

Knowledge production – Counter-practice or Commodity?

A one-day symposium at Deichmanske bibliotek, Arne Garborgs plass, Oslo

17 January 2012, 15:00-19:00

Invited speakers are Sarat Maharaj (Professor of Visual Art & Knowledge Systems, Lund University & Malmö Art Academy, Sweden), Olivia Plender (artist based in Berlin) and Matthew Poole (Program Director of the Centre for Curatorial Studies at the University of Essex, UK).

The symposium is moderated by Vanessa Ohlraun, Dean of Oslo Academy of Fine Art.

The symposium is conceived by Wiebke Gronemeyer, Gerd Elise Mørland and Heidi Bale Amundsen in collaboration with Kunsthall Oslo.

Artistic, academic and curatorial practices have, in recent years, often been discussed in terms of "knowledge production". But what do we mean when we speak about these practices as "producing knowledge"? If we wish to affirm the potential of art as a thinking process, how should we understand the wider institutional context in which this process now operates? If we work in a knowledge economy, how should we understand the commodified form in which knowledge must then circulate? What are the alternatives to the emerging reality of cognitive capitalism?

The symposium aims to reflect on the understanding of artistic or cultural practice as knowledge production. This is to raise the question whether artistic, curatorial, or even academic practices can establish a counter-practice to processes of commodification.

Programme:

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| 15.00-15.15 | Registration |
| 15.15-15.30 | Welcome and introduction by Gerd Elise Mørland and Wiebke Gronemeyer |
| 15.30-15.40 | Introduction by Vanessa Ohlraun |
| 15.40-16.30 | Presentation by Olivia Plender, followed by a discussion with Vanessa Ohlraun |
| 16.30-16.45 | Coffee Break |
| 16.45-17.35 | Statement by Matthew Poole, followed by a discussion with Wiebke Gronemeyer |
| 17.35-18.00 | Break. We serve soup and bread |
| 18.00-18.50 | Lecture by Sarat Maharaj, followed by a discussion with Vanessa Ohlraun |
| 18.50-19.00 | Closing remarks |

Kindly supported by the Arts Council Norway, The Norwegian Embassy in London (UK), Oslo National Academy of the Arts and The Freedom of Expression Foundation.

The symposium forms part of *The Expanded Library*, a collaborative project by Kunsthall Oslo with the Deichmanske library. The Expanded Library is kindly supported by The Freedom of Expression Foundation and Arts Council Norway.

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BIOGRAPHIES

Olivia Plender is an artist based in Berlin. Her research based practise interrogates the ideological framework around the narration of history and more recently changing attitudes to education and value. For example, in an installation for *Altermodern: Tate Triennial 2009*, Tate Britain she focussed on the Kibbo Kift Kindred; a British alternative educational movement existing between 1920-1951, who were radicalised during the economic crisis of the 1930s into a nationalist monetary reform movement. For the seminar she will focus on the architectural installation *Google Office*, which she made for the Taipei Biennial 2010.

Matthew Poole is Co-Director of the Centre for Curatorial Studies at The University of Essex (Colchester, UK). His research focusses on the efficacy of contemporary curatorial practice in relation to anti-humanist philosophies and political theory. As well as lecturing, Matthew works as a freelance curator of contemporary art, and is also Director of the project-space *kynastonmcshine* (www.kynastonmcshine.org.uk), based in south London. He is also currently the co-ordinator of the inter-collegiate research group PoCA (The Political Currency of Art Research Group - www.thepoliticalcurrencyofart.org.uk), and is a founder member of the research group *Curating Video* (www.curatingvideo.org).

Sarat Maharaj was born and educated in South Africa during the Apartheid years. He did his PHD in the UK on 'The Dialectic of Modernism and Mass Culture: Studies in British Art' (1985). He was Professor of Art History at Goldsmiths University of London since 1980 (now Visiting Research Professor). He is currently Professor of Visual Art & Knowledge Systems, Lund University & the Malmo Art Academies, Sweden. He was Rudolf Arnheim Professor, Philosophy Faculty, Humboldt University, Berlin (2001-02) and Research Fellow at the Jan Van Eyck Akademie, Maastricht (1999-2001). His research and publications focus on cultural translation and difference, textiles, sonics, and visual art as knowledge production. He was co-curator of *Documenta XI* in 2002 and the 2011 Gothenburg Biennale *Pandemonium: art in a time of creativity fever*.

Vanessa Ohlraun is currently Dean of the Academy of Fine Art, Oslo. Previous to her appointment to the academy in Oslo, she was Course Director of the Master of Fine Art programme at the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam where she collaborated with international artists, curators and critics across a variety of disciplines, including contemporary art and art theory, art criticism and writing, psychoanalysis, philosophy, cinema, dance and performance art. Recent publications include *Tell Me What You Want, What You Really, Really Want*, a collection of writings by Jan Verwoert, and *Options with Nostrils* on the collaborative project "Office for the Unknown". She is on the editorial board of *A Prior's* edition on artistic research. Vanessa Ohlraun studied Art History, Cultural Anthropology and Gender Studies in Freiburg, Seattle (USA), and Berlin.

Wiebke Gronemeyer is an independent curator and writer based in London, UK, and Hamburg, Germany. Her practice emerges out of the realm of critical theory, cultural studies and sociology, which she studied at University Witten/Herdecke before completing the MFA *Curating* at Goldsmiths College in London. Here, she is currently completing a PhD investigating into the relationship between curatorial practice and cultural production in the social sphere. Recently curated exhibitions include *No Neutral Ground*, German Embassy, London (2011), *In the Event of Suspicion* at the Bielefelder Kunstverein (2010), and a presentation of the collaborative work of Stian Ådlandsvik and Lutz-Rainer Müller at MOT International, London (2010). Currently she is a visiting tutor to the MFA *Curating* at Goldsmiths, London, and *Kunstakademie Düsseldorf*, Germany.

Gerd Elise Mørland is currently employed as a senior curator at Kistefos-Museum in Jevnaker. Previously, she worked as a freelance curator, writer and art critic based in Oslo. She earned her MA in Art History on the changing role of the curator from the 1990s at the University of Oslo (2009), and partially attended the MFA *curatorial program* at Goldsmiths University of London (2008). In 2010 she guest-edited the online journal *On-Curating.org* issue 4; *The Political Potential of Curatorial Practise* together with Heidi Bale Amundsen. Gerd Elise was a former member of the editorial board of the Nordic Art journal *Kunstkritikk.no*, to which she frequently contributed, as well as to *Kunstløftet.no*. She also worked as a consultant for Public Art Norway (KORO).

Heidi Bale Amundsen was involved in the early fase of the symposium, before going on maternity leave. She is a PhD candidate at the University of Oslo (UiO) and working on a thesis entitled *Between Visualisation and Conception: A Phenomenological Investigation of the Experience Produced by the Photobook* (to be finished in 2014). As a freelance art critic she writes extensively on photography and aesthetics. In 2010 she guest-edited the fourth issue of the online journal *On-Curating.org*, *The Political Potential of Curatorial Practise*, with Gerd Elise Mørland. Amundsen and Mørland are now working together again, this time on a book series called *The Politics of the Curatorial Gesture*, to be published by Torpedo Press. Bale Amundsen is a member of the board of the Seminar of Aesthetics at the UiO as well as member of the steering group for the art section of the Norwegian Critics' Association.