and—through creative translations and "intellectual synthesis"—in both grasping and presenting the cultures of the world, not as fixed points, but as a permanently changing continuum.

The speakers have summarized the talks that they delivered for the present publication. The articles deal with the potential that contemporary artworks have to reinterpret museum stock in exhibitions. The various contributions present concrete examples of how particular contents and/or subjectivity can be used to broaden museum work.

Taking the exhibition "Game of Thrones" as their point of departure, the articles by Stephen Little (curator of Chinese and Korean art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art) and Melissa Chiu (director of the Asia Society Museum, New York) engage in the present context with contemporary Asian art. They report on their projects of introducing historical artifacts into artists' concepts and ask what dangers or deficits may lie in this exhibition practice. There is general agreement here that artistic interventions should not serve to distract attention from complex topics that are already present in the objects. According to Little, it is far rather a question of creating the possibility for viewers to produce connections between exhibits and their context. Another aim should be to create a historical picture that is as multifaceted as possible by presenting a range of different perspectives.

The Berlin-based artist Christian Jankowski's projects are directed at questioning our habits of seeing and reception. In an interview he answers questions arising from his intervention "Cleaning Up the Studio" (2010) in Nam June Paik's New York studio reconstructed in Seoul and discusses related ideas on the translocation of objects and environments. Thematic and formal restrictions, or respect for objects or audience, are not limiting parameters for Jankowski, but a challenge.

Clémentine Deliss (director of the Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt am Main) formulates her ambition of waking the ethnographical collection in her museum from its age-old historicizing slumber and resuscitating it for the public. Her article is a plea for opening the institution and encouraging a dialogue that would go beyond academic divisions. On her view, the museum could also become a production site and studio, enabling the public when viewing the collection to better understand the narratives around

the objects, as well as to question the existing canon and test out new readings.

Beatrice von Bismarck (professor at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst, Leipzig) addresses the reenactment of exhibitions in her article. Taking as example Harald Szeemann's influential exhibition "Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form (Works – Concepts – Processes – Situations – Information)," a remake of which was produced at the Fondazione Prada in Venice with the suffix "Bern 1969 / Venice 2013" in 2013, she shows how representations of art and cultural objects generate new interpretations, stripping exhibits of particular meanings or investing them with new ones. What we know about a work depends on how it is presented, so that ultimately an exhibition becomes part of the work.

Jana Scholze (curator of contemporary furniture and product design, Victoria and Albert Museum, London) looks at the exhibition "Tomorrow" by the Danish artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset to consider possible strategies by which contemporary art can change how historical exhibits are currently understood. Taking as example the first handgun printable on a 3D-printer, she inquires into the potential in the stories that can form around objects. Her conclusion is that what ultimately matters is trusting objects with their complex and conflicting effects. The objects for her are absolutely central—they are the agents that facilitate and influence our experience, perception, and emotions in the first place.

Last but not least, Jörn Schafaff (research associate, Collaborative Research Centre 626, Freie Universität Berlin), the symposium moderator, looks at the concept of the model in the exhibition "Game of Thrones," while Kito Nedo (Berlin-based journalist and art critic) comments on a range of important aspects of the symposium.

Symposium: Some Observations Remembering as a Constructive Act—Artistic Concepts for Museum Collections

Kito Nedo

It is generally agreed that ethnology museums are in a state of crisis today. Because of their history, they are closely bound up with colonialism, their worldview is antiquated, and their collections often bear the taint of stolen goods; the debate on restitution has smoldered on for years—and finds expression in Berlin, say, in the "No Humboldt 21!" campaign. Ethnology museums, as the art theorist and historian Susanne Leeb wrote recently, "served primarily as a means of scientifically studying 'other' cultures, of demonstrating power of control, and of advertizing for the colonial project." The debate on the future and legacy of ethnology museums has gained further weight in the German capital as the opening of the Humboldt-Forum in 2019 draws closer.

Hence the symposium "Remembering as a Constructive Act—Artistic Concepts for Museum Collections" (Berlin, October 19, 2013) touched a wide range of acute museological and cultural-political issues: Can ethnology collections remain intact in future? What task do they have to fulfill when the peoples they deal with live in the call shop opposite? The job of thinking about the present world with its migratory movements has meanwhile been taken over by others. Following on from the field of cultural studies that has emerged since the 1960s, it has chiefly devolved to biennials and exhibitions of contemporary art, for instance, the "Project Migration," an initiative of the German Federal Cultural Foundation. Contemporary art ostensibly offers ethnology museums a way out of their legitimation crisis.

What is the significance behind the increased courting of the cooperation of contemporary artists by institutions? What significance does it have for the institutions? What good does it do art? Or are critics such as Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie right when they maintain that artists who work with Western museums in re-presenting their ethnology collections render themselves "suspect of complicity"?

An example that Melissa Chiu referred to in the symposium shows that it depends on how such collections are treated. A huge advertizing banner hung from the façade of the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore in 1992. It promised passersby a "different history" that could be discovered in the museum. What lay behind this was a project by Fred Wilson, an Afro-American artist who had mounted a show titled "Mining the Museum" at the Historical Society which to this day has set a standard for what institution-critical interventions by contemporary artists can achieve in the context of history or ethnology museums. Wilson juxtaposed objects from the museum collection and other material sensitively and radically, and thus invited the public to engage critically with how history is presented in historical collections. Following the principle that more can be learnt about a museum by researching its depot than by just visiting an exhibition, he studied the Historical Society's stock and talked with all the museum staff. This research laid the basis for his—in the meantime oft-cited—installation "Mining the Museum," which shows how only minor interventions can suffice to open up new angles on history. Wilson exhibited silverware, for instance, and—in the same showcase, formerly concealed in the depot—slaves' leg irons. In this way he highlighted the connection between economic wealth and slavery both clearly and simply.

More than two decades later, artists seem to have roles to play in relation to museum collections other than institution critique. Such at least was the impression conveyed by Jana Scholze's talk on the exhibition project "Tomorrow" at the London V&A museum. The museum invited the artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset to design a big site-specific installation in the former textile galleries. The two artists who, among other things, have been casually citing the traditions of art-institution critique in their practice ever since the mid-1990s, created a fictional character, through whose private domicile museum visitors were led. In the fake, South Kensington apartment of Norman Swann, retired architect, objects from the museum collection were for once not presented according to traditional museological practice, but instead were put in the service of the narrative about the fictional character. "Tomorrow," to follow Scholze, raises the issues of "how objects are dealt with in the museum" and of the "value added that the museum objects provide in contrast to other objects." Because certain V&A objects were not available for the Elmgreen & Dragset show, similar antiques acquired elsewhere—alongside things brought in by the artists—were integrated in the exhibition.

Might "Tomorrow" be a possible model for alternative collections?

In Frankfurt am Main, on the other hand, artists have actually become a central component in the practice of one ethnology museum. As Clémentine Deliss explained at the start of her talk: "My models and my method of work stem from contemporary art." With the aid of pictures from the Frankfurt exhibition "Trading Style—World Fashion in Dialogue" (November 7, 2012–October 27, 2013), Deliss showed how historical, ethnographic artifacts from the collection were brought together with contemporary approaches in art and design at the Weltkulturen Museum originally founded in 1904. For the exhibition project four young fashion labels—A Kind of Guise (Germany), Buki Akib (Nigeria), CassettePlaya (Great Britain), and Perks and Mini (Australia)—were invited to spend time working at the Frankfurt institution and, over a period of weeks, on the basis of its extensive collection of pictures, films, and artifacts, and in dialogue with restorers and in-house researchers, to develop their own collections in the newly installed "Weltkulturen Labor" (World Cultures Lab). Historical photographs from the museum archive, for instance, were combined with image material from the various designers' lookbooks and stylesheets in a bricolage-like technique indebted both to punk and mash-up cultures. As Deliss put it, in the combination of "anthropology, contemporary art, and fashion" the exhibits from the museum collection became "source material for new and substantive insights, both for specialists as well as a broader public." This practice coincides with the institution's self-understanding as a "post-ethnographic museum" (also reflected in the museum's renamings—until 2001 it was known as the "Museum für Völkerkunde," then "Museum der Weltkulturen," and since 2010 "Weltkulturen Museum").

Since Deliss took over in Frankfurt, contemporary artists have regularly been invited to work on museum stock with a view to reactivating objects and re-contextualizing them. This is an effective way of "breaking the canon." Deliss also met with disagreement from her audience here. Ought not visitors first to be familiarized with the canon in order to understand its critical deconstruction? Who then is responsible for broad-based education, the classical task of museums?

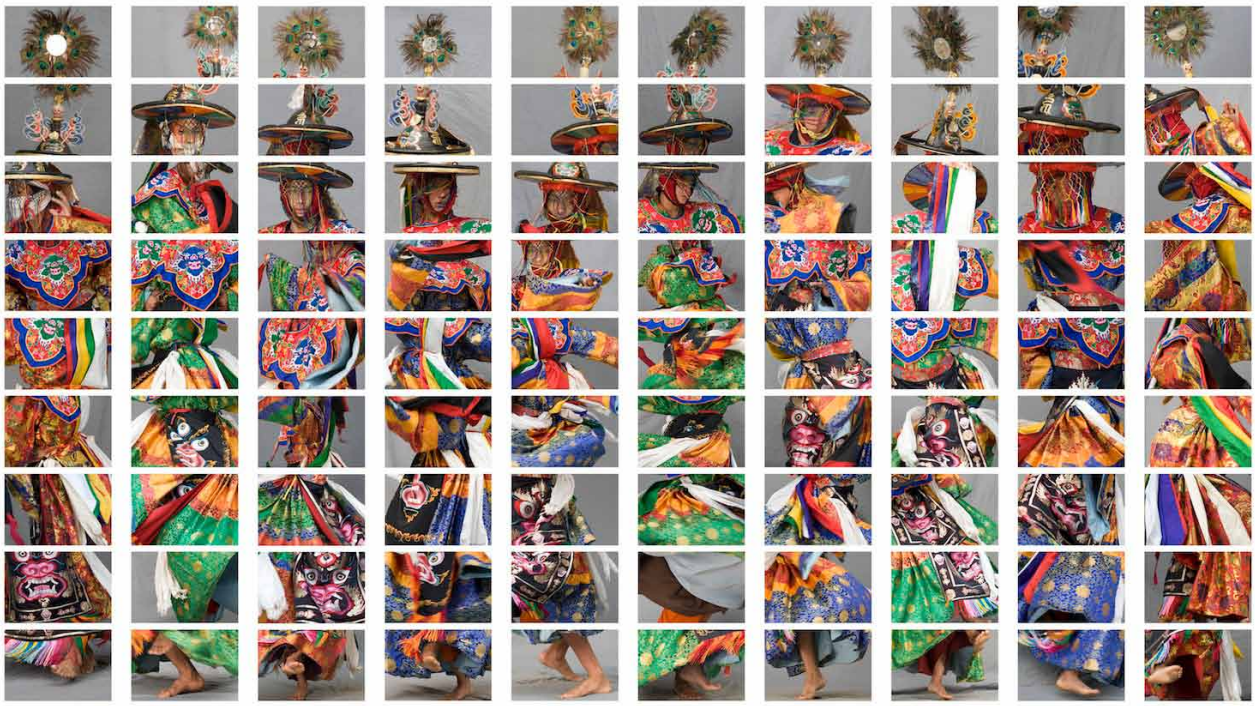
Maybe the museum as educator and the inclusion of artistic concepts do not contradict each other? The central questions occupying Stephen Little as a museum curator are precisely a result of the relations and misunderstandings between the present and ancient Asian cultures. Little explained one useful curatorial technique with reference to the exhibition "Taoism and the Arts of China" that ran at the Art Institute of Chicago in 2000. The exhibition addressed, first and foremost, the impact of Daoism on Chinese art, taking a look at Daoist philosophy "through the window of art" to inquire into how art functions in the context of a religion. Because Daoism continues to be a living tradition in China, "Daoism and the Arts of China," according to Little, was also an exhibition about the present. Because "[i]f one understands Daoism, modern Chinese culture itself becomes easier to understand."

How do artists themselves see the role assigned to them? Does it degrade them to uncritical service providers? In conversation with Christian Jankowski, the moderator Jörn Schafaff asked what it was like for an artist to be invited "to do something with a collection." How does one deal with this kind of assignment? "Invitations are always welcome," Jankowski explained. "The ambitions behind particular invitations vary. One must see if it makes sense. Naturally, I prefer having a completely free hand." Jankowski, whose works often turn on the relations between artist, market, society, and institution, had previously screened his video "Cleaning Up the Studio" (2010) commissioned by the Nam June Paik Art Center in South Korea. Shortly before he died in 2006, Paik sold his disorderly New York studio as a total installation to the Korean museum. After his death, it was dismantled, shipped to Korea, and reassembled in its original state. For his video Jankowski paid a cleaning company named Beautiful Cleaning to clean and tidy up the video-art pioneer's studio. "Cleaning Up the Studio" is a bit like a PR clip for the cleaning firm and can be read at different levels—as an artist's commentary on the public's addiction to authenticity, or as a story about the strange discomfort felt when a living artist uses what a dead artist has left behind as his material.

The reenactment of the pioneering exhibition "When Attitudes Become Form" in Venice in 2013 was also an occasion for discomfort. For the reconstruction of the exhibition originally mounted by the young curator Harald Szeemann (d. 2005) at the Kunsthalle Bern in spring 1969 that formed the start of the curator's international career, the Fondazione Prada commissioned the Italian curator Germano Celant, who had worked with Szeemann in 1969, the architect Rem Koolhaas, and the artist Thomas Demand. In her talk Beatrice von Bismarck inquired into the changes that occur when major exhibitions are reenacted. In the case of "When Attitudes Become Form" the reenactment seems like a reversal of the original exhibition's anti-commercial intention, a project that had combined conceptual and minimal approaches, fluxus and arte povera.

Conclusions: Contemporary art cannot solve the pressing problems (such as restitution) of ethnology museums. Nor, if it is smart, will it contribute to concealing such issues or to stifling their debate. However, artistic projects such as "Mining the Museum" do seem able, as a critical instance, to change how publics view an institution and its collection and to initiate critical, open-ended discussion—the more independent their position in the process (cf. Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt) the better. Artistic interventions can help break certain preconceived or traditional readings. The interdisciplinary opening and extension of contemporary art seems to facilitate a plurality. Constellations are possible that can form the starting point for discussion. Only a radical opening up seems able to reanimate ethnological collections and link them to contemporary discourse.

Herbert Migdoll, “Black Hat Dancers” (preparatory design), Trongsa, Bhutan, 2007



Let the Past Serve the Present; Let the Present Serve the Past

Stephen Little

It is often said that to understand the present one must understand the past. This is a widely held truism, expressed in such popular sayings as, "Let the past serve the present" (Mao Zedong) and, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (George Santayana). Less often does one hear the converse: let the present serve the past. I think they both are true: one cannot understand the past without understanding the present.

As a curator I am always looking for effective ways in which to convey a deeper understanding of traditional Asian cultures, and to find ways in which ancient cultures can be relevant for the present. I find value in probing both the works of art that provide the fundamental material for curatorial research and display, and the underlying assumptions on which we base our knowledge and methodologies. The questions I ask are also influenced by my early training in physics and astrophysics, in which I was taught the importance of challenging transmitted wisdom and conventional interpretations. As a curator, these are the some of the questions I ask:

1. Does a greater clarity of vision manifest in the merging of past and present? In other words, is there value in juxtaposing traditional and contemporary works of art, and if so, what is that value?
2. What are the risks and opportunities to be derived from exhibiting traditional and contemporary works in the same space and time?
3. Is it necessary to understand the significance and original context of a work of ancient art when juxtaposing it with a contemporary work of art?
4. What is the contemporary artist in the present moment trying to communicate, and how deep is their understanding of the past, or of the present?

In two recent exhibitions of traditional Asian art ("Taoism and the Arts of China," The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000, and "The Dragon's Gift: The Sacred Arts of Bhutan," Rubin Museum of Art, New York, 2008), the curatorial team's goal was to present two alternate Asian cosmologies to a Western audience. Both exhibitions included adjunct installations comprising, either fully or in part, contemporary art works. In the first exhibition a Daoist altar was constructed in the middle of the exhibition. While perhaps not a work of art per se, the installation of an altar that could actually function as the venue for ritual had a dramatic effect on visitors to the exhibition, to the extent that it enabled them to visualize the dimensions, structure, appearance, and sounds of a Daoist ritual space. "The Dragon's Gift" ended with a large installation comprising two painted photographic collages by Herbert Migdoll (b. 1944), resident photographer of the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago. This commission depicted contemporary Buddhist monk-dancers in Bhutan in a visually fragmented manner that suggested the dancers' altered trance state in the midst of their movement. Designed for the exhibition's final gallery, the Migdoll installation presented a modern parallel to several of the concepts embodied in the historical exhibits, including the idea that the visual forms and worldview inherent in Bhutanese Buddhist paintings and sculptures are mirrored in the forms of Buddhist ritual dance.

One example of the juxtaposition of traditional Asian concepts and works of art that I found particularly successful was the 2011 "Haein Art Project" in Korea (Yu Yeon Kim, chief curator; Jiwoong Yoon, director). This project coincided with the one thousandth anniversary of the Haeinsa, a Buddhist temple famous for its intact set of wooden printing blocks carved with the complete text of the Buddhist Canon. The exhibition challenged numerous artists to respond to such themes as the inherent emptiness of phenomena, as well as the concept of 'tong,' meaning link, understanding, comprehension, or, literally, to penetrate, to go through. Several of the works approached the theme of impermanence head-on, with, in my opinion, considerable success. Among these were Atta Kim's "Ice Buddha" (2011), Xu Bing's "Silk Worm Series—Haeinsa," Bill Viola's video "Three Women" (2008), Zhang Huan's "Haeinsa Buddha" (2011), and Jeon Joonho and Moon Kyung-won's mirrored pavilion "Dok Seong Gak."

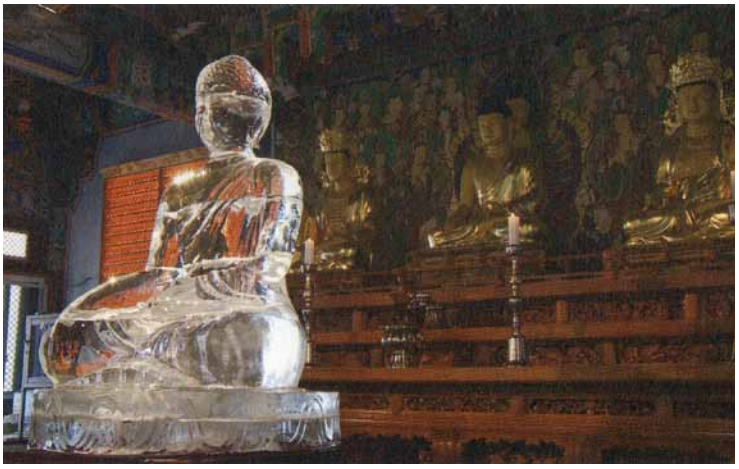
I was also impressed with the four installations that comprised the exhibition "Spiel der Throne," the artistic fulcrum for the Humboldt Lab Dahlem. In

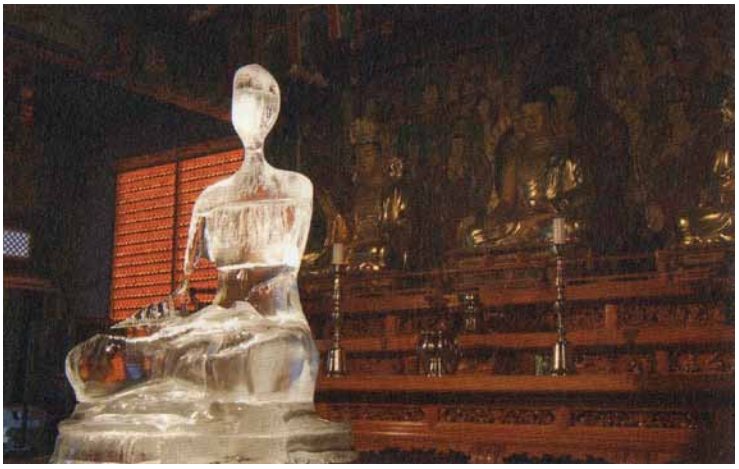
their separate ways, the artists Konstantin Grcic, Zhao Zhao, Kirstine Roepstorff, and Simon Starling, taking as their point of inspiration a spectacular Qing dynasty throne from the Kangxi era (1662–1722), created artistic statements on the themes of access, power, violence, cosmological correspondences, and self-awareness that succeeded in causing the viewer to reflect on how such symbols of imperial presence as a throne impact human experience and behavior.

LACMA is now engaged with the contemporary Korean artist Do Ho Suh to create a major contemporary installation for 2015, the "Ghost House," based on traditional architectural forms. Throughout his career Suh has used architecture to create works of art that challenge our perceptions of the spaces we live in, and our own presence in them. Over the past decade Suh has become well known for his recreations of both Asian and Western architectural forms. These recreations are grounded in his own personal domiciles, from his traditional Korean home to apartments he has inhabited in New York and Berlin. His use of the lightweight and translucent materials of wire and nylon to recreate architecture calls into question the seeming solidity of buildings, and leads to the deeper question of what is solid. His work challenges such assumptions by rendering buildings that normally appear solid into things that become elusive. In the "Ghost House" Do Ho Suh will create an actual-size replica in machine-sculpted blocks of acrylic resin of a 19th-century palace building of the Joseon dynasty, located in Gyeongbokgung (Gyeongbok Palace) in Seoul.

It is hoped that the "Ghost House" with its dramatic scale, translucent acrylic body, evocation of private space, and seeming insubstantiality will function as a catalyst and evoke in the viewer a place and time far removed from the present, that is yet completely situated in the present. We hope that this merging of past and present will create a dynamic tension that transcends the work's boundaries as a "replica" and continues to resonate and challenge the viewer long after it is experienced.

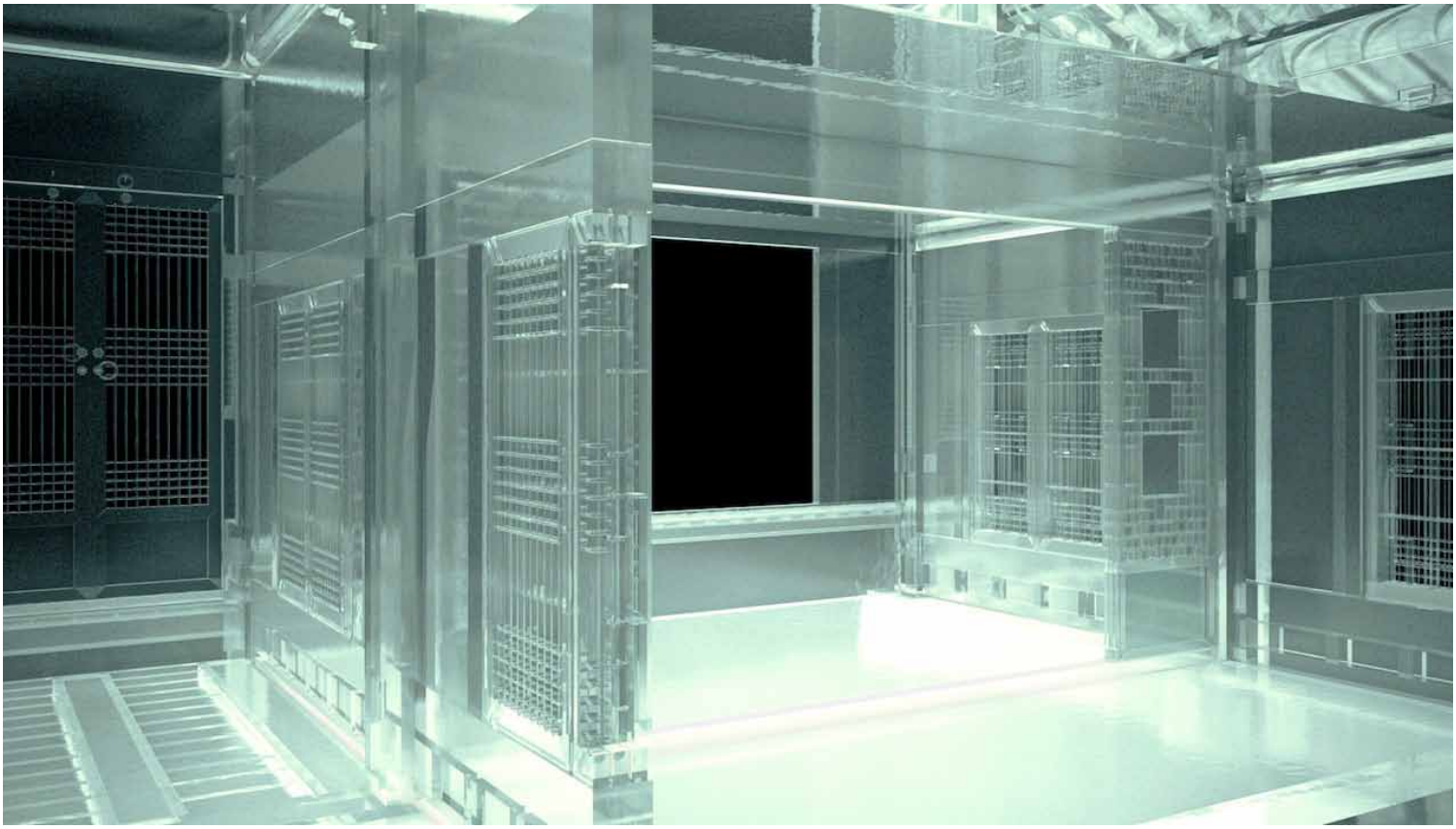
In my experience, the greatest risks in mixing traditional and contemporary Asian art are situations in which an installation's conceptual premise has not been adequately thought through or articulated, regardless of the artist's or curator's ultimate goals. Especially predictable are interpretive wall texts, labels, and accompanying publications that purport to describe for the viewer an installation's purpose (or at least to give the viewer some conceptual direction in this regard), which can nonetheless end up being frustratingly vague. Even though such installations can be visually beautiful and striking, so often the conceptual links between ancient and contemporary works that might create the tensions that allow the artwork to resonate in a deeper and transformative way are not articulated, and it is left up the viewer to determine such connections and interpretations on their own. Ambiguity, which can be a powerful artistic agent in its own right, seems far more tolerated in the realm of contemporary art than in that of traditional art. This is a situation that deserves more critical discussion among curators and artists.

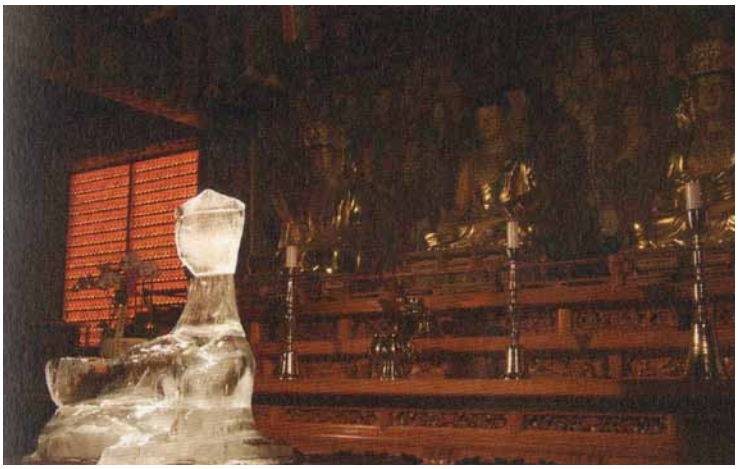


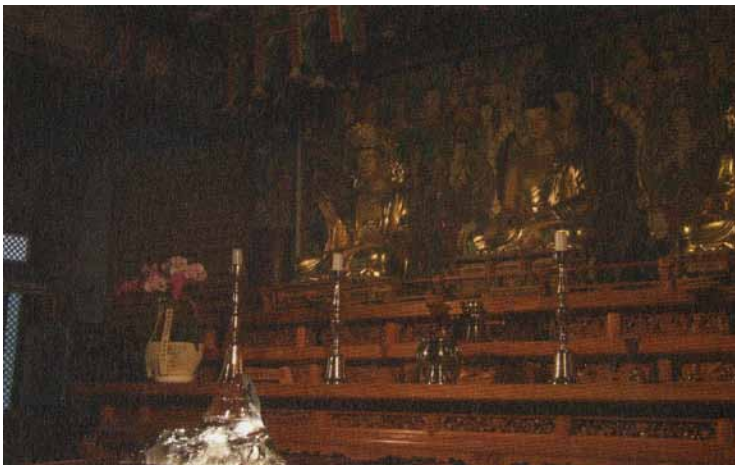


Atta Kim, "Ice Buddha," Haein Art Project 2011, Haeinsa, Korea, 2011

**Do Ho Suh, "Ghost House" (render in progress, detail),
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2013 © Do Ho Suh**







An Artist's View: From Asia's Past to Present

Melissa Chiu

My paper will address the subject of this symposium by providing some examples of how artists have worked with museum collections to create new art inspired by collections of historical material or how they have curated a display from a collection. This has become a prevalent museum practice today. In my view, there are a couple of reasons for this, firstly, it has been nearly twenty years since the first forays of artists acting as curator so there is now comfort in what may have been perceived initially as a risk for the museum to cede the interpretation of their collections to someone other than a curator. Secondly, encyclopedic museums are increasingly interested in finding new ways of engaging and enlivening their collections. Artists are now frequently being commissioned to offer their interpretations of collections in a multitude of different ways. My talk focused on some of the first examples in the United States of artists acting as curators of collection materials followed by some examples of the work I have done at Asia Society in working with artists to produce exhibitions that have strong connections to traditions, such as the works of Michael Joo, Yang Fudong, and Ah Xian.

Before I begin, however, I'd like to spend a few moments talking about Asian contemporary art. I wanted to raise the issue of the newness of Asian contemporary art as a discursive field. I understand that the Humboldt-Forum will comprise non-Western art and so the interest in what contemporary artists in Asia have to offer is a natural one. With this in mind, I raise it by way of saying that there are some issues in Asian contemporary art that are peculiar to this field. The most significant is the relationship to tradition that must define any consideration of Asian art. To understand the context of production for contemporary art is essential, perhaps more so in the case of Asia. For example, within the field of Asian contemporary art, you may discern a division between artists who are part of an international art community and those who could be seen to continue a tradition, such as ink painting. These worlds have largely remained separate and a divide between local, national, or regional interests and transnational interests continues today. When we exhibit Asian contemporary art outside Asia these distinctions tend to become more pronounced. Curiously enough this separation has tended to be replicated within some museums' approaches to the subject, especially larger-scaled encyclopedic museums, where the Asian departments tend to be interested in those artists who continue traditional modes while the contemporary art departments work with artists who create art in international idioms such as photography, painting, or installation art. This is something of an aside from the crux of our discussions today, but as we approach the subject of artists' interactions with museums, and as the Humboldt-Forum intends to engage artists from Asia for their Asian art collections, to be mindful of these complexities will produce even more nuanced and fruitful exhibitions.

Now I'd like to set the scene for my paper by introducing two exhibitions that I believe have set the agenda for artists' interventions into museums. These two exhibitions are Joseph Kosuth's "The Brooklyn Museum Collection: The Play of the Unmentionable" at the Brooklyn Museum in 1990 and Fred Wilson's "Mining the Museum" in 1992 at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore. Both exhibitions were conceived at the very time museums were the subject of political scrutiny with the culture war that erupted over the 1989 cancelled exhibition of Mapplethorpe's photographs at the Corcoran Museum in Washington. At the same time, museums began to be criticized by artists for their exclusionary practices of women and those of color, culminating in the 1993 Whitney Biennial and a focus on identity politics. These circumstances provide a backdrop to two artists' responses to the issue of their times through the curation of objects of the past.

Wilson's interest in the Maryland Historical Society was its relationship to slavery. As an African-American artist, Wilson was acutely aware of the intertwining histories of prosperity and slavery. He set about creating a number of juxtapositions of materials that question the assumptions of museum arrangement, that is, the placement and curation of material. Wilson said, "What they put on view says a lot about a museum, but what they don't put on view says even more." One of the most striking was "Metalwork," a case of ornate Victorian silverware with metal slave shackles. This was jarring because we are more accustomed to seeing them in separate sections of the museum, if not in different museums altogether—

decorative arts and social history. A similar juxtaposition was "Cabinetmaking, 1820–1960," a cluster of decoratively carved wooden Victorian chairs facing a whipping post, as if viewing the punishment. These works question the assumptions that are prevalent in our expectations of museum displays, allowing us also to question the way history is recorded, and perhaps more importantly, the way museums illustrate and create this history. Wilson's interest in this exhibition was to make the idea of museums display a subjective enterprise.

Joseph Kosuth's exhibition, "The Brooklyn Museum Collection: The Play of the Unmentionable," took a similar approach but he was interested in the issues around taboo and censorship. As one of the foremost conceptual artists from the 1970s, his work had always been attentive to meaning and display. With this exhibition, Kosuth worked across the different departments of the museum to select objects on the subject of changing societal attitudes to taboo, from the defacement of Egyptian statues to Cindy Sherman photographs. The curator of the exhibition, Charlotta Kotik, likened Kosuth's approach to the collection as a readymade. Through this display, the artist revealed the changing nature of societal taboos and the role that art has played in triggering controversy.

These two exhibitions by artists have acted as precursors for exhibitions at the Asia Society. As one of three museums dedicated exclusively to Asian art in the United States, the Asia Society was also the first museum to embark on an exhibition program of Asian contemporary art beginning in the early 1990s. I'd like to introduce three projects with artists that have involved our collection of traditional material. The first is a project I organized with Korean-American artist Michael Joo, who selected a Gandharan standing Buddhist sculpture from the third century CE as a starting point for an installation titled "Bodhi Obfuscatus (Space Baby)" (2005). Joo's work created a Buckminster Fuller-like geodesic dome around the Buddha's head which transmitted images to surrounding television monitors and projections. It was an installation about the mediated experience of viewing art, and perhaps also a commentary on the commodification of Buddhist icons in popular culture, as other works by Joo have addressed.

Joo's project at the Asia Society was to create an entirely new work of art inspired by the collection. Another curatorial approach taken at the Asia Society has involved the pairing of traditional material with an artist's work to elucidate and create a greater depth of knowledge about their art. This was evident in exhibitions of Yang Fudong and Ah Xian's works. Yang Fudong's "Seven Intellectuals in a Bamboo Forest" is a series of five video works created from 2003 through 2007. Although Yang's works are about the disillusioned youth of today's Shanghai the reference points are firmly grounded in the past, from Shanghai's early-modern transformation in the twentieth century to the theme of the seven sages of the bamboo grove that has functioned as a theme in Chinese art since the third century CE. The exhibition at the Asia Society exhibited Yang's video works with an accompanying exhibition of antiquities that displayed the seven sages themes including ceramics, brush pots, and ink paintings. By making this historical thematic connection, viewers were able to see the cultural context of Yang's works while also understanding his creative departure from it. In a similar way, Ah Xian's exhibition titled "China Refigured" (2002) took a connection to tradition, in this case the longstanding production of porcelain, as the foundation for an understanding of Ah Xian's works. As one of a growing number of Chinese diaspora artists in the 1990s, Ah Xian moved to Sydney and there became interested in articulating what he saw as cultural differences between East and West. This took the form of a series of bust portraits of friends and family rendered in porcelain with traditional porcelain designs painted onto their surface. For Ah Xian, the busts represented a western tradition of portraiture while the material and motifs represented Chinese traditions and, perhaps most importantly, his connection to Chinese culture. The exhibition included a selection of his busts with a cluster of traditional Chinese porcelain objects such as flasks, dishes, and bottles. The direct connection to tradition was evident in the display, yet Ah Xian's busts also forged a reinterpretation of the tradition based on the artist's experience of dislocation from his home country.

My discussion of these projects allows viewers to see collections through the eyes of artists. Although this is a well-developed exhibition strategy today, for Asian collections there is still much work to be done.

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Ah Xian, "China, China – Bust 57," 2002
Porcelain with low-temperature yellow glaze and relief, landscape design
Asia Society, New York: Asia Society Museum Collection
© courtesy Asia Society

Michael Joo, "Bodhi Obfuscatus (Space-Baby)," installation view
Asia Society Museum, New York, March 1–May 1, 2005
© courtesy Asia Society, photo: Davis Thompson-Moss

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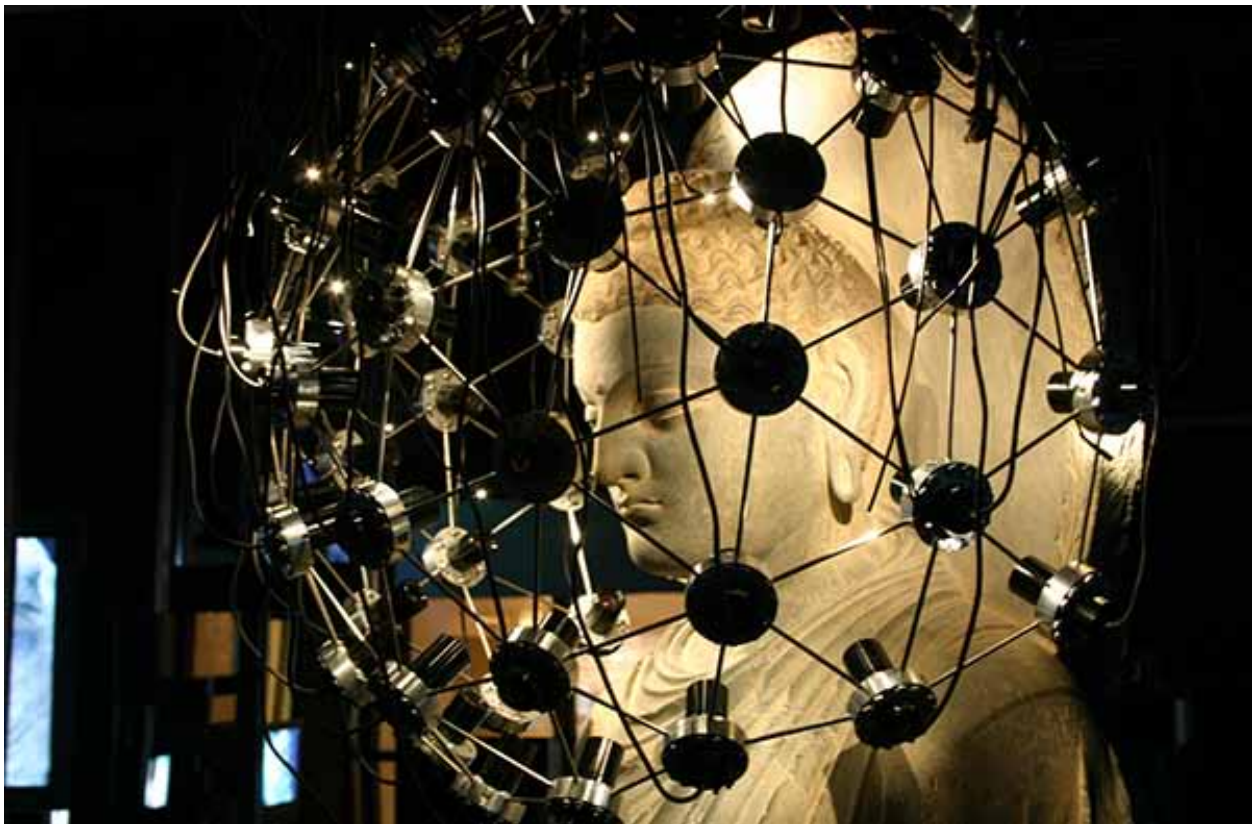
Fred Wilson, "Metalwork. Mining the Museum: An Installation by Fred Wilson"
Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, 1992–1993
© courtesy Maryland Historical Society

Fred Wilson, "Cabinetmaking, 1820–1960. Mining the Museum: An Installation by Fred Wilson," Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, 1992–1993
© courtesy Maryland Historical Society




CABINETMAKING
1820-1960

Cleaning Up the Studio

Christian Jankowski in conversation with Angela Rosenberg

Christian Jankowski's project "Cleaning Up the Studio" (2010) addresses curatorial and conservational aspects of reconstruction, aura, and originality. The film was produced in Nam June Paik's Broome Street studio that had been shipped from New York to Seoul and reconstructed in the Nam June Paik Art Center. The film documents staff of the cleaning firm Beautiful Cleaning commissioned by the artist as they clean and tidy up the studio. 622 catalogued object groups and thirty items of furniture were moved in the cleaning process. The altered installation remained as a sculpture for the two months of the "Trickster Makes This World" exhibition curated by Tobias Berger and Nav Haq. At the end of the exhibition the studio was returned to its original state.

AR: The genre of the artist studio lives on the idea of a studio's auratic charge. Whether in the preserved or reconstructed studios of Francis Bacon, Gustave Moreau, Constantin Brâncuşi, Frida Kahlo, or Giorgio de Chirico—the precondition for these studio situations is always that they be presented as if the artist had just left the room. What was your particular interest in Nam June Paik's studio?
CJ: What interested me was the phenomenon of the exhibited artist's studio. Like the room a poet died in, or the house a composer was born in, it's pretty much its own genre in the museological world. Authenticity reenacted in this way shows the scope for the real at such sites. When a studio as chaotic as Nam June Paik's gets packed into chests and reconstructed in Korea, one can imagine that a certain amount gets lost in translation.

AR: A studio is no more than a production site really. What role does the issue of authenticity play in this installation?
CJ: Nam June Paik had already sold his studio to the Museum in Seoul while he was still alive. Since then it has formed the heart of the museum as a permanent installation. What's interesting is that the idea of authenticity is already inherent in the claim of art. By means of this predicate the artist declared his studio an artwork and memento.

AR: Doesn't that make your intervention disrespectful? Is it permissible?
CJ: I don't think I was being disrespectful. Nam June Paik was a pioneer of video art. As a fluxus artist he was an advocate of the idea that everything is in motion. In the world of the museum, on the other hand, where the archiving of artworks is at stake, everything is static. That his studio has now come to rest, as if in a sarcophagus, is basically contrary to Paik's dicta. And in trying to exalt the figure of the artist, the museum is moving away from his original idea. My work sharpened our senses for Paik's work. It sparked a discussion about what it means to protect his work. And it became clear that both cases are an enactment—something that many people forgot amid all the stir.

AR: What instructions did you give the Beautiful Cleaning team?
CJ: From Berlin I researched the websites and quotations of various cleaning teams for tidying up the studio. The instructions I gave were that the studio was to be got into shape for another artist to work there—a kind of temporary arrangement for a subtenant.

AR: Did the cleanup have any practical effect?
CJ: Cleaning has to do with hygiene, in the case of a religious ritual with spiritual hygiene. It often plays a role in art as well—whether in the washing of Jesus' feet or sweeping something out. Joseph Beuys's ironic action "Auskehren" (Sweep-out) after the May Day demonstrations in Berlin in 1972 also performed a cleansing function at various levels. And when one thinks about it, museums and art history hygienically disinfect the legend of the artist if necessary, freeing it at best from too much or false interpretation.
The intervention "Cleaning Up the Studio" was never meant to be merely a provocation, more a ceremony, a performance. What interested me was to depict the two poles of production and re-production. It's significant here that after the studio had been returned to its original state the museum director carried out a Buddhist ritual—to recapture the spirit of Nam June Paik.

AR: The reordering by which you modified the original through cleaning and tidying is suggestive of destruction. Is it through destruction that the idea of reality becomes credible in the first place?
CJ: Yes. And at the same time something new came about: the original Paik became a Paik-Jankowski. Nam June Paik created many outstanding artworks

by destruction. I'm aware that using material not produced by one's own hands is tantamount to breaking with a taboo. But what's at stake is more than stepping on the curator's toes or making the director and restorer faint.
The exhibition title helps one to see this: a "trickster" is a mythological figure who mediates at the threshold between two worlds and sows disorder in the (divine) universe by means of tricks, but in doing so he enables us to see the boundaries of this order.

AR: Is the positing of a relatively large hiatus between original and reconstruction indicative of a fundamental skepticism as to how history is written and depicted?
CJ: In principle, yes—depicting and writing are creative acts. The temporally limited distance from the so-called original is not really the same as destruction since everything has been minutely documented: where each object is; there are thousands of numbered and catalogued objects, from nuts and bolts to monitors. The existence of a minutely documented plan makes it possible to reconstruct the studio down to the last detail, over and over. And who's to say that the reconstruction following my installation isn't closer to the initial New York original?
As we've seen, the action gave rise to critical concern that I had extinguished the spirit of Nam June Paik in the studio, and that it was impossible to identically recreate the studio. My reply to these critics by way of reassurance, and to the museum conservators, follows Nam June Paik who said: "When too perfect, lieber Gott böse."*

Berlin, November 2013

** "When too perfect, dear God mad."*

Christian Jankowski, "Cleaning Up the Studio," 2010, video, 9:33 min

page 30
Christian Jankowski, "Cleaning Up the Studio (Shelf)," 2010
diptych, 2 c-prints, each 126.5 x 101.5 cm
© courtesy Christian Jankowski

page 31
Christian Jankowski, "Cleaning Up the Studio (Desk)," 2010
diptych, 2 c-prints, each 126.5 x 101.5 cm
© courtesy Christian Jankowski

Anachronism as the Foundation for Experiment

Clémentine Deliss

By way of an introduction, I'd like to emphasise that my background is in contemporary art practice rather than art history, and that I studied semantic anthropology in London in the mid-1980s before becoming an independent curator. My models are therefore intimately connected to the conceptual and aesthetic strategies of artists and intellectuals of the late 1970s and early '80s. Even if studies of anthropology came second to me they have formed the basis for the intercultural and interdisciplinary work that I have engaged with over the last twenty-five years. As a curator, I've lived, researched, and produced in numerous cities around the world, publishing books and magazines, setting up think tanks and meetings, and developing strategies for new concepts and forms of independent inquiry that go beyond the format of the exhibition. "Future Academy," the long-term research collective that I directed between 2003–2009, which looked into structural, architectonic, and epistemological possibilities for a future arts institution, finally led me back to the notion of a research collection and, with that to the foundation of ethnographic museums. For the last three years, I have directed the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt am Main and attempted to introduce a new methodology into ways of interpreting and exhibiting ethnographic materials.

At the Weltkulturen Museum, we work with over 67,000 objects, an image and film archive of around 120,000 documents, plus a pioneering collection of works of contemporary art from Africa that was initiated in the mid-1980s. However, the basic condition of this museum is one of anachronism: the collection is inconsistent in terms of today's postcolonial condition and does not reflect the current geopolitical circulation of people and goods. As a result, affinity to an ethnographic collection of this kind is not a given. In Frankfurt, we try to tackle the hiatus between then and now through a particular approach based on critical heterogeneity. We introduce external impulses into the museological setting in order to work with, rather than against, anachronism. As Paul Rabinow suggests, "The exercise is how to present historical elements in a contemporary assemblage such that new visibilities and sayable things become actual inducing motion and affect." The following manifesto aims to identify the key concepts of this approach.

1 Paul Rabinow, "Assembling Untimeliness: Permanently and Restively," work in progress, sent to Clémentine Deliss in 2010.

Otobong Nkanga and Clémentine Deliss
Weltkulturen Labor, Frankfurt am Main, 2011
© Weltkulturen Museum, photo: Wolfgang Günzel

Curating Neighborhoods: Manifesto for the Post-Ethnographic Museum

It's about working with a collection
That belongs to another time
That belongs to other people
That is deeply connected to the histories of European colonialism and trade
That is contested and will continue to be contested
Whose referentiality is far from expended
Whose restitution is undeniable

It's about working with what you have
With the existing architecture and not against it
Doing domestic research in villas
Moving between apartments, studios, archives, and lab rooms
Finding structural solutions for the installation of artifacts
That are neither in storage nor exhibited
Repositioning collections both conceptually and physically
Making new assemblages

It's about reintroducing a laboratory into the museum
A lab of renewed interpretation
Of self-critical and recursive inquiries
Slow, prone to change, and not always visible
Developing a center for thought as yet undervalued by market concerns

It's about the possibility of production inside a museum
A place of embodied institutional critique
A workshop for the production of prototypes
Unfinished, incomplete, tentative, and generous
Building a new collection out of the collection
A research collection for today's emergent investigations
Constructing exhibitions out of this recursive procedure

It's about remediation over time
About working with a deficient situation
Daring to change the anthropological classification of objects
Suspending the logos of ethnos
Developing different metaphors and interpretations
Through dialogical and visual inquiry
Exhibiting unfinished models, test works, exercises
Rethinking the exhibition as an instrument of remediation
Engaging different publics in the process

It's about curating neighborhoods
Inviting artists, designers, lawyers, writers, historians, and anthropologists in residence
Those who connect to the original source of the collection
Those who come from elsewhere
Adjacent and responsive
Rubbing shoulders through their engagement with the museum
Forging new alliances and contemporary geographies

A Kind of Guise, Buki Akib, John Akomfrah, Bruce Altschuler, Marie Angeletti, Lothar Baumgarten, Helke Bayrle, Thomas Bayrle, Benedikte Bjerre, Rut Blees Luxemburg, Friedrich von Bose, Peggy Buth, CassettePlaya, Marc Camille Chaimowicz, Sunah Choi, Hamish Clayton, Clegg & Guttmann, Minerva Cuevas, Mathis Esterhazy, Patricia Falguières, Michael Fehr, Heather Galbraith, Bryce Galloway, Gabriel Gbadamosi, Matthias Görlich, Ros Gray, Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs, Werner Herzog, Michael Kraus, Pramod Kumar KG, David Lau, Armin Linke, Antje Majewski, Tina Makereti, Tom McCarthy, Markus Miessen, Renée Mussai, Otobong Nkanga, Michael Oppitz, Peter Osborne, Perks and Mini, Francis Pesamino, Simon Popper, Paul Rabinow, Ciraj Rassool, Olivier Richon, Markus Schindelbeck, Richard Sennett, El Hadji Sy, Luke Willis Thompson, David Weber-Krebs (Weltkulturen Museum, 2011–2013)

It's the seed of a new museum-university
Unequivocally collection-centered, working outwards from actual exhibits
Deconstructing earlier archives and the histories of ethnographic museums
Working with virtual open labs to enable greater access
Providing a new platform for professional development
Associating artists as curators and custodians
Interconnecting the younger generation of protagonists
Those from curatorial studies, cultural studies, postcolonial studies, museum studies, contemporary art, design, performance, art history, anthropology, music, literature, law, architecture, ecology, informatics ...
At global locations of education, in South Africa, Nigeria, Senegal, Brazil, New Zealand ...
Constantly working with external impulses
Redrafting the concept of generalism
And the democratic intellect
Towards a non-standardized education
Independent and self-organizing
A subjective, porous, critical institution.

Labor: CassettePlaya, 2012, selection from the collection

Exhibition "FOREIGN EXCHANGE (or the stories you wouldn't tell a stranger)," 2014
© Weltkulturen Museum, photos: Wolfgang Günzel

Cover Versions: The Exhibition as Reenactment

Beatrice von Bismarck

Changing how art and artifacts are presented—quite apart from whether this occurs in the form of a long-term museum display or in short-term, temporary exhibitions—always goes hand in hand with a new constellation. Dislocations and relocations, additions and commentaries bring exhibits into modified relations with other exhibits, displays, spaces, people, and contexts. If, as the title of the Humboldt Lab symposium affirms, what is at stake is "Remembering as a Constructive Act," then the new presentation entails the adding of one or more narratives to that hitherto used to structure "remembering" at the museum or previous exhibition venue. In being updated, memory is relativized; not only memory, though, but also its elements that have been brought into relation with each other. In being re-contextualized, all these elements are subjected to changes that lead to certain of their aspects becoming more apparent than before, or even to their becoming visible or capable of being experienced for the first time. The aesthetic, social, economic, or political significance of exhibits, their display, the housing institution, the various people involved in exhibiting them change accordingly. This kind of reenactment consequently raises questions about the status of things, the function of cultural archives as contexts of meaning and their historical changes, about the relations between materiality and discursivity, original and repetition. How is historicity incorporated in the presentation of exhibits? How does it communicate itself? And what shifts does it undergo in the wake of re-presentation?

The lecture "Cover Versions: The Exhibition as Reenactment" aimed at investigating these issues at the presentational level. It was thus a question of focusing on the individual components of a presentation as well as the constellations with their changes. The exhibition "When Attitudes Become Form—Bern 1969 / Venice 2013" at the Fondazione Prada, Venice, in 2013 was the exemplary object of study—an exhibition that invoked the now legendary exhibition "When Attitudes Become Form: Works—Concepts—Processes—Situations—Information," which ran at the Kunsthalle Bern from March 22 to April 27, 1969, and then toured Europe. The exhibition established the reputation of its Swiss curator, Harald Szeemann, as well as his further career as an independent curator.

While there was a whole range of curatorial initiatives in the later 1960s embodying similar aesthetic interests to those encountered in the Bern show, the exhibition "When Attitudes Become Form" developed in its reception into the most important and most celebrated representative of an exhibition dedicated to new art. "New" at the time meant artistic approaches that focused on ephemerality and process, both with regards to materiality as well as modes of production and presentation. Harald Szeemann, who at the time had been director of the Kunsthalle Bern since 1961, had developed the idea for the show in a space of months, in particular between December 1968 and March 1969. The scandal surrounding "When Attitudes Become Form" coincided with his decision to leave the Kunsthalle to work as an independent curator, not least for documenta 5 in Kassel (1972).

The "embodiments" aimed at in Venice in the sense of reenactments can be made out at three levels: The exhibits were to represent themselves, while the architecture of the Fondazione Prada's Ca' Corner della Regina and its fittings designed in consultation with Rem Koolhaas and Thomas Demand assimilated the rooms of the Kunsthalle Bern; and lastly, Germano Celant—somewhat revenant-like given his personal and biographical details—assumed the role of the Swiss curator who died in 2005.

Against the backdrop of this triple reenactment, the lecture asked what effects reenactment had on this exhibition understood as a performative work and on the constellation set out in it. The lecture went on to look more closely at three perspectives relating to: changes in the exhibits, the figure of the curator, and the exhibition as a whole. The focus was thus, firstly, on the shifts that the original concept underlying the artistic contributions went through. Contrary to their initial conceptual orientation and their thrust to withdraw from the market, the short-lived, 'povera' materials and performative acts obtained material stability in Venice. The remake ultimately bore witness to a narrative of esteem both in the art market and art-historical reception.

Secondly, the lecture traced a shift from 1969 to 2013 that took into account the upgrading of the role of curators that has occurred over the past forty years. This shift reflects the enhanced status of the position of curator in the cultural field while simultaneously locating it in the context of the demands made on curators and their activities in the framework of postfordist labor conditions.

The third perspective focused on changes in the exhibition as a cohesive semantic configuration. It brought out how the radical character attributed to the exhibition in the context of developments in art discourse in the late 1960s was increasingly split off from its underlying properties to persist as a mere image of the show. Radicalism thus became a self-sufficing criterion and—entirely in keeping with the exigencies of fashion to which Prada, the project initiator, is committed—had only to seize on the "look" of the exhibition independently of any of its former connotations.

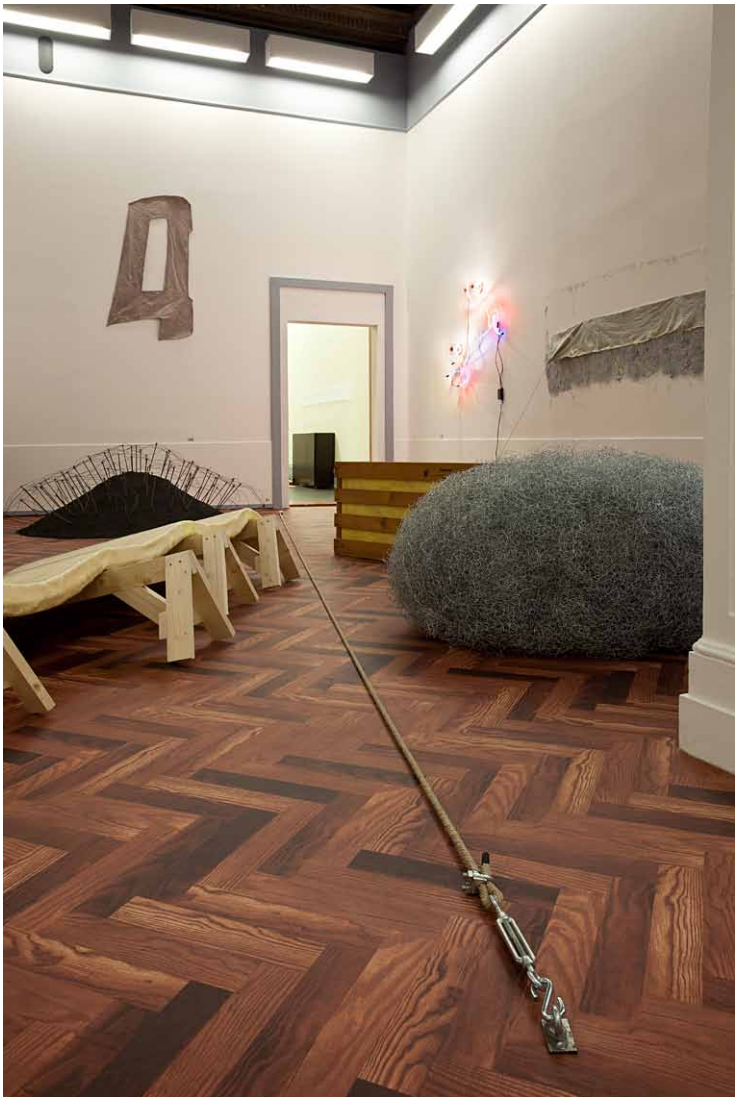
The new edition of "When Attitudes Become Form" in Venice illustrated in exemplary fashion the processes by which meaning is stripped and then re-invested in the re-enactment of art and cultural objects as are being studied in the Humboldt Lab initiatives for a period of years—processes that absorb, as formative elements, the history of their discursive, social, and economic reception no less than their premises and transformations.

"When Attitudes Become Form: Bern 1969/Venice 2013," installation view
l. to r.: works by Mario Merz, Barry Flanagan, Richard Artschwager,
Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman
Fondazione Prada, Ca' Corner della Regina, Venice, June 1–November 3, 2013
courtesy Fondazione Prada, photo: Attilio Maranzano

"Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form," installation view
l. to r.: works by Alighiero Boetti, Mario Merz, Robert Morris,
Barry Flanagan, Bruce Nauman
Kunsthalle Bern, 1969
courtesy The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2011.M.30)
© J. Paul Getty Trust, photo: Balthasar Burkhard

"When Attitudes Become Form: Bern 1969 / Venice 2013," installation view
l. to r.: works by Gary B. Kuehn, Eva Hesse, Alan Saret,
Reiner Ruthenbeck, Richard Tuttle
Fondazione Prada, Ca' Corner della Regina, Venice, June 1–November 3, 2013
courtesy Fondazione Prada, photo: Attilio Maranzano

"Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form," installation view
l. to r.: works by Bill Bollinger, Eva Hesse, Gary B. Kuehn,
Reiner Ruthenbeck, Richard Tuttle, Alan, Saret, Keith Sonnier
Kunsthalle Bern, 1969
courtesy The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2011.M.30)
© J. Paul Getty Trust, photo: Balthasar Burkhard



Sense and Sensuality

Jana Scholze

"Tomorrow" is a site-specific installation by the Danish artist duo Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset commissioned by the Victoria and Albert Museum for their former textile galleries. The galleries were transformed into an apartment belonging to a fictional, elderly, disillusioned architect, Norman Swann. The domestic scenario is like the set of an unrealized film, the script of which is handed out. Visitors are invited to look around the apartment, to sit on the sofa reading, or to notice more or less discreetly private memorabilia. An unwrapped bouquet of flowers, the unmade bed, and the sound of water running in the shower give the impression that the occupant of the apartment is at home.

The realistic-looking apartment was furnished with objects from the V&A collections, works by the artists, and items from antique markets. But the objects lack all written identification. Museum attendants dressed as butler and maid are there to help, encouraging visitors to open drawers, but also making sure that they do not touch certain objects. So far visitors have used the rooms sensitively. This is reassuring given that the loan of objects for the project sparked controversy even at the V&A. Reasonably enough, the question arose as to the value added that the museum objects provide. The mix of museum, art, and other objects made it impossible to distinguish which was which. The carefully researched interior creates a situation that elicits a wide range of responses, from "playing along" to observing. I would like to argue that the tension between real and fictional, between knowing and concealing the characters of objects and their histories, generates a discomfort that makes visitors curious and motivates inquiry, speculation, and interpretation of objects. It is precisely here that the reason for presenting museum objects has to be sought. The contextualization of the objects assures visitors that they can draw on familiar practices of viewing, reading, and interpreting things. Embedding the installation in the overall landscape of V&A galleries also seems to be significant. On leaving the installation, one enters the museum's permanent "19th century" display. The powerfully contrasting ways in which similar objects are exhibited highlights the alienation of objects in the museum context but it also reveals how the museum selects, interprets and writes history. What the exhibition "Tomorrow" offers then, is an experience that radically questions the topos of museum and exhibition, collection and object, museum visitor and museum visit. It does so not by means of a critical but an ironic and ironizing approach that is not allusive but showcases precisely and specifically.

What the exhibition demonstrates to curators is to trust their working materials. For years debate has centered on the meaning and interpretation of museum objects. On this approach objects are understood as connectors in networks of relationships. The role of the objet in the world is focused on, rather than its material properties. This angle often neglects the object as a concrete, ready-to-hand source. However, I will not argue for an object analysis that gives formal properties precedence over the framework of references and relationships; rather I would urge that we critically address the complex materiality of objects, their emotional and sensual effects, and that we learn to understand and use these. The physicality of objects is defined by elements whose interplay enables us to sensually experience the objects. Particularly in the exhibition context, objects are agents that facilitate and decisively influence experience, perceptions, and emotions. The properties conveyed and expressed may relate to the functionality of the object, or entirely hide it; they can evoke emotions and feelings of wonder, excitement, or revulsion. This interaction not only pertains to the materiality of objects, but includes their meanings. Objects, on such a reading, are active participants in the interaction with viewers and/or users. Everyday interaction with objects provides experiences, securities, and habits that can be utilized in museum practice. Museum visitors, however, are often given the impression that museum objects must be read differently, and that their language can only be understood by curators.

I would like to illustrate the above briefly with a controversial object that made international headlines this year—the 3D-printed gun, "Liberator" by the Texan Cody Wilson. The production, and more so the firing of this weapon in May 2013 provoked worldwide debate on the use and application of non-regulated gun design. Wilson's act raised questions about the consequences, extent, and regulation of "weapon production at the press of a button."

The handling of Wilson's case by the US authorities, hotly debated and covered by the media, shows that the legislature was unprepared for this provocation. Citizens' safety issues were pitched against freedom and the right to possess firearms. For the design discourse, the Liberator proved a significant object, opening up a debate on new production methods and techniques and as yet unforeseeable consequences from a professional forum to large sections of the global community. To document this phenomenon, the V&A decided to buy the Liberator. The decision was controversial both internally and externally. Clearly, the object was not to be celebrated—a considerable challenge given that all other objects in the collection receive just this appreciation. Negotiations were conducted to acquire the first fired weapon, early prototypes, and components of the production process, a process in line with the conventional acquisition practice with focus on object provenance and the representation of process. The chosen objects themselves, however, cast a skeptical light on the adequacy of this routine. Traces on the weapon testifying to the act of firing assigned to the object the status of proof as well as fetish. The individual object and parts representing the design process are tantamount to an instruction manual, providing first and foremost a blueprint for reproduction. The decisive question here is what relationship the selected objects have to the specific (hi)story we wish to tell in the museum and how this can be represented by the object itself.

One aspect is noteworthy, namely, that the Liberator is an "open source design." Open source poses a challenge for museums in general, because initially the object exists only virtually, and hence is caught up in an endless process of modification and change. The resulting tangible objects are similarly flexible and can be individually modified and customized. For the purpose of collecting such designs in a museum, the question arises, what exactly should be collected: the code, the file, a printout, a physical object? Open source, however, enables the museum to be considered as user and—in our case—to print out the Liberator following Wilson's published drawings. But such a procedure proved problematic as the US government closed Wilson's website. Nonetheless—and here the implications of the virtual world deliberately exploited by the Liberator's creator are apparent—the drawings had by then already been downloaded several thousand times and made available on alternative platforms. Downloading these files is a penal offence in the USA but still unregulated in Europe.

Financing the V&A's acquisition of the Liberator led to an unexpected decision since the purchase was to be made with the aid of a fund demanding an exhibition of the year's new acquisitions. To date (December 1, 2013) the objects have not received an export license. So it was decided to print a temporary replacement in London. We soon discovered that most institutions with a suitable 3D-printer are unwilling to produce a weapon. Even the firm that finally printed the gun argued convincingly and publicly against the printing of weapons. Their solution was an "ersatz of the ersatz," for which the parts of the gun were printed in two different materials and colors as well as slightly different dimensions, thus preventing assembly or use. The noticeably distinct features of the object testify to those acts that we wish to communicate in the museum: from open source to modified design and individual printout; but also individual self-control given the absence of legislation, and the production of an individual object as a statement rather than a copy of the original.

The examples described above radically challenge our conventional approach to objects. They give prominence to the fundamental questions: What is an exhibition and what is a museum? Artists' installations or interventions often show how objects and their contents can be encountered with more agility, yet also more radically. An approach of this kind often entails reducing contents or interpretations and focusing on specific interpretations or contexts. Another technique is to introduce objects into completely new contexts and to stimulate speculation by means of critique, alienation, and irony. I wish to argue for inclusion of such practices in everyday museum practice. Despite my enthusiasm for artistic intervention, I would also issue a warning and an appeal for thorough examination of the intention behind any such commission. Artistic intervention is often resorted to when subjects appear to be too complex or involved for the exhibition context and too little trust is placed in their communication by the objects themselves.

I trust it is clear that, in calling for the object to be addressed more closely, I am pronouncing no judgment on the collecting of more or less contextual information, meanings, or interpretations. The need to interpret and communicate focuses normally on already existing knowledge, and weaves it into (hi)stories. In doing so, though, curators easily forget that our real material is the object, which not only ought to illustrate (hi)stories, but ideally also to take part in their telling.

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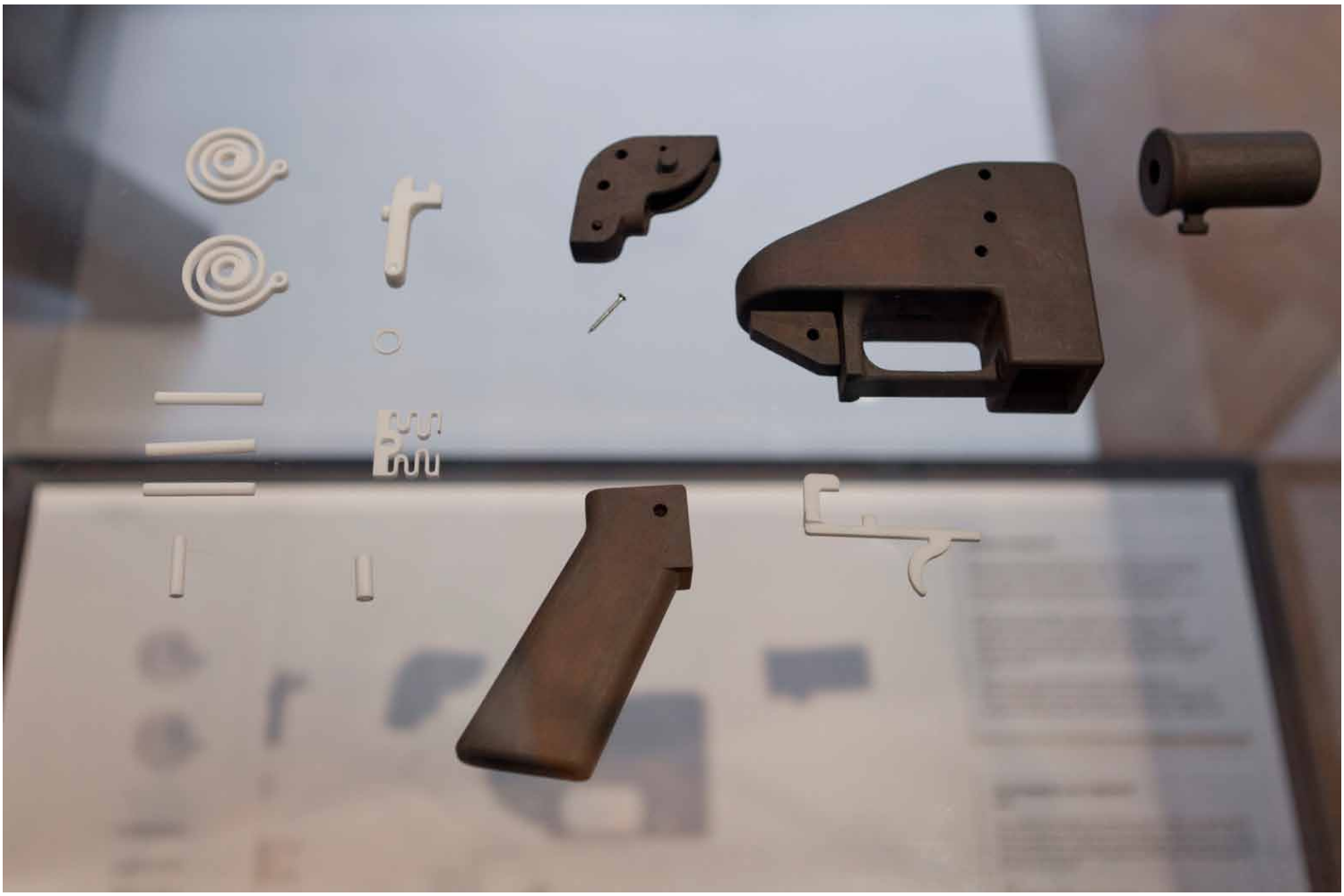
"Liberator," 3D-printed gun, 2013
design: Cody Wilson/Defence Distributed,
purchased by the Design Fund, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
© courtesy Victoria and Albert Museum

page 43
Exhibition "Tomorrow. Elmgreen & Dragset at the V&A," installation views
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, October 1, 2013–January 2, 2014
© courtesy Elmgreen & Dragset; Victoria Miro, London
photo: Anders Sune Berg



Model of / Model for: Functionality and the Exhibition Game of Thrones

Jörn Schafaff

The four screens and the thrones before them are painted either gray or white. They are life-size replicas of a pair of objects from the collection of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin. Their monotone coloring emphasizes their distinction from the originals. They aim to convey no naturalistic impression but to bring out particular features—outline, shape, size, volume. They suffice to convey the shape of the originals and an idea of the space that the screen and throne would take up were they to be presented. For this is the issue that the "Game of Thrones" addresses: How might the ensemble be adequately presented and what aspects should be taken into account?

To answer these questions, a designer and three artists were invited to engage with the pieces and to apply their insights to one of the replicated ensembles. The research material put at their disposal also forms the prelude to the exhibition. An illustrated wall text in an anteroom informs visitors about comparable ensembles and their placement in Chinese palaces, in collections and museums. An art-film-collage by Daniel Kohl takes a look at throne rooms in Hollywood movies. In the windowless exhibition hall itself, visitors are met by a cruciform exhibition architecture and four almost square rooms of identical size. The movable walls reach neither to the ceiling nor to the sidewalls of the hall, so that they seem a bit like stage flats. This in turn brings out the stage-like character of the four exhibition spaces for which the four presentation scenarios were developed. While the designer Konstantin Grcic and the artist Kirstine Roepstorff primarily addressed the structuring of the space, the artists Simon Starling and Zhao Zhao dealt with the exhibits themselves.

The model character of the scenarios is immediately apparent. On closer consideration, though, the exhibits themselves, the fact that they are fourfold, and the square exhibition space raise the question as to what model exactly is being presented in the "Game of Thrones." This is not least a result of the ambiguity of the concept of a model. "In general usage," as John Miller for example remarks, "the word model means, alternately: an example to be emulated, an ideal, a simplified representation, a particular version of a product, and, ultimately, a person who poses for art, fashion or advertising."[1] Even if we restrict ourselves to the meaning of a "simplified representation," classification is still no easy matter, because, as Miller goes on to state: "As a simplified representation, the model has the virtue of comprehensibility. It may represent things as they are, as they might be or as they should not be."[2] Which of these aims is or are being addressed by the exhibition scenarios ultimately remains ambiguous. The gray or white replicas are models of the original items in the collection; but they do not illustrate the complexity of the originals for visitors in the way that, say, architectural models exemplify architectural structures. In a certain sense they are not important, serving primarily as stand-ins upon which the potential reality of artistic treatments can be tested out. This is the chief focus of attention. But do they have any model function at all? If so, then to represent things "as they might be." Yet it is not clear what exactly the four scenarios represent. They are certainly not practical suggestions for some future presentation of the imperial throne at the Humboldt-Forum. In particular Zhao's wax-covered variant is out of the question on conservational grounds. Are we dealing here with specific suggestions for an artistic intervention? This would be a curious anticipation of a future that does not yet exist and that is entirely undecided. The logic of intervention requires an already existing situation; but the only definite thing about "Game of Thrones" is the objects and the spatial situations described above, where the latter clearly relate to no specific rooms, least of all to any future spatial arrangement at the Humboldt-Forum. So the question arises whether the four presentations are model scenarios at all.

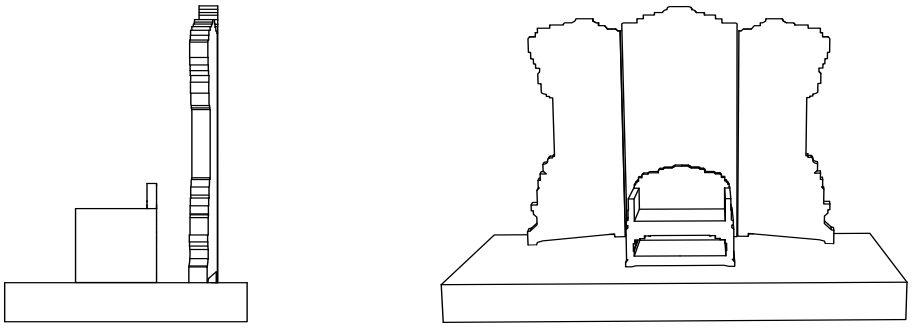
What exactly does "Game of Thrones" show visitors to the exhibition? A possible answer would be that the effect of both the individual contributions and of the exhibition as a whole unfolds at the level of commentary. Grcic's, Roepstorff's, Starling's, and Zhao's installations comment on aspects of the exhibits under consideration, for example in regard to their historical function of representing power. Further, they comment on the principle of museum presentation itself. The red wax with which Zhao has covered the model throne and partition recalls blood, but also the color of the Chinese national flag. Together with a blog that he set going, his work can be seen as a call

for contemporary contextualizations of artifacts and against their reduced presentation as aesthetic objects. In Simon Starling's case the video projector which he has placed on the throne assumes the position of the emperor. By confronting the exhibits and the projected film the placement turns into a comment on the power of media communication. The video shows details of the screen that visitors to the exhibition—who are usually kept at a distance from the exhibits—would otherwise not be able to see. At the same time, the detailed close-ups undermine the idea of a discrete object that can be grasped in its entirety. Roepstorff hangs lanterns based on traditional Chinese models in the exhibition space, apparently favoring an atmospheric approach while at the same time setting the throne in a further cultural context. On top of this, the illumination brings out the fact that viewers are not simply confronted with exhibits, but that, together with them, they are joint participants in a presentational situation. Similarly the barrier-like elements with which Grcic has furnished the space: Their labyrinthine arrangement regulates viewers' movements, making one aware of one's physical presence, so that a relation between imperial power and the institutional power of the museum can be experienced bodily.

All things considered, what the four scenarios particularly bring out is the relativity of all museum presentations. Taken as a whole, the exhibition can be grasped as a call to make this relativity the conceptual foundation of future presentations at the Humboldt-Forum. This would further involve recognizing and giving prominence to the fact that every endeavor to bring a culture closer by exhibiting its objects entails depriving these objects of their cultural context. The multiple abstractional measures that detach the scenarios from any direct relation to reality seem to hint at a danger—namely, that scenographic attempts to bridge museum displacements inevitably threaten to obscure the cultural, social, and political implications of collecting, ordering, and presenting. From this point of view, the function of the exhibition "Game of Thrones" is less to provide models of future presentational practice (nor in relation to the inclusion of artists) than to call to mind the challenges to which those involved with the conception and planning of the Humboldt-Forum must rise.

1 John Miller, "Modell/Model," in Jörn Schafaff, Nina Schallenberg, Tobias Vogt (eds.), "Kunst-Begriffe der Gegenwart: Von Allegorie bis Zip," Walther König, Cologne: 2013, 193–197, 193.

2 Ibid., 194.



"Spiel der Throne," drawing for the model of the throne ensemble in mdf
scala/Günter Krüger, 2013

Artists / Authors

Exhibition
Game of Thrones

Konstantin Grcic (b. 1965 Munich, lives in Munich) is an industrial designer who moves between the fields of design, art, and architecture. Together with his Munich design practice KGID (Konstantin Grcic Industrial Design) he designs furniture, lamps, and accessories for leading production firms. He designed the multimedia space Space1 at the MUDAM Luxemburg, and the gallery space 032c in Berlin. He has realized several projects at the Haus der Kunst in Munich. He was a curator for the exhibition "Comfort" in the Design Biennial St. Etienne (2010) and for the "DESIGN-REAL" exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, London (2009). He was responsible for exhibition design at the German Pavilion at the 13th Venice Architecture Biennial.

Kirstine Roepstorff (b. 1972 Copenhagen, lives in Berlin) works with the principal of collage. Her works comprehend paper works as well as large-scale theatrical installations and draw on a wide range of source materials and reference systems. Roepstorff appropriates this material and re-constellates it. For the exhibition "Dried Dew Drops: Wunderkammer of Formlessness" (2010) at the Kunstmuseum Basel, she created a curiosity cabinet following her own idiosyncratic rules that included first-class objects from five Basel museums. She curated the project "Scorpio's Garden" (2009) at the Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin. Solo exhibitions at venues including Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design, Oslo (2011); Kunstmuseum Basel, Museum für Gegenwartskunst (2010); Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck (2010); MUSAC, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y Leôn (2009); Kunsthallen Brandts, Odense (2009); The Drawing Center, New York (2007); Arnolfini, Bristol (2006).

Simon Starling (b. 1967 Epsom, lives in Copenhagen) engages in his art with natural and cultural processes of change. He brings artifacts from the different spheres of science, culture, and art history into unexpected relations with each other. His working methods comprehend research and documentation, comparisons of times and places far apart from each other, and the invention of new ways of interpreting the things that surround us. Starling encourages viewers to engage with the history of objects and the transformations they have undergone. Solo exhibitions at venues including Duveen Galleries, Tate Britain, London (2013); Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna (2012, with Superflex); Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art (2011); The Power Plant, Toronto (2008); Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin (2008); Museum Folkwang, Essen (2007). Simon Starling was awarded the Turner Prize in 2005.

Zhao Zhao's (b. 1982 Xinjiang, lives in Beijing) artistic work with its thematic, formal, and media variety is an expression of his critical stance. He challenges social reality and its ideological conventions no less than cultural stereotypes and the dominance of various, mainly European, art-historical categories in order to question constructed meanings. As filmmaker he has worked intensively with the artist Ai Weiwei, documenting the latter's art actions for several years now. Recent participation in exhibition projects includes Pinchuk Art Centre, Kiev (2013); Alexander Ochs Galleries Berlin / Beijing (2013); UCCA—Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2012); He Xiangning Art Museum, Shenzhen (2011); MOCA, Shanghai (2010).

Daniel Kohl (b. 1967 Hammersmith, lives in Frankfurt am Main) is an artist and filmmaker. In addition to music videos for Michel Klöfkorn / Oliver Husain, Art Critics Orchestra, and Mouse on Mars (with Rosa Barba), he has produced documentary films for the Shoah Visual History Foundation. Together with the artist Thomas Bayrle he produced "Gummibaum" (1994) which was shown at dOCUMENTA 13 (2012), as well as "Autobahnkreuz" (2007/2008) together with Harald Pridgar and Martin Feldbauer in connection with "Tracer," After the Butcher (2009). He has produced other documentaries, industrial films, and TV productions, e.g. for The Forsythe Company. Daniel Kohl runs the legendary surfboard bar "Consume" together with Christian Pantzer and Tony Hunt.

Symposium
Remembering as a Constructive Act—
Artistic Concepts for Museum Collections

Prof. Dr. Beatrice von Bismarck teaches art history, image sciences, and cultures of the curatorial at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig. From 1989 to 1993 she was curator of the 20th-century department at the Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, and from 1993 to 1999 at the Leuphana University, Lüneburg, where she was cofounder and director of the Leuphana University art space, Lüneburg. As author and editor of numerous publications her interests include such issues as the aesthetic, social, and political potential of curatorial action, the impact of globalization on the sphere of culture, and the functions of the postmodern image of the artist.

Dr. Melissa Chiu is director of the Asia Society Museum in New York and Senior Vice President for Global Arts and Cultural Programs. She has addressed the subject of contemporary Asian art in numerous pioneering projects as curator, author, and editor. Her publications include "Breakout: Chinese Art Outside China" (2007), "Chinese Contemporary Art: 7 Things You Should Know" (2008) as well as "Asian Art Now" (2010) and "Contemporary Art in Asia: A Critical Reader" (2010), both of the last together with Benjamin Genocchio.

Dr. Clémentine Deliss has been director of the Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt am Main, since 2010. She is a curator, publicist, and researcher in the fields of the interpretation and mediation of contemporary art and ethnology. From 1992 to 1995 she was director of the "africa95" festival for the Royal Academy of Arts, London, and from 2003 to 2010 of the "Future Academy" project in Edinburgh, Dakar, Bangalore, Tokyo, and Melbourne. From 1996 to 2009 she was editor of "Metronome" and "Metronome Press". Further publications include "Object Atlas—

Fieldwork in the Museum" (2012), "Stored Code—Remediating the Ethnographic Collection," at SMBA Stedelijk Museum (2011).

Martin Heller has worked as contents planner of the Humboldt-Forum Berlin since 2011. From 1986 he worked as a curator; from 1990 to 1998 he was director of the Museum für Gestaltung Zurich, and from 1998 to 2003 artistic director of the Swiss national exhibition Expo.02. In 2003 he founded Heller Enterprises, Zurich. From 2005 to 2010 he was director of Linz 2009 European Capital of Culture. His activities include exhibitions and event formats, the development and implementation of cultural-political and urban concepts, texts, publications, lectures, and educational events at museums and colleges.

Christian Jankowski is an artist and professor at the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Stuttgart. His humorous and often institution-critical films and installations address present-day media society in manifold ways. His most recent exhibition participations include "The Encyclopedic Palace," 55th Venice Biennale (2013); "Utopie Gesamtkunstwerk," 21er Haus, Belvedere, Vienna (2012); "Im Raum des Betrachters," Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2012); "Trickster Makes This World," Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul (2010). Christian Jankowski was awarded the Videonale Preis der KfW Stiftung 2013.

Dr. Stephen Little is curator and head of the Chinese and Korean art department at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). In his capacity as expert on East Asian art he has worked as a curator at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and at the Art Institute of Chicago. From 2003 to 2010 he was director of the Honolulu Academy of Arts before moving to the LACMA in 2011. Publications include "Taoism and the Arts of China" (2000), "New Songs on Ancient Tunes: 19th–20th-Century Chinese Painting and Calligraphy from the Richard Fabian Collection" (2007), and "View of the Pinnacle: Japanese Lacquer Writing Boxes—The Lewis Collection of Suzuribako" (2012).

Kito Nedo is a freelance journalist and art critic living in Berlin. His publications on art and cultural-political topics have appeared in numerous major newspapers (Die Zeit, Süddeutsche Zeitung, taz–Die Tageszeitung, Berliner Zeitung), magazines (e.g. Spex, art–Das Kunstmagazin, Der Freitag, Cicero) as well as in international art magazines (Artforum, frieze d/e, Leap–The International Art Magazine of Contemporary China). He is the author of numerous catalogue articles on contemporary artists and of "Die Künstler sind die Könige: Villa Romana–1970er Jahre bis heute," in Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (ed.), "Villa Romana: Gegenwart eines Künstlerhauses" (2013).

Angela Rosenberg is an art historian, curator, and writer. A central theme of her work is the structuring of collections and the possibilities for interdisciplinary exhibition projects. From 2008 to 2010 as curatorial manager she initiated the Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin series of exhibitions curated by artists and edited the accompanying publications. Further projects include "Playing Among the Ruins", Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2011). She has been publishing regularly for museums, collections, and magazines on contemporary art, in particular the Berlin art scene, since 2000.

Prof. Dr. Klaas Ruitenbeek has been director of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin since 2010. From 1996 to 2009 he was East Asian curator at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, where he supervised the reorganization of the Asian Department (opened 2006). From 1994 to 1996 he was professor of Chinese art history and archaeology at the Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich. Before that, from 1985 to 1994, he was East Asian curator at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Chinese architecture is among his special subjects.

Dr. Jörn Schafaff works on the Collaborative Research Centre 626 "Aesthetic Experience and the Dissolution of Artistic Limits" at the Freie Universität, Berlin. His special interest is the situativity of artistic displays. From 2009 to 2011 he took part in developing the "Cultures of the Curatorial" course at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst in Leipzig. Publications include "How We Gonna Behave? Philippe Parreno, Angewandtes Kino" (2008); he co-edited "Cultures of the Curatorial" (2012) and "Timing: On the Temporal Dimension of Exhibiting" (2014).

Dr. Jana Scholze is curator of contemporary furniture and product design at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London, where she has implemented major acquisitions and a range of exhibitions including "Cold War Modern: Design 1945–1970" (2008). She teaches and publishes regularly on the history and theory of design ("Medium Ausstellung," 2004) and is editor of the magazine "Design and Culture".

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