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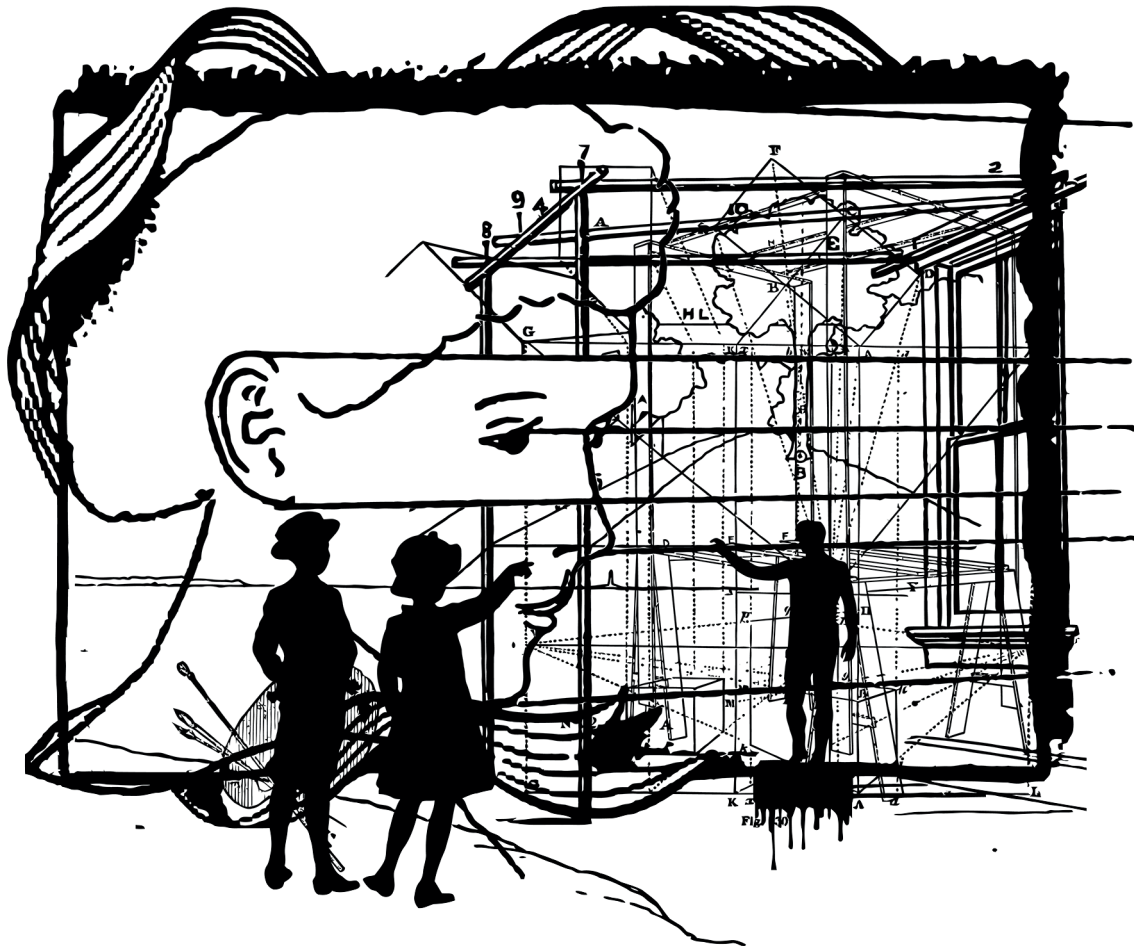
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Aura Seikkula

# The Curatorial *Épistémè*

An Epistemological Concept Analysis  
on the Meaning Creating Agency in Arts

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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND  
SOCIAL SCIENCES

JYU DISSERTATIONS 359

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## ABSTRACT

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This doctoral thesis is an epistemological concept analysis on the meaning creating agencies in arts, i.e. an inquiry of the specific nature of knowledge produced in arts and how it relates to philosophical concepts such as truth, belief, and justification. The analysis is contextualized through the professional practice of a contemporary art curator. With this analytical process two epistemological concepts are formulated: that of curatorial *épistémè* and of Intellectual Sustainability. By doing so this thesis aims to define the special features and characteristics that constitute as knowledge, within arts, while simultaneously introducing these characteristics to the wider philosophical conversations about knowledge and epistemic practices.

Methodologically, the thesis is founded on the idea that an *épistémè* defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge that can be formed and practiced within a frame of reference. Intellectual Sustainability is negotiated as a reciprocal knowledge production between the human and artificial intelligences. Here I outline the human intelligence with Heidegger as *poiēsis*, remaining as the human potential of Being and employing *technē*, the artificial intelligence. In order to break free from the constrains of object-oriented theorizations of art, the meaning creating agency is outlined to merge these two in its processes.

Keywords: *épistémè*, intellectual sustainability, curator

## TIIVISTELMÄ (ABSTRACT IN FINNISH)

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Tämä väitöskirjatutkimus on epistemologinen käsiteanalyysi taiteiden merkityksiä luovista mahdollisuuksista eli tutkimus taiteessa tuotetun tiedon erityisluonteesta ja siitä, miten taiteessa tuotettu tieto liittyy filosofian peruskäsitteisiin, kuten totuuteen ja tietoon. Tutkimuksen analyysi kontekstualisoituu nykyaidekuraattorin ammatillisuuden ja työskentelyn kautta. Analyyttisen prosessin tuloksena syntyy kaksi epistemologista käsitettä: kuratoriaalinen *épistémè* ja älyllinen kestävyys. Täten tutkimus määrittelee taiteen tiedollisia erityispiirteitä tuoden ne laajemman filosofisen, epistemologisen keskustelun piiriin niin tiedosta kuin tiedon luonteesta.

Määrittelen *épistémèn* menetelmällisesti kahtalaisesti, ensiksikin kaiken tiedon tuottamisen edellytyksenä ja toisekseen sen tiedon tuottamisena ammatillisissa viitekehyksissä. Älyllisen kestävyuden määrittelen taiteessa vastavuoroisena tiedontuotantona ihmisen ja tekoälyn välillä. Lisäksi määrittelen inhimillisen älykkyyden Heideggerin *poiēsis* käsitteenä, joka hyödyntää *technēä*. Vapautuakseen taiteen teoskeskeisistä määritelmistä, taiteen merkitys luodaan yhdistämällä nämä kaksi älyllisyyttä toisiinsa.

Avainsanat: *épistémè*, älyllinen kestävyys, kuraattori.

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Helsinki February 15, 2021  
Aura Seikkula.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The various forms of knowledge continue merging into an entity, where to separate human intelligence from the artificial one is getting increasingly ambivalent and indecisive. In the field of arts, knowledge and the ways of producing knowledge have had a long tradition within the discursive and contemporary practices, where the special nature of its content, components and its participatory acts has been debated for decades. With this doctoral thesis I aim to take part in this complex knowledge composition, a maze of mergers, where the special nature of art's knowledge producing processes will be offered new meaning.

In this doctoral thesis curatorial epistemic practices are formulated as meaning creating agency. I claim that arts are at the core of human intelligence, where our ability to analyze, express, develop, share and experience knowledge separate us from all other forms of intelligence, including the artificial ones. In order to take this notion under an investigation, I will start by looking into the sustainability debate in arts and continue with developing the idea of human intelligence and its unique character through arts. Here my analysis is contextualized with a philosophical set of tools. Instead of conducting a classical philosophical concept analysis I aim to merge concepts into a foundation of something we will call the curatorial *épistémè*.

In *The Order of Things* (1966/1970) Michel Foucault formulates *épistémè* as defining the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether in *a* theory or in *a* practice.<sup>1</sup> As I will discuss in further detail, the curatorial *épistémè* involves these knowledge conditions always and simultaneously both in theory and in practice. It is thus my main aim to formulate the concept of the curatorial *épistémè* in this doctoral thesis through an extensive overview of a variety of epistemological philosophies as well as negotiations in dissonance. I dare to embark on this long epistemological journey in order to portray the vast entity of the curatorial agency. I am encouraged to do so by Lyotard (1988), who suggested that Art is

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<sup>1</sup> Foucault 1970, p. 168.

the method and medium through which the disruptive and initiative power of *differend* takes place.<sup>2</sup> Often defined in relation to prevailing socio-political discourses and tendencies as well as through a narrative anthology of the multitude of practices or even more specific through singular exhibition efforts, the curatorial agency is a fruitful soil to consider one of the most debated philosophical concepts, that of *knowledge*.

I consider this extensive overview relevant as art happens in the world, within the complexities of the world and withing the structures providing for knowledge. Accordingly, bringing together a vast variety og thinkers and theories simulates the prevailing culture of debating. I aim to negotiate wether knowledge(s) created in and through art has special characters or features, and if so, can these features be introduced to philosophical epistemological conversations at large. Accordingly, considered vice versa, I find it interesting whether such special epistemic features can reveal something new of knowledge, epistemologically for the larger philosophical conversations.

I am interested in this negotiation primarily due to two reasons. Firstly, as noted, the dirscursive practices in arts entail a generally accepted idea of knowledge being produced in artistic processes and presentation practices. This knowledge remains internal within the field and is distriputed mainly in relation to publications and programming related to exhibitions and display strategies. Secondly, as noted, the tensions and balances between the human and artificial intelligences have gained a relevance within the artistic and presentation practices, primarily defining and predicting the way art is being produced and presented as well as, more philosophically considering what kind of practices count as art. In these aims and acknowledging the global context of escalating crises. I am introducing the notion of Intellectual Sustainability. Art's relevance as a foundation for discussing the sustainability agenda is increasing, as its components are forming a continuum, where the consideration of their resources and future features are of greatest essence.

## 1.1 A Philosophy of Art

Art is generally, philosophically negotiated from the perspectives of aesthetics, as founded on Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790), as well as perception, as understood in phenomenology. Whereas Kant formalistically defined art having normativity that could not be brought under concepts but reflected a universal communicability among subjects, Hegel's conception of art focuses on its truth by considering art being a form of the absolute Spirit (*Geist*) that is infinite.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Lyotard 1988.

<sup>3</sup> Kant 1790/1987; Hegel 1975.

Classical definitions of art characterize artworks by a type of property, such as representation, expression and form.<sup>4</sup> Regardless of this rather simplified understanding of such properties, it is relevant to note, that philosophy of art considers these properties participating in larger systems of thought, such as epistemology, ontology, value theory and so forth. Ever since Plato, the philosophy of art, or the aesthetic theories to be more specific, have been discussed metaphysically. In order to outline the frame of reference of my doctoral thesis, I will start with a short overview of some of the most influential philosophical considerations of art.

With the *Republic*, Plato considers the arts as representational or *mimetic*. Also, a central concept of Aristotle's *Poetics*, *mimesis* gained relevance as the representational form of not only works of literature but all forms of art in general. For Plato, artworks rely ontologically on imitations of ordinary physical objects that in turn rely ontologically on imitations of the non-physical unvarying *Forms*. Thus, artworks reflect and present an appearance of an appearance of these *Forms*, to be comprehended by reason alone.<sup>5</sup> Plato considers the artist to work outside epistemic practices but metaphysically, artworks are subordinate to moral realities and truth. However, Plato's aesthetics treats art and beauty as antipodes.

Kant's definition of art merges the aforementioned properties of representation, expression and form as he focuses on the creativity of the artistic genius, something he calls an "*innate mental aptitude*". His aesthetic theory is neither focused on art. Kant categorizes art under the broader thematic of aesthetic judgment, which covers judgments of the beautiful, of the sublime, and teleologically of nature itself. Aesthetic judgment gains a part in his vast structure of scientific knowledge, morality, and religious faith.<sup>6</sup>

G. W. F. Hegel was influenced by Kant (*Critik der Urtheilskraft* 1790) and Friedrich Schiller (*Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* 1795). Along with Kant and Schiller, Hegel's philosophy of art is a focal part of the German aesthetic tradition, where Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger and T.W. Adorno have created an extensive, discursive consideration of the work of art.

Hegel's account of art at its best conveys truth. The truth, for Hegel, is the universe as the realization of what is conceptual or rational, which is superior to the sensory experiences.<sup>7</sup> A work of art, for Hegel, is an Idea, an articulated entity realizing its own, original concept and by so doing reveals the absolute idea, the self-realizing nature of the world and thus inherently a medium of knowledge.<sup>8</sup> As a supreme mode of cultural expression, art's main task, similar to philosophy and religion, is to reveal

the deepest interests of humankind, and the most comprehensive truths of the mind.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2007/2018.

<sup>5</sup> Pappas 1999, p. 66-78.

<sup>6</sup> Kant 1790.

<sup>7</sup> Hegel 1986, p. 25-29.

<sup>8</sup> Mäcklin 2018, p. 68.

<sup>9</sup> Hegel 1835/1988, p. 22.

Hegel's conceptualization will remain focal to our negotiation. Prior to Hegel, and with *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1818), Arthur Schopenhauer formulated artistic work in like manner as supreme mode in human society. Schopenhauer elevated art from artisanry and proposed art as a substitute to religion as salvation was available in an aesthetic experience. Schopenhauer's aesthetic understanding gained highest relevance within the 19th century creation and thought. Friedrich Nietzsche sought to amend Schopenhauer's uncompromising pessimism and ideas on the Will by encouragement. Accordingly, with his first publication *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (*Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* 1872) Nietzsche portrayed the artist through his fabled Apollonian-Dionysian dialect. Nietzsche outlined art as the highest form of human activity, as the fundamental metaphysical activity. Aesthetics thus hold a supremacy over ethics and knowledge and so create value even more generally. Art enables revaluing the world and the human experience.

John Dewey's *Art as Experience* (1934) is an extensive overview on the meaning of experiencing art. Dewey proposes that the artist and the viewer encounter each other through an artwork, in an experience of this encounter, a process that forms their environments, understanding of that and culture at large.<sup>10</sup> For him the mundane encloses a continuity between the refined experience of works of art and everyday activities and events, something that the aesthetic theory can bring forth.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, for Nelson Goodman art has a world defining capacity. He presented influentially a semiotic theory of art in *Languages of Art* (1976). He claims that we use symbols in defining, comprehending and creating worlds of experiences. Thus, an object can feature as a work of art only if it features as a symbol. A symbol becomes thus a necessary condition for any object to function as a work of art.<sup>12</sup> These symbols lay a foundation for knowledge creation.<sup>13</sup>

Continuing from these classical formulations, the legacy of Kant continues as a fundamental reference point for some of the most prevailing theories of art. Vattimo (2008) outlines three tendencies. Firstly, thinking emphasizing the dialectical nature of knowledge, including Marxism, psychoanalysis, and structuralism that all maintain the Hegelian notion of the world as a comprehensible totality *vis-a-vis* all its parts derive their meaning.<sup>14</sup> Secondly, the neo-Kantian traces of contemporary philosophy of culture considering aesthetics as the thought of the transcendental structures of an aesthetic, subjective experience<sup>15</sup>, and finally, the phenomenological aesthetics, that remain faithful to Husserl and subsequently to the Kantian account of securing consciousness as the ultimate foundation for presence.<sup>16,17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Dewey 1934.

<sup>11</sup> Puolakka 2019, p. 141.

<sup>12</sup> Lammenranta 1992, p. 341.

<sup>13</sup> Goodman 1976.

<sup>14</sup> Vattimo 2008, p. 17-18.

<sup>15</sup> Vattimo 2008, p. 18

<sup>16</sup> Vattimo 2008, p. 18-19.

<sup>17</sup> Mäcklin 2018, p. 70-71.

With these metaphysical understandings, art and the aesthetic experience remain in the core of various thinkers, such as Clement Greenberg's formalism, Jean-François Lyotard's account of the postmodern sublime and Jacques Rancière's redefinition of aesthetics through the everyday. For Rancière, artistic invention can reframe and disrupt our understanding of the present and the political. Whereas Lyotard merged the Kantian sublime with Heidegger's *Ereignis*, Rancière discusses Kantian aesthetics through Schiller's revisions of it.<sup>18</sup> Lyotard was particularly interested in the visual of the arts. For him art has a potential *to present the fact that the unrepresentable exists*.<sup>19</sup> Art has a potential to reveal and visualize that there is something inconceivable or unrepresentable. As Lyotard's focused on defining the postmodern condition through his ideas of metanarrative, he claimed that art is a site of resistance against metanarratives.<sup>20</sup>

John Dewey considers art providing life defining moments as encountering art facilitates for clarification and intensification that lead to understanding of life. For him a work of art forms "*an experience as an experience*". Art thus entails knowledge producing features. He argues that an artistic practice is epistemological in nature as knowledge is transformed both in production and in experience and merges with non-intellectual elements. By so doing, Dewey concurs artistic practice with intellect. Intelligence is what perceives the relation between doing and undergoing.<sup>21</sup> Shusterman considers Dewey's ideas on experience central, yet limited, as an analytic aesthetics. For him, the institutional art world establishment has a restricting power over the definitions of art.<sup>22</sup>

Agreeing for example with Shusterman, understanding from a contemporary, ontological foundation, art is not defined through a specific medium, but the opposite merely as including conceptual, social or political implications and objectives. While these philosophical considerations do negotiate art as a practice or an agency, they yet revolve around the idea of a work of art.

Conceptual artists, such as Joseph Kosuth and Sol LeWitt, define art through its idea. Accordingly, conceptual artists with a social practice, such as Joseph Beuys and Suzanne Lacy, define art through participation and public dialogue. Lacy's large-scale performance event *Three Weeks in May* (1977)<sup>23</sup> can be seen as an emergence of a new genre of Public Art federating relational

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<sup>18</sup> Rancière lecture 1 June 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Lyotard 1982, p. 43.

<sup>20</sup> Lyotard 1984, p. 71

<sup>21</sup> Dewey 1934, p. 298.

<sup>22</sup> It is imperative to acknowledge how the institutional theories and critique has affected the understanding of contemporary art practices at large. Stemming from minimalist and conceptual practices a multitude of prominent artists aimed to (re)define a work of art independent of any institutional context. Such concerns have always been embedded in art but took on new urgency in late 1960s, when—driven by the social upheaval of the time and enabled by the tools and techniques of conceptual art—institutional critique emerged as a genre (*Institutional Critique. An Anthology of Artists' Writings* 2009 MIT Press.) Considering this development fascinating and relevant, I will however, keep my analytical focus on the definition of art's epistemic features.

<sup>23</sup> In collaboration with Leslie Labowitz, Jill Soderholm, Melissa Hoffman and Barbara Cohen.

aesthetics and social practice.<sup>24</sup> As suggested by Greenberg, the question of the nature of art is of essence, rather than its objecthood or materialization. In *Art after Philosophy* (1969), Kosuth defines art as an idea rather than an aesthetic experience. Even when materialized, art's objecthood can remain outside the traditional definitions of art, as long as its idea is art. For LeWitt

the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work.  
The idea becomes a machine that makes the art.<sup>25</sup>

So, in the conceptual and contemporary terms the consideration of the artwork has transitioned from that of an object towards that of an idea since the fundamental relationship between an idea, the subjectivity of the artist, and the artwork this idea produces, was overturned. Here, the traditionally conceived aesthetic contemplation lost its relevance while the role of the artist as a thinker rather than object-maker was ontologically perceived. This, then, requires a more analytical review on the nature of an artwork as a part of LeWitt's idea machinery.

Considering LeWitt's idea, the representation, and the information the artwork provides, can be comprehended as semantic rather than illustrative. The artwork thus mediates meaning rather than proposes a specific scene, a person or an event. As noted with Lyotard, what remains visualized or presented conceptually, is a semantic intention to represent something one cannot directly perceive. This semantic meaning creation thus makes artist a meaning rather an object maker.

I would say, both the philosophy of art and the history of art, and so the understanding of art, is mediated in theory and in practice through the entity of a work of art. In Foucauldian terms, the *épistémè* of art considers itself through the theory of work of art and the practice of making it. In order to break free from the constrains of object oriented theorizations, I will aim to consider the epistemic practice of art as a meaning creating agency. Here meanings are negotiated from their semantic origins. Aiming at this, I will negotiate in detail a dichotomy of syntax and semantics in the process of revealing, something that Heidegger claims in art as *technē* belongs within the realm of *poiēsis*. In Heideggerian turns, I define syntax as challenging-forth and semantics as bringing-forth. Accordingly, the Hegelian thought of the Absolute Idea and art's potential providing for conceptual thinking becomes the essence of knowledge as meaning creating agency.

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<sup>24</sup> Fryd, 2007, p. 23–38.

<sup>25</sup> LeWitt 1967, p. 166.



## 1.2 Research Objectives

Epistemology concerns itself with ways of knowing and how we know.<sup>26</sup> This doctoral thesis is an epistemological concept analysis on the meaning creating agencies in arts, i.e. an inquiry of the specific nature of knowledge produced in arts and how it relates to philosophical concepts such as truth, belief, and justification. In my opinion, the epistemological investigation of art gaining ever more relevance. By agreeing with Lyotard and Dewey, art is a fruitful soil to grow a multitude of philosophical concepts and nurture them into new ideas.

John Locke's epistemology influenced the eighteenth-century aesthetic theories by bridging a connection between the scientific paradigms of the 17th and 18<sup>th</sup> century mechanism and aesthetics. Interestingly aesthetics has been read as a contested field of value-driven features, where ethics becomes contextualized.<sup>27</sup> In *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) Locke defines epistemology as an inquiry:

...into the original, certainty, and extent of human knowledge, together with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and assent.<sup>28</sup>

Considered more broadly, epistemology concerns the creation and dissemination of knowledge in particular areas of inquiry, in this case art.<sup>29, 30</sup> One of the greatest questions of philosophy, knowledge, is often defined in relation to science. Karl Popper (1966) considers human knowledge as something produced and consumed, being one chapter of objective knowledge, aiming for growth.

For Michel Foucault developed the notion of *épistémè* in *The Order of Things* (*Les Mots et les choses* 1966) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (*L'Archéologie du savoir* 1969) by stating that it entailed historical, epoch-related, non-temporal, a priori knowledge

that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether expressed in a theory or silently invested in a practice.<sup>31</sup>

And in which a

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<sup>26</sup> Alston 1989; Dancy 1985; Haslanger 1999.

<sup>27</sup> i.e. with Wittgenstein and Foucault, as I will negotiate later.

<sup>28</sup> John Locke 1689.

<sup>29</sup> Zalta et al 2014; Borchert et al 1967.

<sup>30</sup> Deriving from the ancient Greek *epistēmē* and *logos* – the former meaning knowledge and the latter meaning study – was first applied by Johann Fichte as *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794/95) and introduced as epistemology by J.F. Ferrier in his *Institutes of Metaphysics* (1845). Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle tackled with various answers to these questions, but were challenged by later philosophers the likes of Descartes, Hume, and Kant.

<sup>31</sup> Foucault 1972, p 168.

total set of relations unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences and possibly formalized systems.<sup>32</sup>

It is relevant to note here, that in *The Archaeology of Knowledge (L'Archéologie du savoir 1969)* Foucault introduces another key concept of his, *discourse*. Discourse denotes the ways we constitute knowledge within social practices. For him discourse has an essentially material effect, as they produce

practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak<sup>33</sup>

Here forms of subjectivity and power relations define knowledges. So as a historically prospective social system, discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. As we proceed with our epistemic considerations, I will keep this understanding of Foucauldian knowledge structures foundational but will focus on negotiating *épistémè* as a curatorial agency, rather than *discourse* as a curatorial practice. This decision is founded on Foucault's fruitful criticism of traditional epistemic practices.

As for Foucault *épistémè* is a structured field of knowledge, conditions and historical and cultural patterns that determine what counts as knowledge, truth, or reality in a given time and place. According to Foucault, history runs from one episteme to another, and then yet others. He propounds that knowledge concerning nature, economics and language, for example, was differently shaped during the Renaissance *épistémè*, through the classical *épistémè* from the mid-17th century to the French Revolution, and through systems the modern *épistémè* from the 19th century to the present. He finds coherence in of knowledge within an *épistémè*, but discontinuities between and across them, even with content similarities.<sup>34</sup>

Foucault considers *épistémè* as a field of scientificity, meaning a field of practice where it is possible to separate true from false. As I will discuss later in this research, to make this separation and to justify for, is foundational in understanding an epistemic practice. For Foucault, *épistémè* is the mechanism that enables this separation, not only of true from false, but of what we can and cannot characterize as scientific.<sup>35</sup> Throughout this doctoral thesis, I will remain outside scientificity but consider art as an inquiry, where the aforementioned constitutive truths and reasons are to be agreed with the aims of creating, increasing and producing knowledge.

Parallels have been drawn between Foucault's *épistémè* and Kuhn's presentation of paradigms in the natural sciences interrupted by occasional major shifts in directions.<sup>36</sup> However, whereas for Foucault knowledge is inquiry-based discourse, for Thomas Kuhn (1962) a paradigm is an all-encompassing collection of beliefs and assumptions that result in the organization of scientific worldviews

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<sup>32</sup> Foucault 1972, p. 191.

<sup>33</sup> Foucault 1969, p. 49.

<sup>34</sup> Foucault 1972.

<sup>35</sup> Foucault 1980, p. 197.

<sup>36</sup> Piaget 1970, p. 132.

and practices. So, Foucault's theory of science accepts a range of co-existing *épistémè* but for Kuhn the dominant paradigm rules all. Kuhn's thinking corresponds to what Foucault calls theory of a science. However, Foucault is not in search for the conditions to oppose discourses within a science, but simply for the constant dominant paradigm governing scientific research. Helen Longino (1996, 2001) sets this into context by reminding us on social values as a human context of science.<sup>37</sup> This human context I outline as a Wittgensteinian frame of reference, as will be discussed later.

In this research art is considered as a specific field of inquiry, a specific field of knowledge and knowledge practices, something that I define as a meaning creating agency. The epistemological negotiation in this doctoral thesis is threefold based on core questions of epistemology

- (i) what constitutes as knowledge?
- (ii) how is knowledge produced?
- (iii) how is knowledge shared?

In this research these questions translate firstly into a question of the human intelligence in Chapter 2, secondly into a question of the context of knowledge in Chapter 3 and finally, thirdly into a question of knowledge as an epistemic practice in Chapter 4. In all three chapters, the core issue is to relate the epistemological questions to curatorial practice, which I formulate into curatorial *épistémè*. This is a practice of an inquiry, where a specific meaning creating agency is defined. My aim is therefore not to define knowledge objectively, universally nor scientifically but as an epistemic practice. I will thus aim to create a coherent understanding of the epistemological endeavors practiced in arts. Main tools for this understanding are Foucault's *épistémè* created within Wittgensteinian frame of reference. This consideration may be applicable to other epistemic practices, surely as an example at least.

Firstly, understanding of *épistémè* in defining the ever-evolving continuums of meaning creating agencies in arts is discussed through *technē* and *poiēsis* as proposed by Heidegger. Secondly, the broader understanding of *épistémè* is presented as dissemination and contextualization of knowledge through the professionalization of a central art world establishment power figure, the curator. And finally, thirdly, the epistemic tradition of the curatorial endeavor the curatorial *épistémè* is discussed through the aforementioned concepts of truth, belief, and justification as originally introduced by Plato.

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<sup>37</sup> Longino 2001.

### 1.3 The Methodology of Epistemological Concept Analysis

Foucault profoundly questions the Enlightenment ideal of progressive knowledge. The movement of knowledge in history is discontinuous, not cumulative.<sup>38</sup> I accept the Foucauldian understanding of *épistémè* as a theoretical entity explaining each particular form of human knowledge. However, as he discusses *épistémè* in relation to Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*)<sup>39</sup> and reason, I aim to distance this analysis from reason towards meaning: a set of co-existing *épistémè* in arts where philosophical inquiry is examination into principles of the meaning creating agency.

John Dewey (1938) defines inquiry as a transformation of an indefinable situation into a definable one and there adds the social nature of inquiry to this entity. This curatorial inquiry is conducted by an agent, a Ricouerian *capable human being* in the aims at unified whole, as proposed by Dewey.<sup>40, 41</sup> Like Foucault, Dewey investigates the historical development of knowledge processes. Interestingly, he finds relatively oppressive conditions for artistic expression by noting the philosophical sanction to the cultural conditions which prevented

the utilization of the immense potentialities for attainment of knowledge that were resident in the activities of the arts.<sup>42</sup>

Dewey and Foucault both criticize the tradition by suggesting the renunciation of such traditional notions as rationality, objectivity, method and truth.<sup>43</sup> As Rorty states, by so doing they reach beyond method.<sup>44</sup>

These activities and the residing knowledge gain the essence to Heidegger's *poiēsis*, art's specific nature that will be discussed later. Accordingly, I consider Dewey's proposal as a prelude to Foucault's consideration of power-knowledge relation. As Foucault (1983a) notes himself, he does not employ the word power often by itself but mainly in relation to knowledge. For this he accounts historical changes and inadequacies in, for example, modern humanistic and Marxist for. Thus, and against Marxist and many other conceptualizations Foucault presents power as exercised rather than possessed, needing to be analyzed as productive, for

it produces reality, it produces domains of objects, and rituals of truth.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Megill 1979, p. 460-471.

<sup>39</sup> For Immanuel Kant (1784), *Aufklärung* is neither a world era to which one belongs, nor an event whose signs are perceived, nor the dawning of an accomplishment *Aufklärung*, is of contemporary reality alone and the difference today introduces to yesterday.

<sup>40</sup> Dewey 1938.

<sup>41</sup> Hickman & Alexander 1998, p. 87.

<sup>42</sup> Dewey 1938, p. 59

<sup>43</sup> Rorty 1981, p. 572.

<sup>44</sup> Rorty 1982b, p 204.

<sup>45</sup> Foucault 1977, p. 194.

Power passes and circulates through individuals and so constitute a social body.<sup>46</sup> This idea of a power submitting, social body, is here applied to the art world establishment, where a variety of reality producing individuals define domains of objects and repetitive rituals of truth. Here, power is the implementation and deployment of a relationship of force.<sup>47</sup>

So, for Foucault, power and knowledge directly imply one another.

There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose, and constitute power relations.<sup>48</sup>

It cannot be localized nor found in the hands of the few, nor is it ever appropriated in the way wealth or a commodity can be appropriated. Furthermore, institutions such as the state, family, sciences and museums represent power in concentrations. They do not produce power but instead relay it – i.e., receive, coordinate and disperse – power.

To conclude, Foucault sets knowledge into a power relation. Dewey gives inquiry a social nature. Heidegger considers the essence, instead of productive forms, of art. Ricouer proposes a stance for capacity in being. All these considerations are introduced here as a foundation for the meaning creating agency in arts that then will be contextualized within the overlapping complexities of the global crises of digitalization and climate change challenging the sustainability agenda at large.

## 1.4 The Central Research Concepts

### 1.4.1 Curator

Working with the multitude of arts, a curator composes a précis epistemic horizon for the work of art and by so doing provides versatile audiences access to the artistic practices. This work is founded on the curatorial *épistémè*, a context-formed professional knowledge defined always simultaneously in *a* theory and in *a* practice, that will be thoroughly investigated throughout this thesis.

The field of art is crowded with professional profiles contesting over the validification of art and its worth, whether economic, social, aesthetic or semantic. Such a validating power is in the core of the curatorial practice. Professionalism is conceived of logically distinct methods of organizing and controlling the practice of knowledge and skill, and the social, economic and cultural circumstances surrounding its practice. Founding on Adam Smith and Max Weber, Eliot Freidson (2001) calls professionalism, a template that

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<sup>46</sup> Foucault 2003, p. 29.

<sup>47</sup> Foucault, 2003.

<sup>48</sup> Foucault, 1977, p. 27.

specifies what can but may never fully be.<sup>49</sup>

For Friedson, only professionalism is truly capable of managing and conducting specialized knowledge, that takes time and effort to acquire.<sup>50</sup> As the profession keeps evolving into a critical practice, I consider this validating power as a Foucauldian knowledge relation, an *épistémè* of its own.

I will aim at a synthesis of the establishment of the curatorial profession as one of the focal practices in defining contemporary art, its practices, content and accessibility and as a mode of contextualizing exhibition practices. By composing a conceptual analysis, I look into how art is defined as an immaterialized notion requiring acts for engagement and gaining its existence through a curated encounter with its audience. Artwork becomes the shared ground for artistic practices, where the artist and the curator meet and prepare the artwork for this encounter.

A specified, professional practice evolving around

the creation of a display, within a particular sociopolitical context, based on a carefully formulated argument, presented through the meticulous selection and methodical installation of artworks, related objects from the sphere of art, and objects from other areas of visual culture.<sup>51</sup>

and where the curator defines the context and content of an artwork in its temporal, immaterial and installation-based forms.

A progressive professionalization of the curator's position became apparent from many founding directors of modern art museums, considered among the curatorial pioneers: Alfred H. Barr, the first director in 1929 of the *Museum of Modern Art of New York*, or Werner Hofmann who created Vienna's *Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts* in 1962. Whereas Barr's main purpose was to refine the aesthetic sensibility of visitors and to shape a mode of spectatorship that turned the viewer into the educated consumer in contrast to the 19th century ideal of the spectator as responsible citizen<sup>52</sup>, Harald Szeemann believed no traditional forms of exhibition represented the art that was produced from the radical social, political and aesthetic impulses that developed out of the counterculture of the late 1960s. Szeemann's "*Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form*" (Kunsthalle Bern, 1969) was the first exhibition to bring together post-minimalist and conceptual artists in a European institution. With his curating Szeemann radically defined an aesthetic position and invented the modern-day *Großausstellung*, in which the artworks are centrally conceptualized and assembled into new interrelationships focusing on the act itself instead of the object and bringing together the primary triad of the art world: studio, gallery and museum.<sup>53</sup> Important reference points

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<sup>49</sup> Freidson 2001, p. 179.

<sup>50</sup> Freidson 2001, p. 179.

<sup>51</sup> Hoffmann 2010, p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Lind 2015, p. 100.

<sup>53</sup> Biryukova 2017, p. 8.

were alternative methods and the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.<sup>54</sup> Szeemann's curatorial practice had an impetus to characterize and so to establish the profession and its status in the contemporary arts by creating a new element of contextualizing exhibition practices.<sup>55</sup>

The contemporary curator has emerged from these origins of safeguarding, enriching, researching, and displaying artworks in a museal setting. In *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Cultures(s)* (2012) Paul O'Neill categorizes the curatorial practice through three main turns. Firstly, the emergence of the independent curator disengaging from its origins in the tasks of the caretaker of collections in museum institutions in the late 1960s; secondly, proliferation of biennial culture in the late 1980s and the globalization of the art world establishment where curatorial discourse started to play a defining role; and finally, the development of contemporary curatorial practices since the 1990s, where curatorial practices become contested with artistic practices and initiate critical discourse around the profession.<sup>56</sup>

Curatorial practice, and so the profession, is considered to be founded on an immediate socio-political context and having the potential to address, visualize, and question the central effects of the changing status and function of things, ideas and ideologies. Stemming from this, the curator has become one of the main characters advancing globalization by creating presentations as a mode of being in the world.

The curatorial practice overreaches theories, philosophies and approaches in preparing the work of art – and the actual artistic practice – for its encounter across different social and cultural contexts. As noted, I define curatorial practice as a form of an inquiry, an *épistémè*, not a discipline nor a practice in its traditional discourse defining forms.

#### 1.4.2 Meaning Creating Agency

The curatorial *épistémè* is here formulated as a meaning creating agency. Here I understand knowledge as founded on human agency. Foucault (1969) aims at an archaeology of human sciences by avoiding definition of the traditional sovereign unity of a subject, spirit or a period.<sup>57</sup> Inspired by this acknowledgement, I will consider the curatorial episteme through agency, as an epistemic initiative, act and action gaining totality as a shared process. Whereas Greene and Nixon (2020) note *agency is not a concept that is universally used or understood*<sup>58</sup>, I outline agency as the capacity of individuals to act independently, decisively making their own free choices, a process that is embedded temporally and guided by cognitive belief structures.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Obrist 1996; Behnke 2011.

<sup>55</sup> Behnke 2010, p. 29.

<sup>56</sup> O'Neill 2012, p. 1-5; p. 105.

<sup>57</sup> Foucault 1969.

<sup>58</sup> Greene & Nixon 2020, p. 237.

<sup>59</sup> Emirbayer et al 1998; Littlejohn et al 2009.

Ever since Locke, the question of human freedom has been debated through rationality and morals. Locke's concept of the social contract formed agency as the capacity of human beings to shape the circumstances in which they live. Whereas Jean-Jacques Rousseau framed this freedom as a moral will, Immanuel Kant considered freedom as normative grounded individual will governed by the categorical imperative.<sup>60</sup> In short, action theory has been oscillating between individual and collective approaches as it was then considered as a collective dynamic. In G.W.F Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, on the other hand Spirit (*Geist*) entails a triad of subjective spirit, objective spirit, and absolute spirit. Here any subjective decisions and actions are subordinate to culturally distinct objective patterns of social interaction and the cultural institutions within which spirit is objectified in patterns of human life.<sup>61</sup>

Paul Ricoeur sets the agent of action within a reciprocity between voluntary and involuntary, where a structure of agency is intelligible capability. His survey on the phenomenological hermeneutics of the self contains the idea of *capable human being*, the main character of his theory of action and the main character of the inquiry defined in this research. Ricoeur made his first analyses on action through Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*<sup>62</sup>, where the nature of free will – the afore mentioned reciprocity between voluntary and the involuntary (1950) – is negotiated. Accordingly, in Sartre's (*Being and Nothingness* 1943), perception, perceived world and the body find their meaning in action understood in Ricoeur's manner.<sup>63</sup> Ricoeur's phenomenological starting point is the description of the *Cogito* as a subject of will. And within this structure decision is action. To decide is to act. The act of deciding is the constitutive act of my mode of being. The self is thus a capable, deciding agent.

So for Ricoeur, as part of the capable human being's faculties, initiative is a manifestation of man's power and ability to act. Action intervenes at the intersection of agent's powers with the resources of the system. Action theory describes agent's capacity to act, while moral theory describes agent's obligation to act. Ricoeurian dialectic of sameness and selfhood assigns responsibility. The self-responsible for an action must be the same self-imputed to be the agent of the action. This responsibility can be accepted prospectively or retrospectively. Initiative is the beginning of something new. Action changes the world. Ricoeur argues that every action involves initiative, an intervention of the agent of action into the course of the world.<sup>64</sup>

In this doctoral thesis the curatorial *épistémè* – an ongoing meaning creating agency – is loaded with a potential to initiate and create new, artistically relevant and practice defining content, and so to participate in changing the world, in

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<sup>60</sup> Philosophy of action is defined as inter-disciplinary, varying from the general practical philosophy to existentialism, and covering variety of fields including pragmatism, philosophy of mind and language, structuralism and linguistics, anthropology, sociology.

<sup>61</sup> Hegel 1807.

<sup>62</sup> Ricoeur 1995, p. 23.

<sup>63</sup> Sartre's terms *mobile* and *motif* demonstrate the idea that having reasons to act does not mean that those reasons are the cause of that action.

<sup>64</sup> Ricoeur 1992, p. 109.



describing the world and in creating something for the world. Here the initiative of Ricouer's action theory is considered in the form of inquiry. This epistemic agency is an active, meaning creating, initiative, realizing in a form of an artwork. This reciprocity that can, then, be set in an institutional context as suggested by Campolmi (2013) as *archètopy*; i.e., a place (*tòpos*) for individual and collective cultivation where the creation of meanings and narratives has involved practitioners and beholders since the origin (*archè*) of the meaning creating processes.<sup>65</sup> This strategic work is not, however, a matter concerning only the institutions sustaining culture but also each individual practicing art, i.e. the meaning creating agency, the curatorial *épistémè*, at large.

As an introductory example of such agency, I will discuss the artistic initiative of Auguste Rodin, who created a bold intellectual foundation for the modernistic meaning creating agency with an open, creative process. Rodin's *La Porte de l'Enfer* (1880-1917) is discussed as a meaning creating agency as he proposes continuity in the static state of sculpture with his decision to create an uncompleted work and by doing so questions the future potentials of obsolete art forms. Instead of resulting in a polished statue, *La Porte de l'Enfer* is an opening suggestion to an open-ended intellectual production, where movement, composition, an end and a beginning ensue as a process instead of a project.

### 1.4.3 Continuum of the Temporal

The history of knowledge, for Foucault (1969), is a dynamic, constantly changing totality. Foucault argues that this non-unitary, de-centered totality of relations among the human sciences contributes to a shift from the traditional historical inquiry into what was known at a given moment to the discursive practices that perform something knowledgeable. Analysis of an *épistémè* displaces epistemology's theorization of the grounds of knowledge by attending to the representational paradigms which organize that theorization.

Arthur Danto (1964) has described the art world having a dual structure for an artwork that is like a citizen of the Two Cities – the City of God and of Man (cf. Augustine's *City of God - De civitate Dei contra paganos*). The artwork can coexist in the realms of both the art world and the real world. This is most clear in the example of a readymade. As a pioneer of Dada movement, Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) questioned the presumptions of what art should be, and how it should be made. Duchamp began presenting mass-produced, commercially available, even mundane objects as art by calling them *Readymades*. He disrupted the idea of an artist by arguing that an ordinary object can gain the dignity of a work of art by the choice of an artist. Here Duchamp laid a foundation for conceptual art.<sup>66</sup> Like for Duchamp the power of the artist, for Danto it is the theory that can keep the parallels of the artworld and real world coexisting as

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<sup>65</sup> Campolmi 2013, p. 236.

<sup>66</sup> Tate 2012.

that takes it up into the world of art and keeps it from collapsing into the real object which it is.<sup>67</sup>

In other words, it is theory that tells us if and when a work is art, or when it has ceased to be.

Absolute time defined by Newton and understood by mathematics progresses through the universe regardless of our understanding of it. More recently, most philosophers separate this universal, absolute time from human time and its perceptions that contemporary physics could call illusion.<sup>68</sup> Human time and its flowing fail to correspond with physical reality. Human – historically defined and philosophically analyzed – time has different categories from the past through the present to its future. The universe unfolds into the future, dragged by time, and exists according to the order of time.<sup>69</sup>

With his three-volume work *Time and Narrative* Ricoeur (1983/1990; 1984/1990; 1985/1990) proposes a series of arguments concerning the nature of time in order to highlight the continuity and discontinuity between phenomenological and objective time.<sup>70</sup> He concerned himself with the experience of time and offered narrative as mediating between the concepts of chronological clock time with experienced, existential time.<sup>71</sup> Ricoeur argues from the one presupposition that commands both the structural identity of the narrative function and the truth claim of every narrative work, namely the temporal character of human experience.<sup>72</sup>

G.W.F. Hegel (1824a & 1824b; 1952 & 1953) considers history as an intelligible proceeding towards the comprehension of human freedom.<sup>73</sup> Hegel created the idea of progress as an overarching dialectic, something that Arthur Danto (1964) uses in his proposal of philosophy of art to a process of self-realization and understanding that leads up to pure knowledge.<sup>74</sup> Problematic in this understanding are the two prevailing strategies defining art, namely aesthetics and the subjective value systems of art history, including the institutional artworld structure.<sup>75</sup>

Heidegger (1934) believed that the modern tradition of aesthetics had to be conquered, in order to be comprised as a continuation of the phenomenological project.<sup>76</sup> This would be gained by separating art from the work of art, as will be discussed below in more detail. Following Heidegger's proposal Danto distanced philosophy of art from aesthetics by determining theory as the element defining

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<sup>67</sup> Danto 1964, p. 571.

<sup>68</sup> Rovelli 2018.

<sup>69</sup> Rovelli 2018.

<sup>70</sup> Atkins 2002, p. 388.

<sup>71</sup> Stiver 2012 p. 78.

<sup>72</sup> Malan 2017, p. 4.

<sup>73</sup> Hegel 1824a (1952) & 1824b (1953).

<sup>74</sup> Danto 1964 pp. 571-582

<sup>75</sup> Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) is considered as the progenitor of art history with his *The Lives of the Most Excellent painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1550), which presented a collection of his favorite artist.

<sup>76</sup> Heidegger 1934 (1985), p.92.

art and keeping it from crashing into the real object which it is.<sup>77</sup> With this he also noted the temporal role in determining the varying nature of art through changing times as art has become aware

of its history as it has come to be in our time, so that its consciousness of its history forms part of its nature, it is perhaps unavoidable that it should turn into philosophy at last.<sup>78</sup>

According to Gadamer (1975), Hegel's notion of history fails to capture the fully temporal nature of art. Gadamer uses the analogy of a festival to declare the exceptional nature of aesthetic time as differing from ordinary time. For him, festival employs the temporality of art and it is to be distinguished from other versions of the time of art, an atemporality or timelessness of the work.<sup>79</sup> Festival entails a time of celebration and even if repeated it never reoccurs as the same as its

original essence is to be something different.

This discontinuity also entail continuity as it

was originally of a certain nature and was celebrated in this way, then different, then different again.<sup>80</sup>

The temporality, for Gadamer, sets the stage for encounters, for a full participation in the mode of play, the process that requires participation to the festival and constitutes an ontological status. The festival attains an identity throughout these changing features that are transferred by analogy to the work of art, to which Gadamer issues the ontological status of presence.<sup>81</sup>

Gadamer does succeed in defining the specific temporal nature of art and its productions and experiences. However, as the negotiated knowledge context is Foucauldian *épistémè*, it is relevant to discuss his idea of co-existing, noncumulative, temporal and epoch related knowledge structure. In developing the theory of *archaeology of knowledge*, Foucault (1969) outlines the principles constructing the *épistémè* determining an epoch. Foucault uses this determination on a society level to gradually establish its constitutive structures, that may overlap in reconfigurations into new environments. Focal in this formation is its discontinuity.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Kuisma 2019.

<sup>78</sup> Danto 1984, p.27.

<sup>79</sup> Gadamer 1975, p. 297

<sup>80</sup> Gadamer 1975, p. 334.

<sup>81</sup> Sweeney 2002, p. 376.

<sup>82</sup> In negotiating the curatorial *épistémè*, it is relevant to acknowledge all the developing theoretic entities within the curatorial whole. From critical studies to postcolonial theories, the curatorial *épistémè* keeps on merging social, political and aesthetic theories into its own epistemic progress. I would like to consider these as a cumulative entity, not separated selves.

As we consider the continuum of an *épistémè*, I would create an elementary cloud analogy here.<sup>83</sup> The cloud formations, ever changing, appearing, reappearing and disappearing knowledges co-exist without cumulating a progressive formation of knowledge. The formations are not fully separate but merge and grow together. Therefore, I consider the temporal settings of curatorial *épistémè* to be founded in the actual existence of art as an ever-evolving process with overlapping histories and futures.

As broadly criticized, Foucault's assumption that knowledges exist as entities does seem to disregard complexities of discourse. As I define art as an *épistémè* of its own right, an establishment of constitutive truths and reasons as well as power structures of knowledge, I want to outline a difference towards his discourse thinking. Acknowledging its relevance to art and culture, I will keep my analytical approach within the context of knowledge.<sup>84</sup> Art as an *épistémè* is thus an entity where the artist has the power, as suggested by Duchamp, conceptually elevate mundane objects into the realm of art and where a theory, as suggested by Danto, can keep the artist defined object within the realm of art.

For Paul Ricoeur, Hegel conflates the eternal present with the

capacity of the actual present to retain the known past and anticipate the future indicated in the tendencies of this past.<sup>85</sup>

Ricoeur claims that we may simultaneously be historically self-aware and consider philosophy as a rational undertaking aiming at truth.<sup>86</sup> As a philosophical, temporal project, I consider the curatorial *épistémè* to be fragmented, founded on efforts, encounters and participations, that define the content of the work of art and the continuum of artistic practices. In Ricoeurian terms, I consider this anticipation realizing in art. Each act of creation, each work of art, is a contribution to this continuum, the ability to retain the known from the past while taking part in the anticipation of future's promises.

#### 1.4.4 Sustainability

According to the original Brundtland Report definition (UN WCED 1987)

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.<sup>87</sup>

Following the global environmental crisis (i.e. global warming, climate change and widespread deforestation), the issues of sustainability have become most

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<sup>83</sup> This is not in reference to Gutierre's sun-cloud analogy but rather on the one hand the digital clouds containing data and on the other hand the forming process of physical clouds.

<sup>84</sup> For Foucault, as noted, discourses emerge and transform according to a complex set of discursive and institutional relationships, defined by both interruptions as by unified themes.

<sup>85</sup> Ricoeur 1988, p. 201.

<sup>86</sup> Ricoeur 1988, p. 201.

<sup>87</sup> the Brundtland report engendered the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), known as the Rio Earth Summit, in 1992.

debated in the 20th and 21st centuries (UNHS, 2011). The Brundtland definition contains two essential concepts: firstly, the concept of prioritized needs, and secondly, the idea of limitations arising from the effect of technologies as well as social structures and institutions on the environment to satisfy present and future cross-generational needs. However, the definition is only an agreed moral principle and does not provide any explanations what sustainable development requires in practice nor what strategic actions should be taken.<sup>88</sup>

As widely acknowledged, the ongoing sustainability debate has turned to negotiate sustainability instead of sustainable development.<sup>89</sup> Whereas it can be generalized that sustainable development has a focus on change and growth and sustaining on conserving and preserving,<sup>90</sup> a single, all-encompassing definition of sustainable development or sustainability is impossible to attain. The highly instrumental political expediency resulting from the vagueness of the WCED sustainable development definition has generated a diverse spectrum of definition, debate and interpretation. Most of the effort of interpreting the concept is influenced by the fundamental principles of specific interest groups or organizations.<sup>91</sup>

In this doctoral thesis my focus is on sustainability, while acknowledging that the both concepts are politically charged and carry various connotations. I will do so, as the concept of sustainability brings into focus human activities and their ability to satisfy human demands without exhausting the productive resources at their disposal.<sup>92</sup> This choice will give us a possibility to consider sustainability as a practice beyond politics and frame it as a social and cultural practice and a way of comprehending the world.<sup>93</sup>

As the fourth, and final pillar, the World Commission on Culture and Development (WCCD 1995) defined cultural sustainability as inter- and intra-generational access to cultural resources, both tangible and intangible. The immaterial aspects that social and cultural sustainability entail are in the very core of the reconceptualization of the sustainability agenda. Social values, such as social justice, solidarity, and participation, equity and wellbeing can be characterized as dimensions of social sustainability.<sup>94</sup> Cultural sustainability has become a growing priority within sustainable development agendas, and is now often depicted as a fourth pillar, equal to social, economic, and environmental concerns.<sup>95</sup> As a fourth pillar, culture is both an enabler and a driver of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Sustainability is principally cultural by being contextual, historically and geographically actual. Human action is cultural and contextual.<sup>96</sup> Cultural

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<sup>88</sup> Ciegis, 2004, 2009; Ramanauskiene, Martinkus, 2009.

<sup>89</sup> See for example Huhmarniemi & Jokela 2020; Birkeland 2015; Dessein, Soini, Fairclough & Horlings 2015.

<sup>90</sup> Dessein, Soini, Fairclough & Horlings 2015.

<sup>91</sup> Mebratu 1998, p. 518.

<sup>92</sup> Thomas 2015.

<sup>93</sup> Huhmarniemi & Jokela 2020, p. 5.

<sup>94</sup> Axelsson et al 2013.

<sup>95</sup> Loach, Rowley & Griffiths 2017.

<sup>96</sup> Birkeland 2015, p. 165.

sustainability means both creativity and cultural diversity, as well as cultural heritage and all human knowledge.<sup>97</sup> The concept has gained meaning covering all of humanity. Cultural sustainability merges with social sustainability to ensure the fair treatment of people and the wellbeing of all generations. In terms of preserving and supporting cultural heritage, cultural sustainability also encompasses an ecological dimension of sustainability.<sup>98,99</sup> Culture appears and is understandable through narrative organization, and cultural sustainability can so emerge as a social process created through narratives that connect the past with the future, and the local with the global.<sup>100</sup>

Bearing the idea of fulfillment or welfare, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the UN's Agenda 2030, are built upon the four-pillar definition of sustainability encompassing notion's environmental, economic, social and cultural dimensions. The actual notion and principles of sustainability aim to balance and mediate between these pillars.<sup>101</sup> A key feature of the SDGs is that their development objectives and targets are basically interdependent but interlinked.<sup>102</sup> It is argued that the SDGs entail complementarities or synergies as well as trade-offs or tensions which have implications for global and national contexts.

In this doctoral thesis I will negotiate sustainability in relation to art and arts epistemic practices. As widely regarded, art's sustainable references are twofold. On the one hand, the term sustainable art refers to artistic practices relating, discussing, employing and developing environmental issues and using ecological elements, contexts and tools as their focal setting. On the other, art's sustainable potential refers to its own capability to bring awareness and new perspectives to essential and critical cultural, social, ecological and economical—whether individual or shared—issues and so sustainable art is the actual impact art has to the issues of sustainability.<sup>103</sup> In order to develop this duality further, I would like to reconsider it within the framework of the four roles of cultural policy in sustainability, where the Latourian continuities play a central role.

Sustainability in arts has also defined the curatorial practice in question. As awareness in production processes, including upcycling and recycling as well as circular economies, has become an accepted form of practice, a lot of attention is laid on actual content of art. Here exhibitions and events communicate sustainability and its goals for example through protection of natural landscapes, the conditions and consequences of urbanization and industrialization, the

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<sup>97</sup> Soini & Birkeland 2014; Loach, Rowley & Griffiths 2017.

<sup>98</sup> Loach, Rowley & Griffiths 2017.

<sup>99</sup> From the Brundtland commission point of view, cultural sustainability provides for immaterial needs, regarding intercultural communication, human knowledge at large, creative diversity as well as recognition of intercultural dialogue as one of humankind's key challenges.

<sup>100</sup> Birkeland 2015, p. 165.

<sup>101</sup> Throsby 1999; Council of Europe 2000; Hawkes 2001; Littig and Grießler 2005; Lane 2014; Forest Europe, UNECE and FAO 2011.

<sup>102</sup> Tosun & Leininger, 2017.

<sup>103</sup> Fowkes' 2006; Fowkes' 2012.

emergence of women artists, the use of resources and reconsiderations of education, to name a few key discussions.<sup>104</sup>

Hence, I will consider art and sustainability through the meaning creating agency, requiring Ricoeurian ethics in believing that action has a potential to change the world. Here, I will suggest a threefold conceptualization for the meaning creating agencies in art: firstly, to express concern in a perceivable form; secondly, to take responsibility in production and dissemination of art and thirdly, to reach for ethical implications on a global level.

As I proceed to analyze the meaning creating agency through Heidegger's *technē* and *poiēsis*, I will propose that art's epistemic practices bridge artificial and human intelligences reciprocally. Instead of focusing on concerns created by this tension, I acknowledge the potential of the Heideggerian bringing forth. Considering the features of artificial and human intelligences, I will involve sustainability in this ongoing epistemic consideration. Merging the agency of the intellect with the sustainability agenda and proceeding from this definition, I propose a new paradigm of sustainability: intellectual sustainability. Here the merged intellect is considered as an active, shared agency that cannot be attained artificially or digitally, but remains to be elevated, refined and sustained between and among individuals.

## 1.5 Proceeding

The following chapters are outlined through a threefold discussion. I will start by negotiating intellectual sustainability through a continuum of meaning creating agencies as the curatorial *épistémè* in Chapter 2. Here art is defined as intertwining in various knowledge processes, as suggested by Heidegger. This will take us to an analytical overview of the professionalization of the curatorial practice as art's context defining epistemic practice in Chapter 3. Here the that Foucauldian power/knowledge relation gains existence. I will conclude the threefold epistemic analysis with an investigation to the features of curatorial *épistémè* in theory and practice in Chapter 4 by defining the curatorial *épistémè* as an inquiry where Justified True Belief system is contextualized within the professional frame of reference with Ricoeur's metaphoric tools.

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<sup>104</sup> I want to acknowledge a prevailing debate, as for example noted by Callard (2020) with an Opinion Letter to The New York Times *Should we cancel Aristotle?* As repeatedly experienced, the time of a crisis has throughout the history prompted systematic destruction of relevant cultural artefacts, art, literature and anything significant depicting humanity. Now, as Callard notes, an ideological crime has provoked removal of statues portraying a position of prominence. Interestingly, as she points out, considering cultural sustainability, we should contextualize any efforts and display of prominence within its epoch and human efforts.

## 2 ARRIVING AT TRUTH. INTELLECTUAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE MEANING CREATING AGENCY IN ARTS

In the era of digitalization of the knowledge technologies<sup>105</sup>, parameters of intellectual production have profoundly changed. In order to understand knowledge in a digital environment, it is relevant to distinguish the three epistemic terms: data, information and knowledge. Data is argued to be located in the world, knowledge in its agents and information between them.<sup>106</sup> Comprehending these terms as interchangeable among themselves, may lead to unclarity. In *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (1986), Latour and Woolgar argue that a measure to be "knowledgeable" necessitates that its internal propensities to act are adjustable upon receipt of information value containing data. Therefore, data itself possesses information value only as a potential to become knowledge through a contextualized process that is organized, collected and embedded in a meaningful way within a context of application.<sup>107</sup>

From this understanding, prevailing concerns of such digital epistemology are related to the hierarchies between human and artificial intelligence.<sup>108</sup> Whereas the original aim of artificial intelligence is to assist users of a system in an intelligent manner to gather, search, filter and by so doing gain information that can become knowledge, it is feared that the escalating independence of these artificial intelligencies may lead to changes in knowledge/power relations. Let us be reminded that for Foucault, power is based on knowledge and it employs

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<sup>105</sup> Knowledge technologies are generally noted to refer intelligent, information and interaction technologies supporting the creation, management and sharing of knowledge at a multitude of individual and social levels (Aloisami 2018). In my research I am contextualizing this technological revolution in reference to the Fordist and Post-Fordist concept development, considering the specificity, elasticity and complexity of the notions.

<sup>106</sup> Child and Ihrig 2013, p. 243.

<sup>107</sup> Child and Ihrig 2013, p. 247.

<sup>108</sup> World Intellectual Property Report 2017. Intangible Capital in Global Value Chains by World Intellectual Property Organization.

[https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo\\_pub\\_944\\_2017.pdf](https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo_pub_944_2017.pdf)



knowledge, while simultaneously reproducing knowledge by forming it and recreating its own fields of practice through this process.<sup>109</sup> As artificial intelligence is built to exercise this power through data collecting and information access defining algorithms and so provide us with modifiable data on users and their habits, tendencies, interests and locations, this dreaded power-knowledge game is seen to shape our everyday life drastically.

As the digital environments escalate to merge with our physical realities, it is topical to negotiate the conditions of future epistemic practices. The ongoing sustainability debate is evermore involved with epistemic practices, such as research and innovation, that are a part of this intellectual agency. Considering the features of artificial and human intelligences, I will introduce and involve sustainability in this epistemic consideration.

In the following, I will outline a difference in artificial and human knowledges based on a simple syntax and semantics division. The notion of semantics, as for for example with Paul Ricoeur, will appear relevant as we proceed. I will negotiate the very nature of this dichotomy and by so doing aim to lay a foundation to sustainability and its intellectual dimensions within the framework of art. I will formulate intellect as the agency possessing contextualized knowledge, i.e. the meaning creating agency in arts that in our frame of research is defined as the curatorial *épistémè*. Intellect is thus an active, shared agency that cannot be attained artificially or digitally, but remains to be shared, elevated, refined and sustained between and among human individuals.

Acknowledging that the global crises of digitalization and climate change are increasingly challenging the sustainability agenda at large, I take the overlapping complexities of these two crises as a foundational context for the meaning creating agency within arts. I start thus by defining intellectual production of the artistic agency, continue by consider this agency through Heidegger's *technē* and *poiēsis*, that I propose to have parallels of syntax and semantics<sup>110</sup> and finally conclude with an analysis of the sustainability agenda. Merging the agency of the intellect with the sustainability agenda and proceeding from this definition, I propose a new paradigm of sustainability: intellectual sustainability.

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<sup>109</sup> Foucault 2008.

<sup>110</sup> My research is not linguistic in nature but uses these notions of syntax and semantics outside their traditional, theoretical setting, as merely metaphoric. By using these foundational concepts, I acknowledge their theoretical development with, and for example, Ferdinand de Saussure (*Le Cours de linguistique générale est une œuvre posthume* 1916), Mikhail Bakhtin (*The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* 1981) and Noam Chomsky (*Syntactic Structures* 1957).

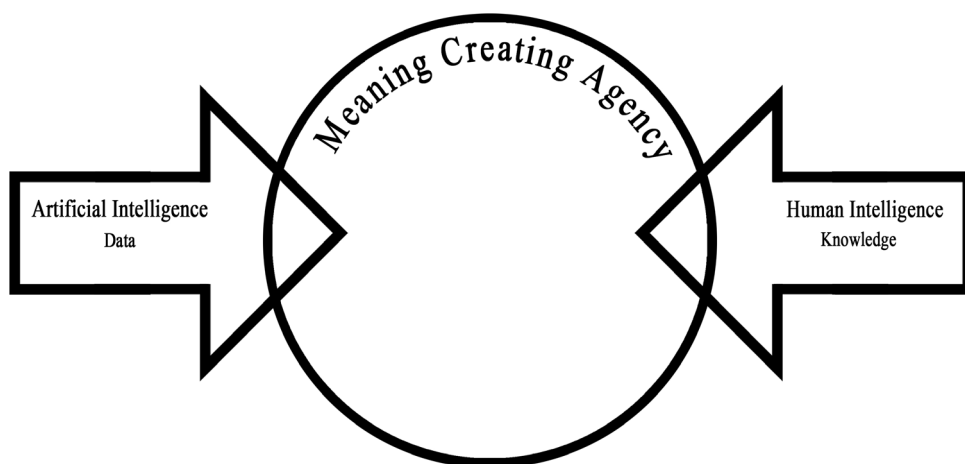


FIGURE 1. *Meaning Creating Agency*

## 2.1 The Gates of Intellect

*La Porte de l'Enfer* (The Gates of Hell, 1880-1917) is a monumental sculptural work by French artist Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) depicting a scene from the *Inferno* of Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* (1472). Commissioned by the Directorate of Fine Arts for the planned *Musée des Arts Decoratifs* in Paris in 1880 Rodin planned to finish the sculpture within five years. *Musée des Arts Decoratifs* was never built and Rodin processed the colossal work, which stands six meters high and contains 180 narrative figures for 37 years until his death in 1917.<sup>111</sup>

*La Porte de l'Enfer* recorded a multitude of influences and subject matters emerging throughout the duration of Rodin's artistic life and practice. It manifested itself as a Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*, both an experimental surface and an official artistic representation, a synthesis between the private and the public spheres of Art. In addition to the actual source of intellectual production, Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, Rodin's influences for *La Porte* were both from religious contexts with Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise*, 15th century bronze doors depicting the Old Testament at the Baptistry of Saint John in Florence as well as from artistic ones including Michelangelo's *Il Giudizio Universale* (1537-1541), Delacroix's *La Barque de Dante* (1822), Balzac's *La Comédie humaine* (1799-1850) and Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857).<sup>112</sup>

In an interview with *Le Matin* in 1890 Rodin noted that dwelling deep with Dante had led his figures to distance too much from reality. This awareness resulted in an endless loop of starting the sculpture over again. Eventually, *La Porte* became a creative reservoir for Rodin, providing for abundance of individual sculptures such as *Le Penseur* and *Le Baiser*. Rodin would store his sculptural sketches, develop, cast and adjust them, eventually remove them

<sup>111</sup> Elsen 1963, p. 35.

<sup>112</sup> Le Normand-Romain 1999; see also Le Normand-Romain 2013.

again and present the figures as an autonomous work. For the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* Rodin decided to present sketches and details of *La Porte* and an unfinished entity and so offered symbolic value to the world's audiences.

With this initiative Rodin created a bold intellectual foundation for the modernistic meaning creating agency with an open, creative process. Philosophically, Rodin proceeded Hegel's proposition of the Death of Art<sup>113</sup>, Art lost its earlier necessity as a life, reality and humanity defining impetus and exists thus in our imagination subjecting the content and the means of presentation of artworks as potentially thought-provoking processes. Art's obligation is to propose intellectual contemplation, in order, not to recreate art but instead for acknowledging philosophically what art is. *La Porte de l'Enfer* is an artistic endeavour to intellectual production, a symbolic work by excellence. Rodin actually proposes continuity in the static state of sculpture with his decision to leave *La Porte* uncompleted and by doing so questions the future potentials of obsolete art forms. Instead of resulting in a polished statue, *La Porte de l'Enfer* is the first suggestion to an open-ended intellectual production, where movement, composition, an end and a beginning ensue as a process instead of a project.

Rodin's formidable, unceasing process is an ingenious example of intellectual production. Considering *La Porte de l'Enfer* as a gate to his intellect, rather than an obsolete, exhibitable work of art, allows us to negotiate the potentials of human intellect. I consider Rodin's work as an epistemic source material for his entire artistic practice, where the strenuous process becomes a source of, not only thought and inspiration, but information. This artistic foundation awaits contextualization, that is an understanding of the potential of its features as an epistemic entity.

Here Rodin preceded the role of an artist as the *inventeur du temps gratuit*, as suggested by Jean-François Lyotard. For him, an artist has to be a philosopher, as he always engages not in producing objects but consistently to consider the nature of what he's involved in doing.<sup>114</sup>

.. certain works have a structure that keeps them from being concerned with their existence as events; they do something entirely different as an attentive observer comes away with the feeling that their engagement with the senses, if any such engagement exists at all, is of far less importance than a primary interest in the most fundamental philosophical question of all, "Why does something happen, rather than nothing?"<sup>115</sup>

By building this gate of intellect, Rodin thus contended with this idea of an artist as a meaning creating agent, debating philosophically about the nature of his own doing, about the nature of art and its conditions to exist. The curatorial *épistémè* engages itself with this very question. As such, this gate leads us to negotiate the meaning creating agency in arts.

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<sup>113</sup> Hegel 1920, p. 139-144; Bosanquet 1919, p. 20-28.

<sup>114</sup> Lyotard & Blistène 1985, p. 32-39.

<sup>115</sup> Lyotard & Blistène 1985, p. 32-39.

## 2.2 Intellectual Production and the Meaning Creating Agency in Arts

The theoretical framework for the Intellectual Sustainability is founded on a multitude of philosophies. As noted, negotiating the meanings between human and artificial intelligences are gaining more relevance in relation to art and its practices. It is therefore focal to my research process to consider the potential and the effect of these intelligences to the epistemic practices of art, here within the sustainability debate.

Intellectual production involves theories, concepts, procedures and methodologies in its operation, including the views available individually as well as collectively. In the following, I take into account intellectual production through the thoughts of Walter Benjamin, John Dewey, Bruno Latour, William James and G. W. F. Hegel.<sup>116</sup> This is followed by the definition of the meaning creating agency in arts through Ursula Wolf, Aristotle and Paul Ricoeur.<sup>117</sup> This triad of Aristotle, Wolf and Ricoeur form an idea of human ethics that later gain essence in negotiating some ideas of sustainability. Accordingly, Aristotle's notions of truth (*aletheia*) have significance for Heidegger's concept of truth.<sup>118</sup> This philosophical foundation will be outlined in the following.

In his essay *Author as Producer* Walter Benjamin (1998, 1977, 1966) aims to insert the rigid, isolated object of art into the context of living social relations determined by production relations positioned *vis-à-vis* the social production relations in a temporal setting.<sup>119</sup> According to Benjamin technical progress eventually changes the function of art forms as well as the intellectual means of production.<sup>120</sup> This escalating process of a multitude of intelligencies involved in intellectual production has indeed formed the content of art, yet alone the means and methodologies surrounding it. Central in this progress, according to Benjamin, is the difference between contributing with a production apparatus and changing it. Intellectual production must thus conquer its separate spheres of competence.<sup>121</sup> Whether literal, photographic or theatrical form of production

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<sup>116</sup> Benjamin has created the foundational notion of artwork as intellectual production, even as a modernistic object. James' and Dewey's pragmatism provide a culture encompassing assessing of the social conditions and values that have to do with the further development of the sustainability agenda at hand. Latour and Hegel will be discussed more broadly throughout the article.

<sup>117</sup> Ursula Wolf bases her aesthetical theory on Aristotle. Whereas Aristotle is fundamental also for the hermeneutical philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, his theory of action will be discussed more thoroughly in the following.

<sup>118</sup> What in *Being and Time* Heidegger called as the "*primordial phenomenon of truth*" was founded on *aletheia*, unconcealment.

<sup>119</sup> Benjamin 1998, p. 87.

<sup>120</sup> Benjamin 1934/2006.

<sup>121</sup> Benjamin 1977, p. 86, 94.

... the barriers of competence must be broken down by each of the productive forces they were created to separate, acting in concert

in order to

...succeed in furthering the unification of the means of intellectual production.<sup>122</sup>

Dewey equates knowledge and science with a work of art<sup>123</sup> and they so hold the potential to converse into things and features, which they did not previously entail. Knowledge is an act that endow with non-cognitive features, which did not belong to it. With this Dewey defines the specific nature of art: its meaning creation potential. This process and its results reveal the quality of knowing or if knowing was truly there through its retroactive validating power as defined by James (1996). We will know if we knew. This is where, as discussed later, Hegel questions the knowledge potential of philosophical agency. Agreeing with this, I propose that the principles of the meaning creating agency are to be considered as the foundation for intellectual sustainability.

With *Kunst, Philosophie und die Frage nach dem guten Leben* Ursula Wolf (1999) defines the quest for *eudaimonia* with Aristotle by looking into the Nicomachean Ethics and noting that a search for something is often a means to a wider goal. Interestingly she dichotomizes art and philosophy by stating that

Diesen individuellen Kern des Verstehens, der in der subjektiven Erfahrung liegt, kann die Philosophie mit ihrem Mitteln nicht ausdrücklich machen, während die Kunst gerade dazu in der Lage ist.<sup>124</sup>

And continues that

Es gibt Grundbegriffe, die sich nur durch die Kunst artikulieren lassen.<sup>125</sup>

Where both philosophy and art address fundamental concepts, such as time and freedom, the difference between the two is, that philosophy can approach and define these concepts through a broader we-perspective while not being able to envision how the structures effect on individual life experiences. Art has the ability to open these concepts to more affective individual experiences.<sup>126</sup>

This is a consideration of the potential what Paul Ricoeur (1992) calls a *capable human being* and what we can consider as the meaning creating agent, i.e. the artist, curator or an artworker of any kind. It entails the exact idea of the individual as a responsible agent for its actions, whose self-knowledge is built through the relations to the world with and among others in that world. These relations Dewey defines non-cognitive and adaptive. Artistic initiative, as any,

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<sup>122</sup> Benjamin 1977, p. 95, 102.

<sup>123</sup> Dewey 1926, p. 381-382.

<sup>124</sup> Wolf 1999, p. 123.

<sup>125</sup> Wolf 1999, p. 125.

<sup>126</sup> Wolf 1999, p. 129-131.

requires an agent with specific capabilities inhabiting a worldly situation and providing a context of opportunities for and obstacles to the agency of initiation.

In Ricoeur's analysis, every action is both purposive and related to other actions, unfolding in a context of meaningfulness. It is responsive to past action and anticipates that there will be future responses to it. As a task, action is always oriented toward the future, and as a motivation, it inherently carries the past.<sup>127</sup> Ricoeur calls for causality in initiating and sustaining something new in the world that can be manifested in conjunction with other causal processes as the temporal character of experience is implicit in action.<sup>128</sup> Through this analysis, artistic practice is understood as a professional capacity and obligation to act responsibly, contextualised in meaningfulness with a desire to act.

In this regard, Bruno Latour (2013) proposes a new stance for scientific institution for the work of, in his terms, redescription to open up more space to other values that did not suffice within the framework of modernity.<sup>129</sup> According to him, as noted in the following the scientific community is forced to reconsider its epistemic values. All of which is now heavily influenced by the new knowledge technologies. This very redescription that Latour calls for in science is our current task at hand, but in relation to art.

So, for Latour, scientific knowledge is not a cognitive process but as an epistemic, cultural practice it is enabled by a variety of instruments, schemes and specific historic conditions.<sup>130</sup> In addition, as he claims in *In Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (1986), the human condition is most prevailing in any scientific process. Epistemologically he underrates the logic and relevance of justification, while simultaneously emphasizing the relevance of context as well as the persuasive and political work behind the emergence of a prevailing scientific or technological fact.<sup>131</sup>

As encouraged by Latour, I would like us to consider art epistemologically, as a meaning creating agency. And again, as encouraged by Latour, we should reconsider what the epistemic features and values of such agency are. I would instigate that this reconsideration is aimed at the results of our short overview of the philosophy of art. It brings forth a prevailing understanding of art through its objecthood. In order to reconsider this orientation towards a work of art, or the work of an artist, as suggested by Latour and Dewey, we need to understand art not only as a process, practice, or inquiry but as we aim to define here, as a meaning creating agency.

Accordingly, agreeing with Latour, we can consider the relevance of context, or the frame of reference as we will negotiate with Wittgenstein later in Chapter 4. Proceeding from this notion of context, I would concur, that justification has minor relevance in our negotiation. This idea I will also further develop in the Chapter 4 and so conclude, as encouraged by Latour, that the human condition, based on acknowledgment as knowledge, will define our epistemic negotiation.

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<sup>127</sup> Ricoeur 1984, p. 59–64.

<sup>128</sup> Ricoeur 1984, p. 102, 109–112.

<sup>129</sup> Latour 2013.

<sup>130</sup> Kofman 2018.

<sup>131</sup> Latour 1986.

As for Latour, network designates a series of associations, a certain continuity of action through intermediaries.<sup>132</sup> Compatibly, every course of action can be comprehended as a network. It is here we can understand Foucault's outline that

power is everywhere not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere.<sup>133</sup>

Power is not a possession of a dominant agent, nor located in an agent's relations to those in domination, but power is instead distributed throughout complex social networks. For Foucault power is something that circulates and is produced from one moment to the next.<sup>134</sup>

In questioning the institution of science, Latour concedes to the ongoing scientific struggles of reasoning climate crisis and its challenges by defining the interdependence of network and domain—the ones of science, law, religion and economy—through the inadequacy of the one entailing the inadequacy of the other.<sup>135</sup> Thus, he defines a new type of understanding, where comparisons are made by characterizing as precisely as possible the discontinuities, through which the continuities are obtained.

The potential with this conceptualization of art is the depth to its capabilities that enable the epistemic inquiry to succeed through its various forms as an individual participatory process, where Ricoeuran capable human being is defined and Latourian continuity of actions activated in invented spaces, as proposed by Lefebvre and as discussed in later detail. This created continuum of intellectual production is in the core of the sustainability agenda. Responsibility is called for in regard to any meaning creating agencies during the era of global crises. Ricoeur suggests that this capability entails all of humanity, something that I aim to negotiate within the context of the sustainability agenda.

### 2.3 Thought of the World – A Meaning Creating Agency

Wenn die Philosophie ihr Grau in Grau malt, dann ist eine Gestalt des Lebens alt geworden, und mit Grau in Grau lässt sie sich nicht verjüngen, sondern nur erkennen; die Eule der Minerva beginnt erst mit der einbrechenden Dämmerung ihren Flug.<sup>136</sup>

With a metaphor of the owl of Minerva, Hegel builds the history of humanity through the triad of subjective, objective, and absolute *Geist*. The human agency is self-conscious, metaphysically social and founded on the shared definition on freedom and equality. These notions for Hegel are to be found in the democratic polis of Ancient Greece, in the early modern Europe, in the post-revolution

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<sup>132</sup> Latour 2013.

<sup>133</sup> Foucault 1976, p. 93.

<sup>134</sup> Foucault 1976, p. 93.

<sup>135</sup> Latour 2013, 2017.

<sup>136</sup> Hegel 1820 (1972) p. 14

worldview but only to acknowledge that this agency – or its idea – is our own construction. The demand of realizing the human agency is thus set upon us by ourselves. In this task, however for Hegel, philosophy plays a weak role. By noting this retroactive proceeding, he formulates the continuum of the sustainability agenda at hand. Reality has a formative role that proceeds the processes of philosophy, the thought of the world. It is only reality that shapes an ideal into an intellectual kingdom. Freedom and equality remain non-negotiable but actualizing these negotiations remain unsettled.<sup>137</sup>

The owl of Minerva is landing on the Anthropocene where the drastic human influence has created novel ecosystems, lacking natural analogs and capitalizing all of planet's resources, while creating complex technosystems that have restructured all our being.<sup>138</sup> Latour claims that the fundamental relations and tensions between art, science and politics of the Anthropocene have not developed since the modernity. This reconstruction has brought forth global crises, that of climate and digitalization. All forms of intellectual production are currently affected by this escalating process where the knowledge technologies have transformed the way in which any knowledge produced is handled, analyzed and interpreted on an unprecedented scale. Intellectual sustainability gains relevance within the prevailing knowledge technologies, where volume, variety and velocity of Big Data<sup>139</sup> have profoundly transformed the processes of any knowledge produced but also, and as noted, what is considered, defined and shared as knowledge.<sup>140</sup>

The Hegelian thought of the world is thus set within a new context, created by the human intellectual agency, where an apparent shift in paradigm has become imperative. For Thomas S. Kuhn (1962, 1996) this prevalent proposal for the sustainability agenda is to attain new principles and definitions.<sup>141</sup> Kuhn's theorization is characteristic of the natural sciences operating within the context of a paradigm, where a disciplinary matrix consisting of laws, beliefs and values

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<sup>137</sup> Hegel 1817.

<sup>138</sup> The ecological niche of the anthropocene contains entirely novel ecosystems that include technosols, technodiversity, anthromes, and the technosphere. The total human ecosystem (anthrome) describes the relationship of the industrial technosphere to the ecosphere. (Edwards 2015) As an ecosystem, the novel ecosystem (Hobbs et al 2013) merges abiotic, biotic, and social components, including their interactions. They differ due to virtue of human influence from those that prevailed historically, tending to demonstrate novel qualities without intensive human management.

<sup>139</sup> Big data means the ways to systematically analyze, structure and extract information from data sets that are too large or complex to be dealt with by traditional data-processing application software. Breur 2016 p. 61–65.

<sup>140</sup> Keeping in mind Heidegger's criticism towards the limitations of epistemology I am aware of the perspectives of Kant and Kuhn, to name a few. In the aims of defining intellectual sustainability, I am considering how Heidegger states not being concerned to the future of philosophical thinking but to thinking itself.

<sup>141</sup> Paradigm implies the production of knowledge in scientific context, where researchers articulate several facets of a paradigm within their abilities, solving intellectual puzzles created by this paradigm, in accordance to theoretical-methodological instruments equating with it. (Kuhn 1977.)



combined with shared research initiative lay epistemological-methodological foundations for creating meaning.<sup>142</sup> Considering this within the anthropocentric context of Hegelian intellectual kingdom, a constitutive understanding of intellectual production is to here be defined for the sustainability agenda.

In philosophy of science knowledge production is considered entailing values, constitutive or contextual. In Kuhnian and Weberian terms

the rules of logic and method that are presupposed as valid in all scientific work<sup>143</sup>

the contextual and cultural values defining knowledge production, and the scientific virtue, do not suffice aiming at the required change.<sup>144, 145</sup> Without discussing the historical development of knowledge in detail, let us agree that the concept has evolved over time; from trusting on Cartesian rationalism in early modern days, by virtue of the empiricism of Locke, Hume and others, to a form of critical rationalism along the lines of Kant and that of Popper.

Heidegger argues that technology turns the world into a standing-reserve. Interestingly this definition finds parallels in Big Data. As for Heidegger, technology transforms the natural world into potentially usable raw materials. In contesting technology with science, as the current technological revolution subjects, Heidegger argues that science and machine technology are mutually dependent upon one another.<sup>146</sup>

When considering the prevailing dichotomy – that of human and artificial intelligences – of intellectual production, of the Hegelian thought of the world, I will further analyze the notion of intellectual sustainability within the human context of knowledge characterized in the parallels of syntax and semantics.

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<sup>142</sup> Kuhn 1962, 1996, p. 181-184, 187.

<sup>143</sup> Weber 1904, p. 143.

<sup>144</sup> Kuhn 1970, 1977; Weber 1948, p. 143.

<sup>145</sup> A multitude of similar distinctions is made between, and for example, science, non-science, unscience or pseudoscience; scientific and extra-scientific values, cognitive and non-cognitive values or between methodological and contextual values (e.g., Lacey 2005; Popper 1976; Douglas 2009). For Weber distinguishes values from facts. He connects the former to 'what ought to be done' and the latter to 'what is'. When he addresses the issue of value-freedom, Weber simply relates facts to observation and empirical investigation. Epistemic values are relevant to an epistemological ideal of arriving at true statements and entail the methods, rules and virtues that lead to well-tested theories or convincing interpretations. Contextual values concern ethical, cultural and political values. Thomas Kuhn (1970, 1977) even claims that epistemic values define the shared commitments of science, that is, the standards of theory assessment that characterize the scientific approach as a whole. Kuhn considers virtues such as simplicity, consistency and scope entailing epistemic values. Constitutive values may entail contextual values, as the human context of knowledge cannot be separated from the meaning creation.

<sup>146</sup> Heidegger 1977.

### 2.3.1 A Continuum of Truth

In *The Origin of the Work of Art* (*Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* 1950, 1978) Martin Heidegger explains the essence of art through the concepts of being and truth. As, for Heidegger truth can happen as and in art.<sup>147</sup> The essence of truth reveals itself as freedom (*On the Essence of Truth*, Heidegger 1943, 1950). Originating from Aristotelian *Aletheia*, Heidegger considers art not only as a way of expressing the element of truth in a culture, but the means of creating truth, and thus freedom. Truth relies on a double concealment, an unconcealment of truth (*Unverborgenheit*), where its process conceals that which surrounds the clearing and that which is. In this clearing process of refusing and dissembling truth must always be tied to untruth in its clearing.<sup>148</sup>

In *Aesthetics* (1835/1975) Hegel defines poetry as a universal artform binding all artforms together and so portrays an artistic characteristic common to them all. Something that

runs through [all other art-forms] and develops itself independently in each of them.<sup>149</sup>

As noted, by agreeing with Arthur Danto, we agree that art should be considered as a philosophy, as art and not as aesthetics and art history of artworks. This philosophy has been merely defined through phenomenological means<sup>150</sup> as a practice of perception. I do consider encountering a work of art as a content defining moment, but will however, keep on considering art as a knowledge producing epistemic agency.

So, for Heidegger, works of art are not only representations of the prevailing conditions of existence but provide a foundation for the clearing and there produce shared understanding.<sup>151</sup> This I consider to be focal part of the meaning creating agency. To explicate the interrelation between artist and the work of art, Heidegger turns to an examination of the essence of art itself, which is not the same as the work of art. As the work of art is a piece of art as a whole, its nature must reveal something about the nature of art as a whole.<sup>152</sup> Each time an artwork is created and added to a culture—or in contemporary terms to a context—the meaning of what it is to exist is inherently changed.

Keeping with Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1975, 1976) aesthetic theory is both deconstructive and constructive. With his phenomenological approach Gadamer claims that art as an object is representational and thus becomes a mere appearance of something else, with a specific meaning. Artwork is an actual occasion of giving appearance to that meaning and with this temporality it will never reveal itself completely. Gadamer claims that artwork's appearance is always contemporary: it implies to something beyond itself

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<sup>147</sup> Heidegger 1978, p. 178.

<sup>148</sup> Heidegger 1978, p. 33.

<sup>149</sup> Hegel 1975, p. 89.

<sup>150</sup> See Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Deleuze.

<sup>151</sup> Heidegger 2008, p. 143.

<sup>152</sup> Jaeger 1958.

through an encounter and an experience and even more so, through a participation in the definition of its appearance, something that according to him remains to be revealed. Gadamer considers the essence of the truth of the artwork, not as a manifestation of meaning but rather the incomprehensible depth of its meaning, oscillating between its revelation and what is yet to be revealed.<sup>153</sup>

### 2.3.2 Syntax if and only if Semantics

The human aims at truth gain relevance within the context of knowledge technologies. In his essay *The Question Concerning Technology* (1977), Heidegger, considers technology and science to co-exist as equals. And as proposed, Heidegger starts his analysis by defining the essence of things as revealing. He thus proposes to build a free relationship to technology which requires an opening of the human existence to the essence of technology. Let us start by considering the essence of technology and then how this relationship can be free.

For Heidegger, technology is not technological. Technology is not something we make. The essence of technology is a way of revealing. Technology has an instrumental and anthropological definition as it is both a means and human activity.<sup>154</sup> Founding on Aristotle, Heidegger outlines that the instrumentality is the fundamental characteristics of technology and is to be traced on the four causes of technology *materialis, formalis, finalis* and *efficiens*.<sup>155</sup> The four causes simultaneously differ and belong and define a responsibility. When these four causes give appearance to something, it is called bringing-forth. This bringing-forth comes from the Greek *poiēsis*.

Continuing on Plato, Heidegger defines this revealing as *aletheia*, as truth. This he finds on Plato's definitions of *technē* and *epistēmē* as they both denote knowing in the widest sense. Whereas all that is technological cannot arrive to the essence of technology, the truth has everything to do with the essence because technology is a means of revealing the truth.<sup>156</sup> He draws this further with Aristotle's *technē*

Technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence [...] in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where *aletheia*, truth, happens.<sup>157</sup>

Thus,

The possibility of all productive manufacturing lies in revealing.<sup>158</sup>

Technology is the means and the location in which we reveal, in which we aim at truth. Technology is for us to employ in the process of revealing.

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<sup>153</sup> Gadamer 1976, p. 226.

<sup>154</sup> Heidegger 1977, p. 4-7.

<sup>155</sup> Heidegger 1977, p. 9-13.

<sup>156</sup> Heidegger 1977, p. 48.

<sup>157</sup> Heidegger 1977, p. 13.

<sup>158</sup> Heidegger 1977, p.12

As discussed earlier, Ricouer finds responsibility in causality where art gains its all-encompassing potential. The principal characteristics of being responsible for Heidegger is to start something on its way to arrival and inducing to go forward (*Ver-an-lassen*). Heidegger quotes Plato in defining the bringing-forth (*Her-vor-bringen*) in its entity, beyond manufacturing and artistry, gaining its physicality in revealing. For Plato, techniques were singled out as epistemological model par excellence. Each science and each technique are always for some specific objects and not for others. Technology that has not delimited the field by its object is not a technology at all.

The dichotomy of syntax and semantics is thus to be found in this process of revealing as Heidegger states that modern technology differs from *poiēsis*. As noted earlier, for Heidegger, in the process of revealing, art as *technē* belongs within the realm of *poiēsis*. This is due to modern technology's foundational relationship to modern physics as an exact science. The revealing of modern technology, therefore, is not bringing-forth, but rather challenging-forth. As I consider it, therefore, syntax is this challenging-forth and semantics bringing-forth. Let us develop this idea further with Heidegger's notion of *Gestell - Enframing*.<sup>159</sup>

For Heidegger, *Enframing* lays beneath modern technology. It gathers into the revealing that challenges-forth

to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve. Enframing means that way of revealing which holds sway in the essence of modern technology and which is itself nothing technological.<sup>160</sup>

It is thus revealing, the truth, that has developed and keeps developing technology further.

*Enframing*, however, entails a threat to technology. It is here Heidegger returns to *poiēsis*. Heidegger reminds us that the notion of *technē* used to entail, in Plato and Aristotle, the bringing-forth of the true into art. Baring a single, manifold revealing granted the arts a superiority. The arts were not enjoyed aesthetically nor a part of the cultural sphere. Art belonged within *poiēsis* as the poetical pervades every revealing of coming to presence. It pervades truth. As Heidegger repeatedly reminds us, technology calls for a realm that is both akin and fundamentally different from it. This realm, for Heidegger, is art as long as it is open to the revealing, to truth.<sup>161</sup>

Let us return to the gate of intellect, Rodin provided us with, and consider it as the *poiēsis*. Heidegger departed from the classical theories of art and aesthetic by considering the essence of art in relation to being and truth. So, Heidegger outlines artist and the artwork as interrelated, both deriving from art. As noted, Rodin contended with the idea of an artist as a meaning creating agent, debating philosophically about the nature of art and its conditions to exist. In the case of

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<sup>159</sup> Heidegger 1977, p. 19-21.

<sup>160</sup> Heidegger 1977, p. 25-28.

<sup>161</sup> Heidegger 1977, p. 33-35.

Rodin's intellectual, open process of elaborating, as Lyotard suggests, what art is, he does concur with Heidegger. The source of the artwork and the artist is art. Art is the source of knowledge. It is here the artist exposes the truth-of-all-being and enables new worlds beyond existing realms. It is here *poiēsis* becomes the original site of Being's declaration. As we continue being encouraged by Lyotard, we can consider the metaphysical aspect of art insufficient in our epistemic efforts. It is thus here I consider the meaning creating agency merging. This then awaits contextualization, that is an understanding of the potential of art's features as an epistemic entity. Let us continue negotiating this.

Acknowledging art as philosophy, as a meaning creating agency aiming at truth, we can agree with Heidegger that art is the source for both the artist and the artwork. As such, art is this negotiated agency that cannot be attained artificially or digitally, but remains to be elevated, refined and sustained between and among individuals. Here, as discussed later, the curatorial *épistémè* emerges and it so constitutes as curatorial knowledge.

Dewey claims that artistic practices involve active actions of amendment of those prevailing conditions constituting the experimental method when they are employed for producing knowledge, instead of being repressed to a scheme of uses and recreation defined by given socio-cultural conditions.<sup>162</sup> Lyotard considers art to presenting questions of our relationship to time and space. As

New and different things are at stake today, even though they're not totally new, and we have to try to understand the things that are being offered to us.<sup>163</sup>

Benjamin agrees to this with his ideal of intellectual production. This potential, employed by the Ricoeurian capable human, defines the distinction between syntax and semantics. As we consider *technē* and *poiēsis* as the artificial and human intelligences and as we agree the consideration of art to be insufficient as metaphysics, I will proceed to negotiate the meaning creation in art contextualized in the sustainability debate.

## **2.4 The Principles of Sustainability and the Meaning Creating Agency in Arts**

The prevailing climate crisis is not a single massive event but rather a combination of international challenges and problems that entail identification and recognition in order to be able to reach for needed solutions and expertise. What makes climate crisis so debated is something Morton (2013) calls a hyperobject – that is a conceptual fact so large and complex that it can never be properly comprehended.

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<sup>162</sup> Dewey 1938, p. 59.

<sup>163</sup> Lyotard & Blistène 1985, p. 32–39.

Entailing a system perspective to the world, a perspective connecting spatial and temporal dimensions, the definition of sustainability is ever evolving. As the concept of sustainability is framed in the introductory Chapter to prepare for our consideration, I will not open the foundational conceptualizations any further here. Let us just remind ourselves with the original Brundtland Report definition (UN WCED 1987)

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

As any concept, also the definition of sustainability is only an agreed principle loaded with ethical valuation. It does not provide any explanations what sustainability requires in practice nor what actions should be taken.<sup>164</sup>

The prevailing sustainability debate includes theoretical, conceptual, and methodological proposals aiming at informed, analytical and practical development of the sustainability agenda. As noted, the ongoing sustainability debate negotiates sustainability instead of sustainable development. I will do accordingly, while acknowledging that the concepts are politically charged and carry various connotations.

As multitude of the sustainability debaters suggest, the tools of cost-benefit analysis and environmental impact assessment rank projects according to economic criteria or assess the degree of impact on scarce environmental resources. These tools have not, however, referred clearly to the societal and political context in which these techniques were supposed to work. Therefore, the described challenge of integrating the more traditional concerns of sustainable development—such as biodiversity, climate crisis and dilemmas between economic growth and nature conservation—with social and cultural issues—such as equity, cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and value systems—is ever leading to further demands for extending the principles of sustainability.<sup>165</sup>

In the efforts to tackle the complexities of this prevailing hyperobject the United Nations (UN) Conference on Sustainable Development formulated Sustainable Development Goals in 2012 that were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. This 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development entails 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that recognize the afore mentioned complexities where ending poverty is intertwined with strategies that build economic growth and

address a range of social needs including education, health, equality and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and working to preserve our ocean and forests.<sup>166</sup>

However, as Duxbury, Kangas & De Beukelaer (2017) note the role of culture remains limited within the 17 SDGs. They argue that culture's absence is

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<sup>164</sup> Ciegis, 2004, 2009; Ramanauskiene, Martinkus, 2009

<sup>165</sup> Feuillette & al 2016; Schröter & al 2014; Hull 2011; Wegner & Pasqual 2011

<sup>166</sup> UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

historically rooted in sustainable development and cultural policy debates where advocacy, policy and academia neglect all-encompassing eco-cultural perspectives on the roles of cultural policy. In Latourian terms this encompasses the interdependence through the inadequacy of the one entailing the inadequacy of the other. The importance of combining and entangling different epistemological traditions in the context of sustainability has already been recognized and mapped.<sup>167</sup>

Agreeing with these representations that are used as structuring principles for exploring the complexity of the culture-sustainability interface<sup>168</sup>, I consider sustainability as an ever-evolving cultural continuum in which future opportunities are subordinate to sustainability's ecological, social and economic constituents. Here the Latourian discontinuities are relevant part of the cultural sustainability where each act of intellectual production is a contribution to this continuum. Sustainability can be met only after recognizing the discontinuities, through which the continuities are obtained. As the pressure of reforming sustainability agenda's principles is both well-argued for and justified, I aim to reinforce this discussion by bringing focus to intellectual production.

While this interest towards the necessity of sustainability is ever increasing, it is of essence to note that regarding sustainability mainly from an environmental perspective may exclude the structural, historical and social perspectives of climate crisis, which are of great relevance in the attempts to approach individual and collective responsibilities regarding the matter. As Duxbury, Kangas & De Beukelaer (2017) define culture's ever-increasing potential in the processes of sustainability, they outline four roles for this agency.<sup>169</sup> Cultural policy can firstly safeguard and sustain cultural practices and rights; secondly, green some of the operations and impacts of cultural organizations; thirdly, raise awareness and accelerate initiatives about sustainability and climate change; and finally, encourage eco-cultural citizenship. Here sustainability can be met by forging and guiding actions along these co-existing and overlapping strategic paths. This outlining gain relevance in the ongoing consideration as we can find parallels to the meaning creating agencies of art, as presented in the following.

### **2.4.1 On Art and Sustainability**

So, the concepts, representations and frameworks evolved to situate culture in sustainability contexts have demonstrated multi- and transdisciplinarity, substantial flexibility, and a widening plurality of approaches.<sup>170</sup> There has accordingly been an abundance of art practices associated with the sustainability agenda. As widely regarded, art's sustainable references are twofold. On the one hand, the term sustainable art refers to artistic practices relating, discussing,

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<sup>167</sup> Hirsch Hadorn, Bradley, Pohl, Rist & Wiesmann 2006.

<sup>168</sup> Hirsch Hadorn, Bradley, Pohl, Rist & Wiesmann 2006, p. 4.

<sup>169</sup> Duxbury, Kangas & De Beukelaer 2017, p. 214-215.

<sup>170</sup> Kangas et al 2017, p. 130.

employing and developing environmental issues and using ecological elements, contexts and tools as their focal setting. On the other, art's sustainable potential refers to its own capability to bring awareness and new perspectives to essential and critical cultural, social, ecological and economical—whether individual or shared—issues and so sustainable art is the actual impact art has to the issues of sustainability. In order to develop this duality further, I would like to reconsider it within the framework of the four roles of cultural policy in sustainability, where the Latourian continuities play a central role.

As Campolmi (2013) suggests, within the institutional context, the development of alternative practices for the creation of narratives may open to novel scenarios and there – instead of a heterotopy position – it will act as *archètopy*; i.e., a place (*tòpos*) for individual and collective cultivation where the creation of meanings and narratives has involved practitioners and beholders since the origin (*archè*) of the meaning creating processes.<sup>171</sup> This strategic work is not, however, a matter concerning only the institutions sustaining culture but also each individual practicing art, i.e. the meaning creating agency at large. Thus, whereas the artistic engagement with sustainability entails an understanding of ecological equality, I propose that a redefined sense of social responsibility drawing from comprehensive critiques of the global art world establishment and its structural systems lay its ground on the immaterial artistic practices providing for the sustainable agenda. This does not only regard confronting the ecological deficit and unethical corporate partnerships of large institutions but more importantly relates to the entire process of producing a work of art, from the initial conceptualization all the way to its mediated existence, where intellectual production ensues. It is exactly here the Ricoeurian capable human being acts purposefully in relation to other actions and by being responsive to past actions and anticipating the future ones. Art has the exact potential Ricoeur requests in simultaneously initiating and sustaining something new in the world.

In conjunction to this increasing awareness and interest of sustainability, the international contemporary art practitioners are taking on a role of producing, mediating, and contextualizing alternative strategies and discussing issues that are marginalized in conventional culture and politics. This interest can be seen originating in the period of artistic experimentation of the late 1960s and early 1970s, during the uprising of social and participatory movements in arts.<sup>172</sup> Interestingly, and importantly, this is also considered as the point when curatorial practice was first acknowledged as a central, independent profession within visual arts. According to the Fowkes' the dematerialization, neo-avantgarde and conceptual experiments of art during that period laid the foundation to the ideas of sustainability. These, I read, correspond to the ecological and social dimensions of the four-pillar-model of the sustainability agenda.

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<sup>171</sup> As introduced in Chapter 1.4.2. Campolmi 2013, p. 236.

<sup>172</sup> Fowkes' 2006.



While some artists combined their conceptual practices with an interest in environmental issues (i.e. the Land Art movement with its site-specific forms), some others developed a more indirect but relevant impact on thinking about sustainability and art by disagreeing with the production and accumulation of art objects, which is central in conceptual art and in the process-based practices, performances and interventions. This was also the core conceptualization and process with Harald Szeemann's accomplished curatorial work. Central in Szeemann's radical approach was to consider exhibitions conceiving as a linguistic medium. Szeemann radically opened the question of the art system and showed how curatorial practice can, and should, advance alternative strategies for producing and presenting work. This essential legacy of contemporary art should be consequently considered as a potential point of origin for, not only the issues of sustainability, but also the practices of sustainability engaging in social and political realities as well as ethics and value systems. This is the very crux of what can be read as the cultural constituent of the four-pillar-model. It is thus here I consider the meaning creating agency as an all-encompassing reciprocal process where the principles of intellectual sustainability can be negotiated. As proposed in the following, I ground this formulation on a Hegelian continuum and a Heideggerian truth.

#### 2.4.2 Intellectual Sustainability

I locate intellectual sustainability within the human context of knowledge, within this Heideggerian continuum of revealing where syntax and semantics are differing. As for the meaning creating agency, Heidegger defines art as poetry. As noted, art belonged within *poiēsis* as the poetical pervades every revealing of coming to presence. It pervades art. It pervades truth. This happens in poetry through the form of Being in language. Being in language calls for a total clarification of human existence through the revealing of inherent meaning. That meaning poetry allows. Central in this consideration is the acknowledgment of human faculty of language as innate.<sup>173, 174</sup>

For Heidegger true thinking is human's most essential manner of being human.<sup>175</sup> It is never performed in abstraction from reality but manifests the relation between human and Being. In true thinking human is used by Being. Thinking is the ultimate utility for Being to manifest itself on whatever is. Being

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<sup>173</sup> Descartes 1637 (2006); Chomsky 1975 (1988); Putnam 1971.

<sup>174</sup> All thinking leads through language. Language first emerged as a philosophical topic in Ancient Greece when Plato initiated the question of how things in the universe came by their names. With the subsequent development of Aristotelian nominalism, objects came to be understood and named according to a commonality of forms. Both Plato and Aristotle focused on language as it provided man with ability to communicate and designate things both in themselves and as they were perceived. However, it was Aristotle's phenomenology that would serve to inspire Heidegger's study of Being and language's role in its origination and perpetuation.

<sup>175</sup> It is customary to call the subject in Heidegger's consideration as man, I prefer a gender-neutral subject of human.

is the human existence, the semantics of poetry that the syntax of knowledge technologies can never attain.

Considering that the prevailing and on-going sustainability debate lacks process and method defining strategies in the aims at sustainable communities, lives and futures, I want to define intellectual sustainability through this negotiated meaning creating agency, where the tensions created by the escalating empowerment of technological intelligences should be considered reciprocal for the human intelligences. Instead of focusing on concerns created by this tension, I do believe in the potential of the Heideggerian bringing forth. *Poiēsis* remains as the human potential of Being. *Poiēsis* employs *technē*, and thus syntax is subordinate to semantics in the process of intellectual sustainability. Yet again, they co-exist. Intellectual sustainability thus entails human and artificial intelligences that necessitate a balance in their means and results as a continuum of cultural contributions, the Latourian discontinuities that are responsibly conducted by the Ricoeurian capable human being.

These analyzed processes of human and artificial intelligences, within the continuum of intellectual production form the entity of Intellectual Sustainability as I propose in the Figure 1. In the continuum of intellectual productions, this proposal is founded a reciprocity between human and artificial intelligences as defined by Heidegger's conceptualization of *technē* and *poiēsis*.

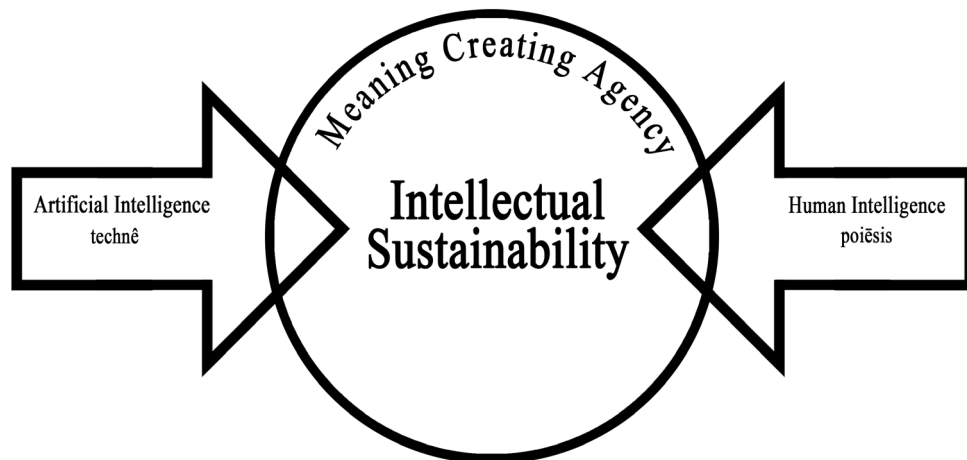


FIGURE 2. *Intellectual Sustainability*

As noted, prevailing concerns of future epistemologies are related to the hierarchies between human and artificial intelligence. As for Foucault, power is based on knowledge and employs knowledge, while simultaneously reproducing knowledge by forming it and recreating its own fields of practice through this process.<sup>176</sup> Considering that he understood power/knowledge as both productive as well as constraining. As Dewey (1938) states, we can gain freedom from this socio-cultural constrain through art. I claim that

<sup>176</sup> Foucault 2008.

understanding and facilitating for this freedom potential is in the core of the meaning creating agency. In order this potential to be fully activated, the acts of curating must take an enabling position.

Heidegger presents art as means to navigate this maze, because the artist – or the poet – views the world as it is and as it reveals itself. I consider this navigation as the main aim for Auguste Rodin's *La Porte de l'Enfer*. His way of navigating in the world, making sense of the world and creating meaning of the world always returned to his foundational process of the Gate. It is therefore here the knowledge technologies, i.e. *technē*, lay a facilitating role for the *poiēsis*, poetry and art, the Hegelian human agency and the meaning creating agency, to reveal to become truth. *Technē* facilitates truth. This continuum of the meaning creating agencies lead in its reciprocity to intellectual sustainability. Intellectual sustainability is, therefore, a shared awareness, created in the meaningful continuum of any human intellectual effort, whether successful or failed, where immediate effects become secondary to the entity of meaning creating agency.

## 2.5 Conclusions

I define intellectual sustainability through negotiating Heidegger's way of finding balance between *technē*, artificial intelligence and *poiēsis* human intelligence.

We started the negotiation of the intellectual sustainability by acknowledging the escalation of merger of the digital environments with our physical realities, and we so agreed to negotiate the conditions of future epistemic practices. Here the ongoing sustainability debate was noted to be an integral a part of the intellectual agency.

Considering the features of artificial and human intelligences, I involved sustainability in this ongoing epistemic consideration. I outlined a difference in artificial and human knowledges based on a simple syntax and semantics division. Here I formulated intellect as the agency possessing contextualized knowledge, i.e. the meaning creating agency in arts that in our frame of research is defined as the curatorial *épistémè*. Notable in our formulation of intellectual sustainability was to agree on intellect as an active, shared agency that cannot be attained artificially or digitally, but remains to be elevated, refined and sustained between and among individuals.

I founded the dichotomy of syntax and semantics in the process of revealing something that Heidegger claims in art as *technē* belongs within the realm of *poiēsis*. This is due to modern technology's foundational relationship to modern physics as an exact science. I consider therefore, syntax as challenging-forth and semantics as bringing-forth. Negotiating this further, I locate intellectual sustainability within the human context of knowledge, within this Heideggerian continuum of revealing where syntax and semantics are differing. As for the meaning creating agency, Heidegger defines art as poetry. As noted, art belonged within *poiēsis* as the poetical pervades every revealing of coming to presence. It

pervades art. It pervades truth. Agreeing with this, and with Lyotard, I repeatedly returned to an introduction to Auguste Rodin's *La Porte de l'Enfer* (The Gates of Hell, 1880-1917), as his eternal process contended with the idea of an artist as a meaning creating agent, debating philosophically about the nature of art and its conditions to exist.

With these aims, Chapter 2 initiated our consideration of the curatorial *épistémè* as a meaning creating agency that has a commitment to aim at intellectual sustainability.

### **3 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CURATORIAL PROFESSION: AN ANALYSIS OF CONTEXTUALIZING, CONTENT DEFINING EXHIBITION PRACTICES**

The preceding epistemological negotiation has led us to consider the development of the contextualizing exhibition practices through an analytical overview in its paralleling with the curatorial professionalization. Looking into the relevance of the imperial exhibition efforts, the modernist discipline and control of the white cube and concluding with the origin of art as a pluralist process in its immaterial forms the analysis considers how the emergence of the curatorial profession has created a new authoritative position defining context and content of an artwork in its temporal, immaterial and installation-based forms. My analysis aims at a synthesis of the establishment of the curatorial profession as one of the focal practices in defining contemporary art, its practices, content and accessibility. By composing a conceptual analysis, I consider how art is defined as an immaterialized notion requiring acts for engagement and gaining its existence through a curated encounter with its audience. Artwork becomes the shared ground for artistic practices, where the artist and the curator meet and prepare the artwork for this encounter.

Pierre Bourdieu (1993, 1996) argues that relationships, beliefs and social norms within the artistic practice have developed from a historical process of modernization and specialization. An important element in this process is the development of professional autonomy of an artist, founded on the modern idea that the appraisals made by specialists in any specific field differ from the perceptions of the population at large, even on the specific communities of interest in various social arenas, such as the economic, political or cultural fields.<sup>177</sup> Abbott (1988) considers shared knowledge prerequisite for a profession. Thus, here professionalization is defined as a process through which professionals develop and adopt strategies for converting their knowledge and

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<sup>177</sup> Bourdieu 1993, 1996.

qualifications into symbolic, social and economic advantages and dividends.<sup>178</sup> For this a set of interconnected institutions is needed for providing the economic support and social organization that sustaining the practice.<sup>179</sup>

For Foucault culture is a hierarchical organization with accessible values, while maintaining systems of selection and exclusion.<sup>180</sup> Arts are a contested field, where the values of influence and status are to be asserted as well as economic and social resources improved. Considered through Bourdieu (1996) art professionals protect their specific interests and continuously struggle for influence and power. As noted, the value validating power is in the core of the curatorial practice.

In the following, I will analyze the developing relationship between artist, artwork and curating through an overview of contextualizing exhibition practices. Central here is to define the professionalization of curatorial practice and its authoritative effects on the content, concept and actual definition of visual arts, where artwork opens a meeting point for the artist and the curator and there prepares for an encounter with its audiences. I, thus, proposes a stance, wherein art is considered to gain its existence through this encounter.

Richard Wagner instituted a foundation for modernist art discourse with his seminal essay *The Art-work of the Future* (1849–50), which he wrote shortly after the failure of the 1848 revolution, discussing the political aims of the uprising through aesthetic means. Wagner criticized artistic practice for being isolated from real life and aimed only at the rich. He outlined the features of the artwork of the future, in contrast to luxury entertainment, as a need for the

passing over of Egoism into Communism.<sup>181</sup>

In order to achieve this, all artists were to overcome the divisions between artistic genres, abstain from their inclinations and express the artistic desire (*Kunstwollen*) of the people. For Wagner, this *Gesamtkunstwerk* was primarily a social project gathering all art forms opening them for the

absolute portrayal of perfected human nature

to

conceive it as the instinctive and associate product of the Manhood of the Future<sup>182</sup>

that would derive from the realization of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a dramatic synthesis merging every participant in it. The establishment of communal artistic practice, however, would still take place on stage. Wagner, in fact, spelled the term *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The term is used to describe a seamless merging of a

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<sup>178</sup> Abbott, 1988; Scott, 2008.

<sup>179</sup> Freidson 2001.

<sup>180</sup> Foucault 2001, p. 173.

<sup>181</sup> Wagner 1849/1850/1993, p. 78

<sup>182</sup> Wagner 1993, p.88.

variety of art forms, and the aim of its practice is to conceive a totality. This Wagnerian aesthetic ideal still understood the viewer and the audience as a mass lacking critical thought. In the early 15th century, interest in humanism and individuality arose. After the turning away from religion and God as world defining forces, science, philosophy, architecture and arts gained secular importance. Artists celebrated their creativity by signing works of art. Through this process, art also changed its subject matter and perspective towards individuals and everyday life. Accordingly, through this progress, art gained new forms and sites for display.

Theoretical elaboration and historical development of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the total work of art, proliferated in modernist discourse in the disciplines of arts and architecture. Yet, as a model of artistic interrelation, the *Gesamtkunstwerk* both supports and inverts modernist principles as they have been traditionally understood. As Juliet Koss notes in *Modernism After Wagner* (2008), the effort to unite the different art forms was asserted on their individual refinement and purification, each dependent on the others' proximity; the *Gesamtkunstwerk* would thus simultaneously support and destroy the autonomy of the individual arts.<sup>183</sup>

Many radical, avant-garde movements in the early 20th century followed the path designed by Wagner. The Italian Futurists and the Zurich Dadaists pursued the dissolution of artistic individuality, authority and authorship. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti encouraged the public with his "*Futurist Manifesto*," published in *Le Figaro* on February 20, 1909. Celebrating technical progress, the energy of the masses and the aggressiveness of modern cities as well as glorifying youth, noise and violence, it echoed the idealism of the future and was based on unconditional faith in mankind's prospects. Whereas the fascist nature of Marinetti's declaration was ahead of his time in creating a new synthesis between politics and art – strategies of conquering public spaces by means of provocation and collective experiences<sup>184</sup> – the Dadaists rejected the prevailing principles in art through an anti-war and anti-bourgeois approach by affiliating with the radical left. The Dadaist practices involved visual arts, literature and theory and were highly communal in public gatherings and demonstrations.

According to the tradition of modern art, an image speaks for itself, convincing the viewer by relying on its own value. The conditions for exhibiting the work of art were to be reduced to white walls and good lighting in order to avoid any distraction from the artwork itself. The viewer was advised to completely abstract her/himself from the work's spatial surroundings and to be fully immersed in world-denying contemplation. This modernist definition of artwork's essence obstructs the visibility of the concrete artwork as it cannot present itself by virtue of its own definition and force the viewer into contemplation. Thus, the work of art needs an exhibition and the process of curating to become visible.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Wagner 1849; Koss 2008.

<sup>184</sup> Groys 2008, p. 25.

<sup>185</sup> Pevsner 1936; Greenberg 1961; O'Doherty 1976; Groys 2008, p. 44.

Taking into consideration the necessity of exhibition practices for visual arts and the structures around it, I outline curatorial professionalization by analyzing its emergence parallel to contemporary art and art's content defining efforts. I compose this overview by focusing on a few fundamental phases and cases, especially the space and mediation defining the artwork, wherein the curator plays the central role. Thus, in order to examine how contextualizing exhibition practices and curatorial professionalization are tightly intertwined with the development of contemporary art, it is necessary to create a conceptual overview of the history of this contextualization.

In relation to the effects of sociological analyses on professionalization processes, the I do acknowledge the relevance of the professionalization of architecture, where organizing the process of creating intentional form became an authoritative practice requiring specialization. Accordingly, as we will discuss, defining a professional practice as a statement pro et contra modernity is focal for the curatorial and architectural professions.<sup>186,187</sup> I start by discussing how colonial efforts founded the status of art and how the growth of biennials has paralleled the growth of installation art. From here, the I continue through the break from the global white cube effect to the Post-Fordist immaterialization tendency in curating. From this analysis, the I continue to create a synthesis of how these developments have established a foundation where the emergence and establishment of the curatorial profession has become one of the focal practices in defining contemporary art, its practices, content and accessibility.

### **3.1 Pre-global Exhibitions: Crystal Palace – Imperial Efforts that Made Art History**

The Crystal Palace in London, at which The Great Exhibition of the Arts and Manufacturers of All Nations took place in 1851, was the most radically translucent 19th century construction providing a spectacular model for international expositions. These exhibitions were national rivalries, modernity's most unsurpassable artifacts: infinitely expandable, anonymous, transparent and abstract. The Crystal Palace was the first unconscious modernist effort to display manufactured objects as art offering universal assumptions and an international presentation of the ideology of modernity. It held the world in a single room, in which objects were catalysts for fraternal intercourse; people were forced to make conversational sense of a heap of things. Thus, the Crystal Palace became a grounding system for modern museology and art historicism.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Brain 1991; Guillen 1997; Weintraub & Kumar 1997; Shvartzberg 2012.

<sup>187</sup> As any professionalization process, curating has a vast number of master's degree programs aiming to educate curators to act professionally, internationally and independently. While this development has marked a discursive turn in the content of the profession, it has not resulted in the hoped for effects of creating a strong, unified field of practice.

<sup>188</sup> Preziosi 2006, p. 33.



The Crystal Palace finds its reflection, its future and its spatial dilation in today's global art shows, mirroring 19th century imperialism. Already introducing a spatial discourse on the global in its prehistory and in its textual formulations as universal, the Crystal Palace expositions presented nothing less than the modern city, the spectacular space that materializes the power to command global constructions.<sup>189</sup> Thus, Roces (2005) suggests that the international art exhibitions of the last century performed the same imperative.<sup>190</sup> City-centric hauteur was evident in the mid-19th century even though the political intent underpinning the expositions was typically articulated as national pride and imperial capacity to arrange a worldwide harmony, as the placard of the first Crystal Palace exposition proclaimed:

The Strengthening of the Bonds of Peace and Friendship Among All Nations of the Earth.<sup>191</sup>

However, as magniloquent capitalist celebrations, the expositions were for and about the metaphysical dimensions of the capital: the national and imperial realm and its control centers.

At the Crystal Palace the materials were displayed around the triumphalism of the city/realm. Whereas, the second universal exposition and the first international art exhibition in Paris in 1855 exhibited paintings and sculptures from 28 nations discussing the relationship between architecture, urban design, art, industry and money. Due to a lack of space, Napoleon III suggested a grid

with national sections along one axis and exhibition categories along the other.<sup>192</sup>

These plans were realized in 1867 in *Frédéric Le Play's* great oval exhibition hall at the *Champ de Mars*. According to Patricia Mainardi (1987), the decision to go with small works instead of large public installations and to hold retrospective exhibitions for major artists at the 1855 exposition emphasized individual self-referential development as a fundamental modernist tool for understanding art aside from its social and political contexts.<sup>193</sup>

The superlative achievement in Paris happened during three exhibitions from 1867–1889, when the Eiffel Tower was built. The world expositions in Vienna in 1873 and in Chicago in 1893 also marked the spirit of a new age, exemplifying the imperial dream as the

triumphs of hegemony as well as symbolic edifices.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Preziosi 2004, 2009.

<sup>190</sup> Roces 2005, p. 51–52.

<sup>191</sup> Tallis 1851; Strutt 2011.

<sup>192</sup> Tallis 1851, p. 23.

<sup>193</sup> Mainardi 1987, p. 131.

<sup>194</sup> Rydell 1984, p. 2.

These world expositions also maintained “white purity” by separating African and other colonial villages on display. Walter Benjamin defined the World Expos as

pilgrimage sites of fetishistic commodities where the exchange rate of the merchandise was romanticized and people were offered as phantasmagoria of diaspora.<sup>195</sup>

The simultaneous development of the Crystal Palace universal exposition in 1851, the *Grandes Expositions on the Champ de Mars* in 1855 and the *Prima Esposizione Internazionale d’Arte di Venezia* in 1895 all acted as an impetus for urban development and city patronage, and, as discussed in the following chapter, have had a crucial role in developing the art world establishment as a hierarchical, contested structure, where artwork is created by various professionals, practices and methodologies, and so define art in its global position.<sup>196</sup>

In the following, I will review the international visual art biennial’s inheritance from the big world exhibitions from the mid-19th century. The modernist exhibition space, the white cube, and its aesthetic and political implications universalized and neutralized art objects. Considering these aspects, I review how biennials as contextualizing and producing parties have had a fundamental impact on the continuous formulation of visual art and how curatorial professionalization has both been influenced by and contributed to this continuum.<sup>197</sup>

### 3.2 Biennialogy – Visual Arts and Globalized Settings

Founded in 1893, the *Esposizione Internazionale d’Arte di Venezia* was built as a repetitious, future-oriented, international event, where the main elements were internationalism, attraction by prizes and by the vision of a new art market. All these features were to distance the expositions from museum culture in order to instantiate renewing and unprecedented art, biannually.<sup>198</sup>

*Biennale d’Arte di Venezia* grew intensely international in the first decades of the 20th century; from 1907 on, several countries began installing national pavilions at the exhibition, and after World War I, La Biennale showed innovative traditions in modern art. The political changes had a drastic influence on the exhibitions and their content. In 1930, control of La Biennale passed from the city council to the national Fascist government. La Biennale proceeded in 1948, after a six-year break due to World War II, with a renewed focus to avant-garde movements in European art, followed by worldwide movements in contemporary art.<sup>199</sup> However, the protests of 1968 marked a crisis for La

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<sup>195</sup> Benjamin 1991, p. 50.

<sup>196</sup> Ferguson, Greenberg, & Nairne 2005, p. 50.

<sup>197</sup> as noted by Groys 2008, 2009; Lorente 2011; Filipovic 2010.

<sup>198</sup> Jones 2010, p. 73–74.

<sup>199</sup> Velthuis 2011.

Biennale; the Grand Prizes were abandoned, and more emphasis went to thematic instead of monographic exhibitions. These changes reflected both the global political changes as well as the development of visual art.

In 1980, Harald Szeemann and Achille Bonito Oliva rebuilt the Venice Biennale in a radical manner, constituting one of the most important shifts in the history of La Biennale by introducing Aperto, a new section created as a response to the rigidity of the Biennale structure and especially to the conservatism of the majority of the selectors. Aperto exhibited emerging artists without any restrictions regarding nationality, and there inaugurated changes on a structural and aesthetic level that enabled the independently curated exhibitions to take place in the Arsenale, once the world's largest pre-industrial production centre.<sup>200</sup> Occupying pre- and postindustrial spaces with emerging attributes of the postmodern revised the global biennial culture by deploying the art experience to aestheticize aging urban facilities. Investigating and understanding the significance of urban geographies and de-localizing sites have since gained relevance as a curatorial method.<sup>201</sup> Needless to say, site-specific exhibitions – originating from 1970s sculptural practices – became extremely widespread in the late 20th century as forms of exhibiting in and outside the biennial practices.

The Documenta exhibition series was founded in Kassel in 1955 to express a renewal of the humanist ideal through an exhibition of Western contemporary art to counter the propagandist *entartete kunst* exhibitions and national rivalries from the Nazi era. Documenta's exhibitions were predecessors of the new museums and galleries devoted exclusively to white, Western and predominately male contemporary art. Many inventive national museums followed this idealized notion to display contemporary art, including the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Moderna Museet in Stockholm and Kunsthallen, such as those in Bern and Basel. Like Documenta, many of the large-scale exhibitions had their origins in profound political and cultural transitions: the Qwangju Biennial (1995) in the democratization of South Korea; the Johannesburg Biennial (1995) in the end of apartheid; or the Manifesta European Biennial of Contemporary Art (1996) in the fall of the Berlin Wall. <sup>202</sup> Most biennials and large-scale international exhibitions were founded in reaction to nonexistent or emerging local art institutions inadequate to support experimental or conceptual contemporary cultural production. These continual exhibitions consider themselves as temporary, precise infrastructures that remain contemporary and keep their distance from museological missions of collecting and preserving art.<sup>203</sup> However, while the museums work to constitute, foster and sustain local and national perspectives within an international context, the biennials are not generally aimed at offering relevance to the cultural and social localities surrounding their physical locations. The evaluation process defining

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<sup>200</sup> Martino 2007.

<sup>201</sup> Jones 2009, p. 74–76.

<sup>202</sup> Martino 2007.

<sup>203</sup> Filipovic 2010, p. 66, 323-324.

the relevance and influence of these institutional structures is closely intertwined with the development of curatorial practice.

The proliferation of biennials emerged simultaneously with opening curatorship to become an expanded field existing beyond mere display and material production and taking account of the discursive and distributional modes of exchange while acting as a catalyst for challenging what we know and the ways in which the known becomes known. O'Neill (2012) considers the expansion of the biennial exhibition model both a symptom and a condition of our globally networked age, and points out how the myriad forms have provided small moments of resistance, dissensus, antagonism, and counter spectacle in relation to the grand narratives of art history, consumer culture, mass entertainment, and the market-driven hegemonic forces of global capitalism.<sup>204</sup>

The first biennials – Venice in 1895 and Sao Paulo in 1952 – were able to formulate their programs around classical concepts, such as internationalization or modernization. Continuing the revision of the global biennial structure, where the Venice, Sao Paulo, the Carnegie International and Documenta were regarded as the most influential international exhibitions, the first recurring large-scale exhibition outside the dominant Western art world *La Bienal de La Habana* was established in 1984.<sup>205</sup>

Although Documenta 5 in 1972 already contained performances, discursive events and other media beyond the traditional art forms, *La Bienal de La Habana* introduced this innovative structure at large. Whereas the Venice Biennial continued celebrating the 19th century idea of a nation-state, *La Bienal*, in contrast, reflected new transnational, multicultural and diasporic identities. Around the mid-1980s, segregation characterized the visual art system. As Gerardo Mosquera (2011) pointed out, the international art events were far from global due to the Western idea of art.<sup>206</sup> *La Bienal de La Habana* recognized culture within a shared, postcolonial practice of contemporary art. Thus, *La Bienal* marked the turn in the contemporary biennials as a platform for the critique of modernity outlined with large-scale European efforts. Its third edition in 1989 introduced a completely new method for curating large international exhibitions by dispensing with national representations and introducing a thematic approach.<sup>207</sup> As noted, large-scale exhibitions were often founded on utopian efforts. *La Bienal* was a part of the Cuban Revolution's strategy of organizing an international event as a way of publicizing its political messianism and molding a positive image of itself by transforming international power relations connected to the circulation and legitimization of art.<sup>208</sup>

The first Dakar Biennial *Dak'Art* was organized in 1992, with a similar pavilion structure as in the Venice Biennale. For the selection and invitation process, the organizers used a network linked mainly to the government. Thus,

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<sup>204</sup> O'Neill 2012, p. 84.

<sup>205</sup> Niemojewski 2010, p. 94–99.

<sup>206</sup> Mosquera 2011, p. 74–75.

<sup>207</sup> Weiss 2011, p. 14–15.

<sup>208</sup> Mosquera 2010, p. 199–205.

the first edition concentrated on international political relations more than contemporary art. Konaté (2010) states that the biennial was set up to define Pan-African art history and a fundamental part of the aesthetic shift of the so-called *art nègre*.<sup>209</sup> Accordingly, Dak'Art played a role in opening a dialogic relation in Africa to its diasporas and developing the idea of Africa as a reality consisting of diverse cultures, philosophies and societies beyond its geographical reality. This has had an effect for the acceptance of new art forms, including video and multimedia installations and performance art, both at Dak'Art and around the African continent, and so provided for new artistic practices as well as emerging curatorial practices. The two leading curatorial figures, Enwezor and Silva, contributing to this process, will be discussed in the following.

From its initial imperialist efforts to view the world at once to emphasizing diaspora as a part of any national culture, the expansion of the large-scale exhibitions paralleled curatorial endeavors in aiming to distinguish the biennial conceptually as larger than the mere presentation of artworks.<sup>210</sup> Founded on utopian agendas, large-scale international exhibitions tend to express a certain romantic imagination. Caroline A. Jones calls the biennial an enlightenment project that secures nationalism in the very act of transcending it.<sup>211</sup> The founding of a biennial promises renewed knowledge, promotes for the cosmopolitan urban centre to re-join a wider international community and makes a pedagogical pledge to visitors to bring them to the world. Challenging the art historical view of art's object-based origin, Jones sees the dominance of installation art and the simultaneous rise of biennials as conjoint phenomena, mutually reinforcing and linked to specific geopolitical and aesthetic conditions.<sup>212</sup>

If it can be said that for more than a century museum and gallery exhibitions have largely been the medium through which visual art becomes known, then it is the biennial context that has arguably since proved to be a relevant medium through which contemporary art becomes known.<sup>213</sup> Through the biennial context itself, artistic practices are disembedded and re-embedded. Biennials not only attract wide attention and a large audience, but also aim to create contact interfaces where the absence of permanent prestige institutions has an effect on exhibition practices.<sup>214</sup> These culture political efforts still enable the fundamental utopias of the Grandes Expositions from the mid-19th century with their focus on urban renovation and tourism. Where the artistic and curatorial activities engage with politics as a cultural practice, the *raison d'être* of transcontinental biennials could possibly contribute to the efforts of supporting cultural localities.

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<sup>209</sup> Konate 2010, p. 108–115.

<sup>210</sup> As noted by O'Neill 2012.

<sup>211</sup> Jones 2010, p. 76.

<sup>212</sup> Jones 2010, p. 69, 82.

<sup>213</sup> Greenberg, Ferguson & Nairne, 1996 p. 2.

<sup>214</sup> Bydler 2004, p. 73, 150.

### 3.3 Pioneering Harald Szeemann

Proceeding from this overview of the fundamental, historical development of international exhibition practices, we turn to the significance of Harald Szeemann's (1933-2005) curatorial work. Whereas many singular visual artists have had a practice defining effect on contemporary art and its ways of exhibiting, Szeemann's curatorial practice had an impetus to characterize and so to establish the profession and its status in the contemporary arts by creating a new element of contextualizing exhibition practices.<sup>215</sup>

A progressive professionalization of the curator's position became apparent from many founding directors of modern art museums, who rank among the curatorial pioneers: for example, Alfred H. Barr, the first director in 1929 of the Museum of Modern Art of New York, or Werner Hofmann who created Vienna's *Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts* in 1962. As the artistic director of Documenta 5 in Kassel in 1972, Szeemann believed no traditional forms of exhibition represented the art that was produced from the radical social, political and aesthetic impulses that developed out of the counterculture of the late 1960s. His coup de grâce, "*Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form*" (Kunsthalle Bern, 1969) was the first exhibition to bring together post-minimalist and conceptual artists in a European institution. With this exhibition, Szeemann radically defined an aesthetic position and invented the modern-day *Großausstellung*, in which the artworks are centrally conceptualized and assembled into new interrelationships focusing on the act itself instead of the object and bringing together the primary triad of the art world: studio, gallery and museum. Important reference points were alternative methods and the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.<sup>216</sup> Interestingly, "*When Attitudes Become Form*" was the first exhibition to experiment with art sponsorship, in this case with Philip Morris.<sup>217</sup>

Szeemann considered the main problem of the Western contemporary art museums<sup>218</sup> to be the authoritative, one-man-lead museum culture, which needed to be replaced not only by a team system but

by a participation of the public.

He emphasized the potential of the museum of the future as

an information centre for related subjects,

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<sup>215</sup> Behnke 2010, p. 29.

<sup>216</sup> Obrist 1996; Behnke 2011.

<sup>217</sup> As discussed preliminary in Chapter 1.4.1. Behnke 2011, p. 32.

<sup>218</sup> *Museum* Vol XXIV, no1 1972, p. 5-32.

instead of always aiming at working outwards from an item displayed up against the wall, one might also include the museum of the future art which does not express itself in material form.<sup>219</sup>

The prevailing discourse on exhibition making started to exempt from the critique of the artwork as an autonomous object of study towards curatorial criticism. Here the exhibition space was given critical priority over the objects of art, as well as the subject of curating and the position of the curator.<sup>220</sup>

In general, artists aimed to challenge conventional exhibition methods by undermining the museum's presumed neutrality and disinterest in order to change the nature of institutional hegemony. The institutional critique originating from these ideas regarded museums as static, controlling, art defining operators that, in their authority, did not support the actual artistic processes resulting in an artwork produced for the institutional contexts. However, institutions have had fundamental relevance in creating a more sustainable idea of art by fostering a certain continuum of local cultural practices, histories and initiatives. Accordingly, by offering discursive contexts, museums are participating in unfolding and supporting processes of exhibition practices to wider audiences by providing possibilities to a dialogue between the prevailing triad of artist-curator-viewer. The various forms of institutional critique have arguably had a major effect on contemporary art practices, including the development of the independent curator and the rise of the wide variety of temporary exhibition sites. Acknowledging this focal discursive development here from the critique towards more collaborative practices, the analysis will focus next on other central processes in actual curatorial professionalization.

In his attempts to radicalize the space and the forms of traditional exhibitions, Szeemann followed his achievement by leaving his position at the Kunsthalle to embark on a freelance career. He organized "*Happenings and Fluxus*" (1970), a show at the Cologne Kunstverein comprising actions, environments and events after which he was appointed as the director of Documenta 5 (1972). There Szeemann reconsidered the "*museum of 100 days*" by programming "*100 days of events*" that included a variety of atypical inclusions focusing on the intellectual and financial rights of the artistic production.<sup>221</sup> Rejecting the notion that exhibitions should aspire to have the last word, Szeemann (2005) argued,

It's not about presenting the best there is, but about discovering where the unpredictable path of art will go in the imminent future.

Szeemann's influence on the curatorial practices of presentation is twofold: the permanent display has reached a standstill in its evolution whilst the temporary installation of exhibitions is constantly growing in volume and variation.<sup>222</sup> Contradictory to his curatorial aims, Szeemann did contribute to the hierarchical

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<sup>219</sup> Szeemann 1972, p. 11, 13.

<sup>220</sup> O'Neill 2007, p. 16.

<sup>221</sup> Behnke 2011, Obrist 1996.

<sup>222</sup> Obrist 1996; Vetrocq 2005, Behnke 2011.

art world establishment by strengthening an idea of a contested star among artists, a position of subjectivity in taste, selection and evaluation.

### 3.4 The New Curatorial Legacies

Whereas Dak'Art influenced in creating a dialogic relation in Africa to its diasporas and developing the idea of Africa as a reality consisting of diverse cultures, philosophies and societies beyond its geographical reality, the emergence of artistic and curatorial practices on the African continent have contributed to a development of the curatorial profession immensely, at large. Two leading curatorial figures, fellow Nigerians, Okwui Enwezor (1963-2019) Olabisi Silva (1962-2019) lead two very different careers but contributed to the idea and definition of curatorial epistemic practices. Whereas Enwezor created an impressive institutional career, Silva focused on defining and strengthening the artistic practices and their livelihood on the African continent.

By directing Haus der Kunst in Munich and becoming the first African-born director of the 56th International Venice Art Biennale in 2015 as well as the first non-European to oversee Documenta XI in Kassel 2002, Enwezor investigated, in particular, the complex phenomenon of globalization in relation to localities and origins. His global analysis was focused on the temporal depth of recent developments in the art world and for the variegated richness of the present.<sup>223</sup>

In addition to the most accomplished positions, he cofounded the scholarly *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* publishing examinations of contemporary African and African Diaspora art within the modernist and postmodernist experience. *Nka* continues to contribute to the intellectual dialogue on world art as well as internationalism and multiculturalism in the arts. Enwezor has said that he

was searching for a term that projected an aesthetic horizon but would also constitute a forum of ideological resistance.

And that

in Igbo, the language I grew up with in Eastern Nigeria, means to create, to make, to invent. It also means art. Then in Basaa, a language in Cameroon, Nka means discourse. People oftentimes ask me, 'When was the first time you went to a museum?' As if a museum is the only space where one encounters art! Calling the magazine *Nka* was a way of disarming this particular notion.<sup>224</sup>

Developing and enriching the dialogue as well as the practices on the African continent were the core professional endeavors for Olabisi Silva, the founding director and curator of the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), Lagos. Silva's

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<sup>223</sup> Baratta 2013, Statement of the Biennale di Venezia

<sup>224</sup> Interview with Vitra Design Museum



comprehension of the contemporary and conceptual practices in Africa was exceptional. In addition to her vast global curatorial practice, Silva is arguably best known for her work with the CCA Lagos. Along with its expanding library, the CCA Lagos provides an important space for cultural research and scholarship on the continent. Driven by a continuous nomadic energy to experience multiple African cities and temporalities, Silva's scholarship was founded on strategies of a shifting local. She stated in an interview with Frieze magazine (2017) that,

What has been understood as contemporary African art has been articulated from a Western as well as a diasporan perspective and at its worst it has had a tenuous engagement with the local context. My work takes me to several countries across Africa and gives me the opportunity to embed myself in the diverse local cultural, artistic and social contexts for extended and at times repeated visits.<sup>225</sup>

Silva's main curatorial effort was the initiative of Àsìkò International Art Programme (2010-2016), a pioneering pedagogical model employing a nomadic framework to provide and facilitate intensive workshops for artists and curators across the African continent. Promoting and enriching dialogues between emerging art practitioners as well as invited international guests, among them artists, scholars, curators, and cultural workers, Àsìkò was a bold initiative of intellectual sustainability. It stimulated critical and conceptual thinking and encouraged meaningful exchange, and collaboration. And even more so, created a cultural support structure on the emerging African art scene, foregrounding the perspectives of those working within the African continent, where local resources and networks vary immensely between regions. The program was documented into the first African anthology of artistic and curatorial practices. *Àsìkò: On the Future of Artistic and Curatorial Pedagogies in Africa* (2017) documents the work and reflections of over 70 cultural producers<sup>226</sup> who participated in Àsìkò from 2010-2016 and offers a foundation for new discourse on visual culture in Africa. The publication proposes methods for articulating, presenting, documenting, and historicizing cultural practices now and in the future.

As Harald Szeemann at his time, both Enwezor and Silva have had immense influence on the development of the curatorial *épistémè* as a meaning creating agency. Throughout their extensive curatorial careers, they participated into the self-governance of African art by creating a fully independent and prevailing practice defining discourse and dialogue as well as an elevated status of the distinct artistic and epistemic practices on the continent.

### 3.5 Contextualizing Space and Object

Art history has long been built on the analysis of individual, autonomous artworks. However, as discussed in the preceding phase classification, art

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<sup>225</sup> Bisi Silva in an interview with Houghton Kinsman, 2017

<sup>226</sup> from 15 African countries

practices are defined and developed through the site or context in which the artwork first gains public visibility. During the course of the 20th century exhibitions – with all their discursive and publication efforts – gained their relevance as a medium through which most art became known. For instance, the predominant accomplishments of the 1910s and the 1920s avant-gardes can be seen as a series of collective conventions and exhibitions enabling ever-increasing numbers of emerging artists to act as their own mediators.<sup>227</sup> As the number and range of exhibitions increased dramatically, museums and art galleries started to display their permanent collections as a series of temporary exhibitions. Regardless of their acknowledged role as cultural fostering institutions, museums must respond to the challenges of the needed reactivity and flexibility of contemporary art practices, which depict and aim to influence prevailing cultural and social phenomena.<sup>228</sup>

Traditionally, as presentation mode exhibitions suggest, the enclosed artworks are judged and interpreted on an equal footing in reference to concepts, methods, artistic values, traditions and the canon. In the 20th century, the existing state of the medium had major relevance. What mattered was the kind of distinction it made, the unexpected formal elements it brought into play and the way it displaced the conventions of the genre or the tradition.<sup>229</sup> The display strategy of the newly inaugurated Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1929 was to distance the viewer from the outside world and the passage of time; in short, the context supported the pure presentation of art. The mode of presentation quickly became standard, a universal signifier of modernity and eventually what is now known as the white cube, the merging of ideology and form,<sup>230</sup> which in a Foucauldian disciplinary power regime constrains the exhibition and the museum as systems of control where the viewers' movements are governed and their visibility and field of vision regulated.<sup>231</sup>

Accordingly, the founding director of the Museum of Modern Art, Alfred H. Barr, integrated pedagogy into every exhibition. Thus, from the 1930s onwards, the exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art have been consciously didactic, promoting Barr's formalist view of art. The term 'modern art' obtained new references through the museum's exhibition contexts and its collection, which was based on donations. As Lind (2011) notes, his main purpose was to refine the aesthetic understanding of visitors and to create a mode of spectatorship that turned the viewer into an educated consumer in contrary to the 19th century ideal of the spectator as responsible citizen.<sup>232</sup>

Adolf Hitler approved the white cube interior in the Nazis' first architectural project at the Haus der Kunst in Munich, which opened in 1937 with

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<sup>227</sup> Cherix 2009, p. 4-5.

<sup>228</sup> Lorente 2011; Obrist 2009.

<sup>229</sup> Bydler 2004, p. 55, 57.

<sup>230</sup> Lorente 2011.

<sup>231</sup> West 2009, p. 243-246.

<sup>232</sup> Lind 2011, p. 99-100.

*Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung*.<sup>233</sup> Filipovic (2005) drew a correlation between the Museum of Modern Art and Haus der Kunst to show that despite their different ideological and aesthetic positions, the conceit of the display embodied qualities that were meaningful to both, including neutrality, order, rationalism, progress, extraction from a larger context as well as universality and modernity. Needless to note, in relation to these exhibition efforts, Hitler's National Socialist Program promoted Nazi ideas on arts and culture by destroying and disrupting works, and even movements, of modern art, in order to defeat the ideologies opposing the Program.<sup>234</sup>

These examples do convey, nevertheless, how the white cube, the immaculate backdrop, the general sparseness and the strict organization of artworks on the wall framed artistic production as universal, neutral, ordered and rational. Thus, contextualization started by questioning how much space a painting needed to speak on its own. With *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (1976) Brian O'Doherty addressed a crisis in postwar visual arts. He argued

we enter the era where works of art conceive the wall as a no-man's land on which to project their concept of the territorial imperative.<sup>235</sup>

According to O'Doherty, investigating the context moves attention away from the art object and focuses on the meaning of space. The space became a convention between artist and consumer. Investigation of the context exposed the construction of societal values within the white cube. He recognized this as revolutionary to art and to exhibiting by altering the notion of art as commodity.<sup>236</sup>

For O'Doherty, the white cube obtained its conceptual propositions corresponding to the reduction of the viewer to a passive gaze within an aesthetic autonomy. Thus, for O'Doherty, the

history of modernism is intimately framed by that space; or rather the history of modern art can be correlated with changes in that space and how we see it.<sup>237</sup>

Accordingly, he continues,

white ideal space may be the archetypal image of the twentieth century art it contains.<sup>238</sup>

O'Doherty considered Marcel Duchamp's work *Twelve Hundred Coal Bags Suspended from the Ceiling over a Stove* in 1938 at the International Exhibition of Surrealism to be

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<sup>233</sup> Filipovic 2005, p. 63-65.

<sup>234</sup> Filipovic 2005, p. 63-65

<sup>235</sup> O'Doherty 1976, p. 27.

<sup>236</sup> O'Doherty 1976, p. 25-27.

<sup>237</sup> O'Doherty 1976, p. 27.

<sup>238</sup> O'Doherty 1976, p. 14.

exposing the effect of context on art, of the container on the contained.<sup>239</sup>

The historical and theoretical discussions around Marcel Duchamp have contributed to the status of the context, turning his artistic practice into a representation of the contextual and enabling subversions and transformations of the conventions and politics that define art. Duchamp's fundamental contribution to the history and discourse of modern art has been the development of his Readymades and his concept of "*found art*." The most prominent example of Duchamp's association with Dada, as noted in the definition of the idea of modernity, was his submission of *Fountain* (1917), a urinal which was not accepted as art and rejected from the exhibition of the Independent Artists Society in the same year. Considered as "*one of the most influential work of modern art*," *Fountain* is a canonized example of Dadaist art.<sup>240</sup>

Michael Fried acknowledged the minimalist object's tendency towards anthropomorphism in his essay "*Art and Objecthood*" (1967). According to Fried, an artwork aspires to be associated with the viewer's space, which equals that of a man in the space. He claimed that art does not aim to defeat or suspend its own objecthood but to discover and project objecthood by attempting to maintain the logic of cause and effect in duality of object and subject. Objects in an exhibition are characteristically durational, embodying a wider aesthetic experience that allows us to view objects as they are.<sup>241</sup>

The readymade accentuates the artist's ability to nominate an object as artwork. Thus, Duchamp's urinal has more in common with a Botticelli or Titian than with a bathtub. Danto, asks if *Fountain* is an artwork, why JL Mott Ironworks' other similar objects are not art and if Brillo Box is an artwork whereas the ordinary Brillo is carton not; the difference in the status of the objects lies in the division of art from reality as a philosophical phenomenon.<sup>242</sup>

According to Groys (2008), the ability and possibility to define the artistic status of an object differentiates the curator from the artist, as the artist has the privilege to exhibit objects that have not already been elevated to the status of artworks. The curator may exhibit them but does not have the ability to transform nonart or manufactured objects into art through the act of display.<sup>243</sup> This capability, according to the dominant cultural conventions, belongs to the artist alone. Thus, whereas the artist defines the medium, or its non-specificity, curators contextualize it. These exclusive, personal sovereign decisions offer artistic installation a way to expand the domain of the sovereign rights of the artist from the individual art object to that of the exhibition space itself. Here, the artistic installation is a space in which the difference between the sovereign

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<sup>239</sup> O'Doherty 1976, p. 69.

<sup>240</sup> *The Fountain* (1917) is within recent art historical research considered to be conceptualized by Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. "*Evidence suggests the famous urinal Fountain, attributed to Marcel Duchamp, was actually created by Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven.*" Siri Hustvedt March 29th, 2019 The Guardian.

<sup>241</sup> Simon 2010, 2011.

<sup>242</sup> Danto 1990, p. 5.

<sup>243</sup> Groys 2008, p. 46-47.

freedom of the artist and the institutional freedom of the curator becomes immediately visible.<sup>244</sup> These overlapping efforts are at the core of the way by which a selection of artworks, a context and thematic or other discursive accompaniments merge into a particular form, into how an exhibition exhibits.<sup>245</sup>

### 3.6 De/Immaterializing the Object

Damit hat sie für uns auch die erste Wahrheit und Lebendigkeit verloren und ist mehr in unsere Vorstellung verlegt, als dass sie in der Wirklichkeit ihre führende Notwendigkeit behauptete und ihren höheren Platz einnahm. Was durch Kunstwerke jetzt in uns erregt wird, ist ausser dem unmittelbaren Genuss zugleich unser Urteil, indem wir den Inhalt, die Darstellungsmittel des Kunstwerks und die Angemessenheit und Unangemessenheit beider unserer denkenden Betrachtung unterwerfen. Die Wissenschaft der Kunst ist darum in unserer Zeit noch viel mehr Bedürfnis als zu den Zeiten, in welchen die Kunst für sich als Kunst schon volle Befriedigung gewährte.

G.W.F. Hegel (1835/1842/1986)<sup>246</sup>

As proposed here by Hegel, art lost its earlier necessity as a life, reality and humanity defining impetus and exists thus in our imagination subjecting the content and the means of presentation of artworks as potentially thought-provoking processes. Instead of considering how art's essence in the development of *Geist* was fulfilled and how that essence obligated any art physically expressing itself, art's obligation is to propose intellectual contemplation, in order, not to create art again but for acknowledging philosophically what art is. As Heidegger reads it, art's highest vocation remains as something in the past.<sup>247</sup> He noted, though, that with his conceptualization, Hegel did not deny the development of a variety of other new artworks and movements but rather the relevance and necessity of art as a way of truth moved to our historical existence.<sup>248</sup>

Danto (1986) continued Hegel's formulation by agreeing that the history of linearly advancing art came to an end when the conceptualization and underpinning theories of an artwork made the existence of the piece itself central. This, for him, meant that the end of art holds the potential for new movements and more artists and artwork. Contrary, however, to Danto's idea that this unfolded through Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box*, the actual process was initiated much earlier than in the late 1960s through the Fluxus and Dada movements establishing the groundwork for completely new mediums and materials within the visual arts. Already, works of art could not necessarily be distinguished from

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<sup>244</sup> Groys 2009, p. 56-67

<sup>245</sup> Filipovic 2005, p. 69.

<sup>246</sup> Hegel 1842, p. 13.

<sup>247</sup> Heidegger 1977, p. 68.

<sup>248</sup> see also Harries 2009, p. 5-6.

other objects – when theoretically supported – as the notion of readymades transmuted the artwork completely. Pluralism came to denote art's essence.

Like Dada preceding it, Fluxus art assumed an anti-commercialism and an anti-art comprehension, favoring an artist-focused, collaborative, creative practice over the conventional market-driven art world.<sup>249</sup> Shedding light on the perceived connections between everyday objects and art Fluxus artists used minimal gestures, presented at “events”, “the smallest unit of a situation”.<sup>250</sup> The events consisted of minimal instruction, inviting for interventions and randomness, realizing Duchamp's notion of the viewer completing and unfolding the artwork.<sup>251</sup>

In 1985, French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard curated a wide-ranging exhibition entitled *Les Immatériaux* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris. The exhibition was designed to demonstrate how new technologies of communication and information management were affecting culture, and it included interactive installations, sound works, responsive environments and experiments in early forms of electronic communication.<sup>252</sup> The exhibition focused both on the installation of the works and the content itself, dematerializing the artifacts and so revealing the systems of communication, value and power that they existed within and were defined by. As Lippard and Chandler propose,

Dematerialized art is post-aesthetic only in its increasingly non-visual emphases.<sup>253</sup>

In order to achieve this, the exhibition was designed so that the individual units merged into each other, where some of the works – and many of them physically transparent – were displayed so that the viewer could not determine where they began or ended. There was also no distinction between artworks and artifacts, which allowed a multivalent narrative to emerge from the exhibition, enabling the viewers to find their own chronological and hierarchical path through the works and thus also functioning to further reveal and dematerialize value.<sup>254</sup>

With this layout, *Les Immatériaux* emphasized the reflection on the exhibition as a form of communication expanding into an immersive space. Birnbaum and Wallenstein (2019) point out the separation to a *Gesamtkunstwerk* by noting how the spatial exploration of Lyotard's immersive communication involve differences and discontinuities inhabiting our sensory faculties.<sup>255</sup> The viewer, or participant, is directed back to the space for questioning, not only the direct visual input, but also of what it means to see, and of who is the subject of seeing. For Lyotard, works of art contain and relieve their affective energy into a

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<sup>249</sup> Robinson 2005.

<sup>250</sup> Rush 2005, p. 25.

<sup>251</sup> Robinson 2005.

<sup>252</sup> Gere 2006a, p. 19.

<sup>253</sup> Lippard & Chandler 1999, p. 48.

<sup>254</sup> Wunderlich 2008; Biggs 2001; Blistène 1985.

<sup>255</sup> Birnbaum & Wallenstein 2019.

variety of influence, interpretation and reception.<sup>256</sup> As noted, the viewer viewing discussion is often loaded with phenomenological references, that I aim to draw more towards the epistemic potential of the exhibition. Thus, this questioning of the potentials of seeing, is retroactively occupied in further epistemic processes, individual and shared.

In reference to this, Lyotard considered whether the process of mediating and displaying art in an exhibition context could be regarded as philosophy. He was particularly impressed by Daniel Buren's remark that large-scale exhibitions like Documenta only show the show itself. He articulated the aim to reorganize the imaginary side of an art institution as a search for an

ontology of the imaginary museum...bearing witness to the unrepresentable.<sup>257</sup>

Lyotard referred to the documentation of *Les Immatériaux* as "presentations of ideas," which, in contrast to mere "documentations of history" supposed another idea of archive through which they are reproduced.<sup>258</sup> Like Szeemann, Lyotard presented a notion of the staging of exhibitions and their potential to perform in new ways or altered circumstances – either inside or outside an institution. *Les Immatériaux*, as a radical presentation defined the role of information and the history of aesthetics after modernism and yet before the contemporary installation-based configuration of biennials, within or against which curatorial professionalization then arose, is at the core of this analysis.

*Les Immatériaux* is considered to have marked a *curatorial turn* in critical theory. Through its experimental layout and hybrid presentation of objects, technologies, and ideas, this pioneering exploration defined exhibition as a medium of communication and foresaw an elaborate engagement with immersive and digital space in both artistic and epistemic practices.<sup>259</sup> Focal here is the consideration of the immaterial content, its created context and relevance to curatorial professionalization. More specifically, according to Rajchman (2009), we can identify two larger questions in the contemporary condition of art that was then starting to take shape, with which the created configuration would become engaged and where Hegel (1986; 1835/1842) proclaimed the end of art.

Lyotard's concept of postmodernism focuses on the experimentation of the avant-garde.<sup>260</sup> Interestingly, Lyotard presented his notion of art's ability to call attention to the limits of representation. As for many, in *Discours, figure* (1971), Lyotard considers visual art through seeing where especially avant-garde art interferes with assumptions, conventions, and established modes of seeing and perceiving. Thus, for Lyotard, this disruption upsets received rules for reception

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<sup>256</sup> Binrbaum & Wallenstein 2019.

<sup>257</sup> Lyotard 1997, p. 16.

<sup>258</sup> Lyotard 1997, p. 164.

<sup>259</sup> Birnbaum & Wallenstein 2019.

<sup>260</sup> It is imperative to distinguish Lyotard's concept of postmodern art from other ideas of postmodern art. There are many theories of postmodernism in the arts, literature, architecture, and other areas of cultural practice.

and meaning.<sup>261</sup> And as discussed, this disruption was called for by Dewey.<sup>262</sup> This ability is related to the sublime, and it is an indication of the *differend*. This has even political relevance for Lyotard, as it can shed light on *differends* through the sublime, and by so doing reveal us that a, and any, wrong has been done.

Indeed, the grand scenarios of modernism or the avant-garde – exemplified by Alfred H. Barr’s views on the white cube presentation, acquisition and collection of modern art as discussed earlier – seem increasingly irrelevant to contemporary conditions. The global art world sets the question of the role of the curator and the nature of contemporary art as corresponding to or conditioned by this globalization, which exposes it, disrupts or questions it. Thus, Rajchman argued that *Les Immatériaux* marked the beginning of a reflection on contemporary forms of interactions that are irreducible to the eminent 19th century division of modernity and tradition, and there defined a new distinction of the role of information and materiality within contemporary art.<sup>263</sup> The preceding analysis of contextualizing exhibition practices emphasized the impossibility of defining curatorial professionalization by a single logic or narrative but rather indicating that it must be defined through its intersection with many others.

### 3.7 Curating, Then

It is best to do nothing.

Carl Andre 2004

In *Do It. The Compendium* (2013), Hans Ulrich Obrist invited artists to give guidelines for the creation of a work of art. This vast contribution of instructions brings together two main strategies employed at key moments by the conceptual avant-garde, namely the generation of artworks following written instructions and the probability of chance in the realization of artwork. These methods have both had relevance throughout the history of the avant-garde exhibition. The contemporary curator has gained a role of an auteur creating visual and conceptual events, experiences and exhibitions, where changing conceptions of the artworks, the exhibition and the curator create overlapping narratives. Altshuler<sup>264</sup> outlines that the move from a conceptual work to conceptual exhibition was initiated by Seth Sieglerlaub with the Douglas Huebler: November 1968 exhibition. Lacking a physical space, the works were presented as an entity in a publication alone. Thus, the instructions presented also relate to this

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<sup>261</sup> Birnbaum & Wallenstein 2019.

<sup>262</sup> In these terms, modernism is defined in retrospect as it must be unsettling before it becomes an accepted norm. Modern art accepts and presents the fact that something is unrepresentable, postmodern art aims to present the unrepresentable.

<sup>263</sup> Rajchman 2009.

<sup>264</sup> Altshuler 2013, p. 29–32.



development of both the curatorial process and the tense role of an art and artwork validating auteur.

Starting with the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*, I will now aim at synthesizing the radical, modernity dismantling cultural and ideological movements, where the Hegelian narrative (of the end of art), Futurists (of the necessity of progress), Dadaists (of the significance of the community) and Fluxus (of merging media) have paved the way for modernity's impossibility to define art through its objecthood. As Hegel suggests, the work of art lost its status and relevance. Art in itself, and less an object, no longer has the right, ability or resources to define reality, which in contemporary artistic practices has become just one concept among the multitude of content productions.

The first art museums from the turn of the 19th century were established as a consequence of revolutions, wars, imperial conquest and the exploitation of non-European cultures. The Parisian *Musée des Artistes Vivants* became the most imitated museum concept in the 19th century, while New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) became the canon for 20th century museums. The exhibition practices of both museums had a principal relevance in defining the notion of 'modern' in art.<sup>265</sup> Despite their restricted singular, museal view, their work on modernity influenced the discussions regarding architecture as in conceptualizing museum venues, art as in creating exhibitions and collections of living artists, theory as in initiating new channels for discourse as well as politics as in offering platforms for both propaganda and social engagement.

Boris Groys considered these acts of modernity influencing the emergence of curatorial practice. The roles of the directors and founders of these museums contained the power to define art through iconoclastic acts by defunctionalizing decorative and functional objects and putting them on display as works of art. The traditional art museum exhibited the emergence of art and its subsequent victory. Individual artworks documented this process and there lost their previous religious or representative significance and gained new meaning.<sup>266</sup>

As noted in the preceding analysis, unconventional strategies began to enter contemporary art exhibitions with an international significance in the late 1960s. The process-based, conceptual and performative nature of artworks affected the unpredictability of the content of the exhibitions as many exhibitions entailed works never exhibited before. This tendency-built experimentation into the very texture of large exhibitions, especially in exhibitions emphasizing interaction with locality through works created for non-standard sites. Accordingly, variable and unexpected developments were characteristics of exhibitions associated with relational art production.<sup>267</sup> The notion that an exhibition is an evolving series of diverse iterations exemplifies a comprehensive method of curatorial practice altering the spatial and temporal parameters of an exhibition<sup>268</sup>, which in this analysis demonstrates how the forms and formats of presentations in artistic

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<sup>265</sup> Lorente 2011.

<sup>266</sup> Groys 2008, p. 43–47.

<sup>267</sup> Altshuler 2013, p. 38–42.

<sup>268</sup> Altshuler 2013, p. 39.

production as well as in theoretical and historical reflection have gained more relevance in relation to the works of art themselves. This developing continuum of visual art's context and content is at the core of curatorial practice.

So, for example with Szeemann, it has been customary to take the 1960s and 1970s as marking a turning point for the foundation of the curatorial practice as a counter force to modernist exhibition practices. An object history was replaced by a conceptual approach, and the work of art became staged within a performance of ideas. Art set itself free from a preset series of divisions, including studio production and white cube exhibition, art and everyday life, information and popular culture. Disengaging itself from such divisions and institutional forms, contemporary art gained access to and so created new stages and structures outside the traditional setting, where visual arts and art institutions played a key role, without exact parallels to modernism in other fields.<sup>269</sup>

As noted, the establishment of the international biennial structure and the white cube in the early 20th century supported the development of curatorial practice in parallel with the changing form and concepts of the artwork. Thus, the shift in the definition and role of the curator can be seen as a response to the changing meaning and relevance of the art object over the last five decades: dematerialization motivated a redefinition of art to incorporate conceptual, processual and performative strategies, among others.

As Groys (2009) stated, the modernist division of labor within the art system was clear. Artworks were to be produced by artists and then selected and displayed by curators. The selection was based on the curator's beliefs that the work of art in question had some critical, economic or socio-historical relevance (or, ideally, a combination of all these factors) and there defined its collectable and/or exhibitable status. Since the late 1980s, the shift away from curating as administrative, mediating activity towards a creative activity was first outlined by Jonathan Watkins for *Art Monthly* (1987). He raised the on-going debate of the curator as artist. Artists have adopted curatorial roles in displaying their own and other artists' works, and conversely, curators have become increasingly directorial in their approach to the exhibitions as a conceptually driven project.<sup>270</sup> In his book *The Avant-Garde in Exhibition*, Bruce Altshuler (1994) finds a breaking point in 1969 in the course of the avant-garde and its exhibition. A dichotomy between anti-commercial artistic modes and dematerialized art and the commercial and public support for visual arts generated the rise of the curator as creator. As it results in merging artistic and curatorial practices, Groys (2009) saw that there is no longer any "ontological" difference between making art and displaying art. In the context of contemporary art, to make art is to show things as art.

In addition to Szeemann's practice, I consider *Les Immatériaux* central in defining contextual exhibition efforts and curating in particular. With his curatorial endeavor, Lyotard concluded curatorial work as Post-Fordist immaterialism. But even more importantly, with *Les Immatériaux* Lyotard defined

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<sup>269</sup> Gielen 2009; Rajchman 2009; Altshuler 2013.

<sup>270</sup> Watkins 1987, p. 27.

the role of information, communication and immateriality as well as exhibition as a presentation form of ideas central to the concept of contemporary art. Communication technologies have developed artistic and curatorial practices increasingly towards immateriality, interactivity, instability, uncertainty and spatial temporalization, where the constant reinvention of meanings through different individual and collective experiences increases.<sup>271</sup>

Kathryn Andrews (2013) provokingly proposes in her instructions for an artwork, the possibility to create a work of art by repeating and duplicating the idea of an artwork, in the name of the artist:

Make an artwork that resembles one you have seen in the world. Replicate the original as closely as possible but add a few anomalous details. Study the signature of the artist who made the original. Master it. Fake it. Without getting caught, circulate the double in important exhibition venues where its authenticity won't be questioned.<sup>272</sup>

Andrews defines the ongoing tension of the debated exhibition practices, where artists and curators participate in the creation of the idea. We can see Andrews provocation strongly resonating LeWitt's focus on the idea or concept as the most important aspect of the work.<sup>273</sup> And as Lyotard suggests, an artist creates an idea, a curator presents it. The professionalization of curating can be thus understood here through an engagement with a context because as our preceding analysis proposes, the artwork necessitates the context. Hence curating is not just the case of displaying the work; it is also a case of making the case for the context itself, for displaying the context and processing the context and its deconstructive work.<sup>274</sup> Curating thus becomes a process of drawing a meaning from such connections while translating this process in a spatial and temporal experience of forms.<sup>275</sup> Carl Andre's request denote the immaterial, temporal efforts analyzed as content defining practice and so may be the Hegelian ideal of contemporary art.

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<sup>271</sup> see also Manovich 2008; Hanru 2005 et al.

<sup>272</sup> Andrews 2013, p. 156.

<sup>273</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1.1. LeWitt 1967, p. 166.

<sup>274</sup> Cassar 2008.

<sup>275</sup> Seikkula 2011, p. 197.

## 4 THE CURATORIAL ÉPISTÉMÈ. METAPHORS OF ACTION AND SPATIOTEMPORALITY

Jens Hoffmann outlines the intent of *The Exhibitionist Journal for Exhibition Making* by noting that it does not occupy itself with all forms of curatorial practice but is specifically concerned with the act of exhibition making:

the creation of a display, within a particular sociopolitical context, based on a carefully formulated argument, presented through the meticulous selection and methodical installation of artworks, related objects from the sphere of art, and objects from other areas of visual culture.<sup>276</sup>

With this editorial statement Hoffmann defines curating as an activity contextualizing visual art in a certain temporal setting. *The Exhibitionist* is the first peer-reviewed journal focused on acts of exhibition making. The clear outline of the publication's analytical focus provides for a fruitful soil for epistemic contemplation.

In the preceding Chapters we have laid a foundation for the curatorial *épistémè* with two separate approaches, in a theory and in a practice as proposed by Foucault. Let us be reminded that for him *épistémè* defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, and in the case of curatorial *épistémè* I consider the knowledge conditions to be founded always simultaneously in a theory and in a practice. This is the special dual character of the curatorial *épistémè*. So, firstly, the sustainability agenda was negotiated within an epistemic context. Secondly, the development of the curatorial practice as a professional entity of its own right was founded. With these two discussions we will now proceed to consider actually epistemologically, the meaning creating agency, of the curatorial profession.

In order to negotiate this special dual character of the curatorial *épistémè* in a theory and in a practice, I will start by participating in the philosophical debate of knowledge as well as through a metaphorical analysis of a selected variety of curatorial statements. I will then proceed in negotiating the curatorial *épistémè* in

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<sup>276</sup> Hoffmann 2010 No1 p.3

a practice, considering the temporal and spatial dimensions of the curatorial practices, how the physical acts of working with art and artworks take place. I do believe a comprehensive analysis of knowledge conditions as well as evaluating conditions of display and production are essential in the given context. In order to conquer this epistemic goal, I have chosen to examine all the text material published in the first four issues (No. 1-2/2010 and No. 3-4/2011) of *The Exhibitionist Journal for Exhibition Making*.

The publications discussing and analyzing curatorial practices are mostly related to singular exhibition projects or artistic practices and there lack a fully practice oriented analysis. Traditionally, these publications are aimed for the audiences to comprehend the given thematical setting, which then refer to the selection of artists, artworks, histories, theories, production processes and so on and so forth.<sup>277</sup> With its analytical ambition, *The Exhibitionist Journal for Exhibition Making* is a plenteous source material for the given task as it postulates a peer oriented approach. In order to comprehend how curators themselves define their own practice, I will firstly outline the curatorial *épistémè* - an epistemic effort to participate in the definition of the curatorial practice - and secondly based on the potential findings pursue my epistemic goals with a metaphoric analysis defining the action of the curatorial practice.

As we have established with Dewey, Foucault and Latour in considering the curatorial *épistémè* and its ability to rearrange knowledge methodologies, I will draw from a practice outside scientificity and discuss knowledge as a shared process. Let us remind ourselves, that Dewey and Foucault criticize the epistemic traditions, those of rationality, objectivity, method and truth. Dewey equates knowledge and science with a work of art and they so hold the potential to converse into things and features, which they did not previously entail. He points out that the objections to changing knowledge processes originated from a confusion of tenses.<sup>278</sup> Dewey claims that artistic practices entail the prospects for abandoning the obstructions of given socio-cultural conditions and so hold an immense potential for attaining knowledge residing in the activities of the arts.

## 4.1 Introduction

As the opening statement of *The Exhibitionist Journal for Exhibition Making*, Jens Hoffman considers

One measure of the vitality of a discipline is the intensity of the debate surrounding it. The discussion around curatorial practice has intensified over the last decade – including the founding of numerous academic programs, the creation of conferences, and the publication of an increasing number of specialized books – but the discipline has not,

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<sup>277</sup> The relevance of this publication material is thus acknowledged by these words and only referred to through the actual resource material from *The Exhibitionist*.

<sup>278</sup> Dewey 1926 p. 381-382.

until now, had a consistent platform for more frequent and interconnected conversations that would bring together the many fragments of current dialogue.<sup>279</sup>

As Hoffmann continues, he reminds his peers how

The application of the auteur theory to curating has been one of the most remarkable developments in our field in recent years, and it finds another level of urgency, intensity, and self-reflection in these pages.

The terms urgency, intensity and self-reflection are of great relevance here as firstly they refer to a temporal setting and secondly, they outline the perspective of the self, of the curator from a subjective position. The temporal setting of knowledge processes is highlighted in these curatorial statements. As discussed in the introductory conceptualization, Essential for the definition of the curatorial *épistémè* is thus the temporal dimension of its shared process. This process, and its results reveal the quality of knowing or if knowing was truly there through its retroactive validating power as defined by William James (1996). We will know if we knew.

Roland Barthes (1967) rejected the auteur in his essay "*The Death of the Author*," by disagreeing with the belief that the author is the unifying and sole creative force of the meaning and value of a work of art.<sup>280</sup> He therefore opened up the artistic production process for example from the Duchampian singular originator. Foucault (1969) approached the question "*What Is an Author?*" by redefining authorship as a functional principle limiting, excluding and choosing, something that for long has been considered as the core activity of the curatorial practice.<sup>281</sup> As Hoffmann here suggests, the auteur theories still play a relevant role in defining the curatorial professionalization process. I do acknowledge their relevance, unquestionably, as a part of the independence process of the profession. However, as we are aiming here for the epistemic definition, we should keep our focus on the *épistémè* rather than singular authoritarian roles. In epistemic terms the set of operations and frameworks for the production and dissemination of meaning, the curatorial authority does include the act of selecting but how this selecting is grounded is in the core of the curatorial *épistémè*.

As acknowledged in the preceding Chapter, art in its pluralist, conceptual form is a process of shared knowledge - shared between the artist, curator, participant and the institution of art - where the dimensions of space and time provide for its context of existence. My intention is, therefore, to analyze the actual curatorial knowledge - an epistemic, participatory formulation of the curatorial practice as well as the action of curating, stemming from *The Exhibitionist's* editorial argumentation. Focal here is how curators describe and how they contextualize their professional aims, activity and practice within the exhibition making apparatus and so state the content, concept and context of curatorial practice. Analyzing the curatorial practice with these aims intents to

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<sup>279</sup> Hoffmann 2010 p.3

<sup>280</sup> Barthes 1967.

<sup>281</sup> Foucault 1969.

contribute to the ongoing, and ever evolving, debate over the contested curatorial practice, whether from the perspective of the auteur, the artist, the institution or the audience.

In order to reach the main goal of my doctoral thesis – the definition of the curatorial *épistémè* simultaneously in a theory and in a practice – I will aim to comprehend what knowledge can mean in the curatorial reference. I will initiate this negotiation by analyzing the curatorial *épistémè* in practice by using Paul Ricoeur’s metaphoric tools in order to define the curatorial action. I will then formulate the curatorial action in space and time with Henri Lefebvre’s revolutionary social processes to produce spaces. For Lefebvre production of space has a variety of modes, altering from absolute space to more complex spaces i.e. social space, all which he analyzes as a three-part dialectic between everyday practices and perceptions, representations or theories of space and a spatial imaginary of the time.<sup>282</sup> As the philosophical definition of knowledge has long been founded on Plato’s definition of justified true belief and reconsidered through a proposal known as the Gettier problem, I will finally formulate the curatorial *épistémè* as a methodological position through this foundation and analyze it with contextualized knowledge efforts as suggested Wittgenstein. With this extensive analytical initiative, I aim to provide for an understanding of the scope and entity of curatorial *épistémè*.

## 4.2 The Curatorial *Épistémè*

The definition of knowledge is here founded on human agency. Hegel’s *Geist* and its triad of subjective spirit, objective spirit, and absolute spirit is foundational for our consideration of an agency. Any subjective decision and action is subordinate to culturally distinct systems of social interaction and the cultural institutions within which spirit is objectified in structures of human life. As Dewey states, we can gain freedom from this socio-cultural objectification through art. I claim that understanding and facilitating for this freedom potential is in the core of the curatorial. In order this potential to be fully activated, the acts of curating must take an enabling position. This is what we call here as the meaning creating agency.

As noted by Hoffmann et al the auteur theory has prevailed in understanding this curatorial position as something subjective. I claim that as the meaning creating agency is loaded with such freedom potentials it needs to be appreciated accordingly with its ethical implications. As a shared knowledge practice the foundation for the curatorial *épistémè* lays in an endorsement to contribute to the epistemological process of defining the curatorial practice. Each act of curating is a contribution to this endorsement. As a curator, while curating, I agree that my curating partakes in the definition as well as in the entity and in the continuum of the curatorial.

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<sup>282</sup> Stanek 2011, p. 6.

This is the epistemological analysis of *The Exhibitionist*, where curators participate in the knowledge formation about their practice by contributing with their formulated and professionally contextualized statements. In order to shed more light on the idea of considering the curatorial *épistémè* and its ability to rearrange knowledge methodologies, it is imperative to draw from a practice outside scientificity and to continue to discuss knowledge as a shared process.

This endorsement is later considered through Wittgenstein's ethics, as for him

Every judgment of relative value is a mere statement of facts and can therefore be put in such a form that it loses all the appearance of a judgment of value

although all judgments of relative value can be shown to be mere statement of facts, no statement of fact can ever be, or imply, a judgment of absolute value.<sup>283</sup>

Thus, the analyzed curatorial statements of *The Exhibitionist* have ethical value, professionally. Interestingly, as Wittgenstein suggests, the impossibility of absolute value entails the statements of value to be statements of facts. This will be reconsidered later.<sup>284</sup>

In the already introduced *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Cultures* (2012) O'Neill outlines the development of curatorial practice and the contemporary curatorial discourse. He considers central for the development of the curatorial practice, the globalization of the art world establishment in the 1990s and the emergence of biennial culture, as discussed in Chapter 3. O'Neill points out, that it was customary to define curating and its practices through international meetings, symposia and conferences. He has thus created a developmental narrative of the curatorial practice.<sup>285</sup> I would consider this discursive turn to highlight mediation and communication, in addition to contextualization, as key elements to the epistemic practice in question. The weight of the definition is therefore on the shared processes and as suggested by Irit Rogoff, the curatorial practice has an embedded epistemic structure

The curatorial seems to be an ability to think everything that goes into the event of knowledge in relation to one another.<sup>286</sup>

Rogoff emphasizes a relational aspect of knowledge production, presenting it as a field of coming together of approaches and previous sets of knowledges. In Rogoff's view, it is the potential embedded in the curatorial process that comes through in the event of knowledge.<sup>287</sup> It appears almost as a necessity to focus on this in curatorial work and research: challenging existing ways of thinking and encouraging alternative ways of thinking, are presented as the main purposes of

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<sup>283</sup> Wittgenstein 1929/1933 p. 192.

<sup>284</sup> Value is a loaded notion defined and debated within various disciplines. It is not my aim to participate in any of these debates nor developments.

<sup>285</sup> O'Neill (2012).

<sup>286</sup> Rogoff 2012, p. 23.

<sup>287</sup> Rogoff 2012.



meaningful curatorial practice. For Rogoff, focusing on the curatorial is to develop a discourse that reaches outwards, instead on inwards such as in descriptions of curatorial projects and experiences.<sup>288</sup>

#### 4.2.1 Agency, Practice or Inquiry?

Agency is considered as the capacity of individuals to act independently, decisively making their own free choices, a process that is embedded temporally and guided by cognitive belief structures.<sup>289</sup> Foucault discusses agency through a scale of subjective positions defining the power/knowledge regime. As noted and negotiated, for him, power and knowledge directly imply one another. There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose, and constitute power relations.<sup>290</sup> This leads to an understanding of the curator as the main character of this regime as they

may promote new forms of subjectivity through refusals of the kind of individuality imposed onus for several centuries.<sup>291</sup>

This formulation of refusal is both internal and external of the curatorial practice. Internal in terms of self-reflective critique of the power/knowledge regime. External as a facilitator for new forms of artistic endeavor in conquering these prevailing power/knowledge regimes. We can thus consider agency as an active, epistemic stance, a position of decision.

So, for Paul Ricoeur this human agency is established as an agent of action is set within a reciprocity between voluntary and involuntary. The structure of this agency is intelligible capability. I would consider this capability conjoining the Foucauldian subjectivity. Ricoeur develops this capability through a survey on the phenomenological hermeneutics of the self containing the idea of '*capable human being*', the main character of his theory of action and the main character of the meaning creating agency, as defined in this research.

Within this structure, or the power/knowledge regime, a decision is action. To decide is to act. The act of deciding is the constitutive act of my mode of being. The self is thus a capable, deciding agent. Decision has an intentional reciprocity. A decision intends its object as something to be done by me, as it is within my power. A decision is also a commitment. I commit myself to my decision. The decision leads into initiative. Initiative is a manifestation of capable human being's ability to act. Here the agency is loaded with both agent's powers and the resources of the system.

As Ricoeur's action theory describes agent's capacity to act, his moral theory describes agent's obligation to act. So, Ricoeur keeps reciprocity as a core element

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<sup>288</sup> Rogoff 2012.

<sup>289</sup> Emirbayer et al 1998; Littlejohn et al 2009.

<sup>290</sup> Foucault, 1977/1979.

<sup>291</sup> Foucault 1982 p. 213.

of this agency.<sup>292</sup> I acknowledge his conceptualization of intersubjectivity as moral selfhood in *Oneself as Another* (1990), culminating in the ethical maxim of “a good life with and for others in just institutions”<sup>293</sup> and the ethics of attestation, of promising. Ricoeurian dialectic of sameness and selfhood assigns responsibility. The self-responsible for an action must be the same self-imputed to be the agent of the action. This responsibility can be accepted prospectively or retrospectively. Interestingly, by locating an agent within this power/knowledge scheme, we necessitate responsibility.

Initiative is the beginning of something new. Action changes the world. Ricoeur argues that every action involves initiative, an intervention of the agent of action into the course of the world.<sup>294</sup> What then is the nature of the world, if human beings are able to change it? And what is the nature of action, if it is to be understood as a potential to change to world?<sup>295</sup>

As a process inquiry aims at augmenting knowledge. Dewey considers the method of artistic inquiry as a structured, systematic investigation, concluding in universal comprehension of experiences.<sup>296</sup> Here processes of inquiry and meaning creation are transformative with ethical connotations. Art has a possibility to communicate justifiable moral purposes.<sup>297</sup> I thus define curatorial *épistémè* to be formed through an inquiry, not a discipline nor a practice in its traditional discourse defining forms. This inquiry overreaches theories, philosophies and approaches in preparing the work of art for its encounter across different social and cultural contexts.

Here the initiative of Ricoeur’s action theory is considered in the form of inquiry. This agency is an active, meaning creating, initiative, realizing in a form of an artwork. So, from this a curatorial inquiry we define the curatorial *épistémè* as a meaning creating agency. This *épistémè* is loaded with a potential to initiate and create new, artistically relevant and practice defining content, and there to find new forms of subjectivity where to participate in changing the world, in describing the world and in creating something for the world is a meaning creating agency.

#### **4.2.2 Systematic Selection of Professional Statements - the Case of The Exhibitionist**

Jens Hoffmann states that in order to contextualize visual art in a certain temporal setting, *The Exhibitionist Journal for Exhibition Making* outlines curatorial activity mainly as a creation of display, that is socio-politically contextualized, thoroughly argued and presented through a selection and installation of artworks and other artifacts. Conclusively, Tara MacDowell (2010 No 1) states that *The Exhibitionist*

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<sup>292</sup> While negotiating it through our need for mutuality.

<sup>293</sup> Ricoeur 1990, p. 262.

<sup>294</sup> Ricoeur 1992, p. 109.

<sup>295</sup> Ricoeur 1992, p. 137.

<sup>296</sup> Goldblatt 2006, p. 22-25.

<sup>297</sup> Dewey 1934.

reverses its central narrative by presenting a recurrent public forum for debating, examining, historicizing, self-critiquing, and editorializing the processes and results of exhibition making.<sup>298</sup>

So, as noted, the source material for my epistemological concept analysis consists of the first four issues of *The Exhibitionist Journal for Exhibition Making* (No 1-4. January 2010 - June 2011). This selection is based on a dialogue unfolding through the journals: issues through 1 to 3 are thematically in dialogue and the issue 4 takes an overview of the three preceding issues. Accordingly, these first four issues of the journal define the need for a professional discourse. *The Exhibitionist* has relevance in the definition of the curatorial practice as it aims to create a discourse around exhibition making with a field and profession describing efforts discursively, as practice enhancing and artistry supportive and without disregarding the artistic practice or consolidating the power of the curator over artist, the ever-existing hierarchical debate.

The three first issues are divided through exhibition analyses in sections: *Curators' Favorites* with reviews on influential exhibition experiences; *Back in the Day* with reconsiderations to a historically, culturally or individually relevant exhibition; *Assessments* with reviews on current large-scale international exhibition; *Typologies* with formulations to exhibition forms; *Attitude* with a professional statement and *Rearmirror* with a self-reflective view on curatorial efforts. *Typologies* present exhibitions through *Solo Shows*, *Art in Public Space* and *The Retrospective*. The fourth issue is composed in the format of responses to the three preceding issues in Responses to: *The Artist and the Curator*, *Toward the History of Exhibitions*, *Curatorial Education*, *The Paracuratorial* and finally *La Critique*.

*The Exhibitionist* argues that the readings of exhibitions by those who make exhibitions make the profession accountable for the works of exhibition and the motivations for doing them. Accordingly, *The Exhibitionist* aims to avoid any consensus of curating by enabling a variety of viewpoints, styles, and commitments and so to participate in and foster the diversification of exhibition models. Regardless of these efforts, it must be noted - both in respect to the unification of the profession as well as its culture - that the evident professional solidarity may be based on the editorial categorization.

## **4.3 Curatorial Practice, its Temporality. Action.**

### **4.3.1 Metaphors of Action**

The curatorial statements outlined in *The Exhibitionist* are loaded with metaphoric notions that curators employ to describe and define their professional efforts and actions. This may be evident, considering the artistic nature of the epistemic practice in question. Even more so, curators work through discursive and

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<sup>298</sup> MacDowell 2010.

communicative efforts, using language as one of their main professional tools. The mediation and communication of any curated installation or initiative equals with the contextualization of art. In the following, I suggest that curatorial *épistémè* is founded on language and will thus analyze it with Paul Ricoeur's narrative tools. Accordingly, I categorize the profession defining concepts, emerging metaphorically, where a

simple inspection of discourse in its explicit intention, a simple interpretation through the game of question and answer, is no longer sufficient. Heideggerian deconstruction must now take on Nietzschean genealogy, Freudian psychoanalysis, the Marxist critique of ideology ... the weapons of the hermeneutics of suspicion. Armed in this way, the critique is capable of unmasking the unthought conjunction of hidden metaphysics and worn-out metaphor.<sup>299</sup>

As our extensive discussion has involved a variety of prominent thinking of Hegel, I want to argue for my choice to proceed with this metaphoric analysis through Ricoeur's analysis and not Hegel's. Let us be reminded that Hegel considers poetry's cognitive value through its form of the absolute spirit in which knowledge is self-knowledge. For Hegel, metaphors and other linguistic figures all aim at conveying the meaning of an object by relating it to another object conceptually, where one object illuminates through its metaphoric comparison with another object.<sup>300</sup> However, as our aim here is to define and formulate an agency of meaning creation, I do consider the possibilities of combining Ricoeurian metaphoric analysis and the ethics of the capable human being fecund.

As for Ricoeur, the metaphorical tools identify metaphor as a source of semantic innovation and linguistic evolution. As meanings are not given directly to us, we must thus make a hermeneutic detour through the symbolic apparatus of the culture.<sup>301</sup> The metaphorical understanding of the curatorial action stems from Ricoeur's definition how it is actually reader's re-contextualising activity that gives metaphor its meaning and reference with the interaction of "*a world in front of the text*". For Ricoeur, human existence is a finite utterance attributing metaphor in establishing the relationship between the world and us and defining existence as a product of the ability to imagine.<sup>302</sup>

As noted in our introductory formulation, the debated definitions of curatorial practices are ever evolving, the metaphoric tools provide for this analysis an emergence of imageries, conceptualizations and language for symbolic representations, which are literally not applicable. Curatorial practice is considered to be founded on an immediate socio-political context and having the potential to address, visualize, and question the central effects of the changing status and function of things, ideas and ideologies. Stemming from this, the curator has become one of the main partakers advancing globalization by creating presentations as a mode of being in the world.

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<sup>299</sup> Ricoeur 1986 p. 285.

<sup>300</sup> De Man 1983.

<sup>301</sup> Ricoeur 1973, p.97.

<sup>302</sup> Ricoeur 1973, p.97.

To utilize these categories methodologically, I will employ the metaphors of action through the narratives presented in the case of *The Exhibitionist*. By reading and analyzing every descriptive verb in *The Exhibitionist* N:o 1-4, I was able to identify a set of language-games that I will here categorize as metaphors of actions. These categories are founded on a set of questions addressing how curators define the curatorial professionalization and the activity to contextualize, display and present works of art. Thus, I suggest that the curatorial *épistémè*, practice and engagement are formulated in the resource material through the metaphors of actions and can so be categorized as *description of curatorial practice through*:

- (i) *metaphors of language*
- (ii) *metaphors of influence*
- (iii) *metaphors of expression*

In the following I will list and categorize every single word of action used in the *The Exhibitionist* N:o 1-4. Interestingly the metaphors of action used in *The Exhibitionist* N:o 1-4 are self-generatively categorizing.

(i) *Description of curatorial practice through metaphors of language*

The resource material reflects the action of curating through various linguistic terms. Curators describe their own professional activity and practice, and especially the act of exhibition making, in reference to creating language and discourse. These metaphors of action include: *to address, to analyze, to argument, to articulate, to assume, to attest, to characterize, to communicate, to consider, to convey, to critique, to declare, to define, to describe, to discuss, to feature, to historicize, to insist, to interpret, to invite, to manifest, to question, to rewrite, to speak, to state, to suggest, and to translate.*

(ii) *Description of curatorial practice through metaphors of influence*

The metaphors of action referring to influencing and impacting through the efforts of exhibition making are most wide-ranging. These words indicate an active stance the curator in question has positioned oneself in the process of exhibition making. These metaphors of action include: *to acknowledge, to adapt, to advance, to arrange, to characterize, to claim, to classify, to compel, to conceive, to confront, to construct, to contain, to contribute, to defend, to demonstrate, to desire, to develop, to disarm, to disregard, to distance, to distort, to employ, to encompass, to encounter, to encourage, to engage, to escape, to execute, to exemplify, to expand, to experience, to explore, to fail, to focus, to ignore, to inaugurate, to infuse, to include, to incorporate, to initiate, to install, to intersect, to invent, to investigate, to live, to maintain, to manipulate, to merge, to mix, to neutralize, to occupy, to offer, to operate, to oppose, to organize, to overdetermine, to overturn, to position, to practice, to protect, to prove, to provide, to recontextualize, to reinforce, to reinvent, to represent, to render, to resist, to restore, to restrict, to reveal, to revisit, to select, to shock, to stress, to struggle, to supersede, to trace, to unfold, to unify, to usher, to use and to violate.*

(iii) *Description of curatorial practice through metaphors of expression*

The metaphors of action defining curatorial practice as an expressive and even artistic field of activity are more varied within this threefold categorization. These metaphors are subliminally contributing to the debate over curator as artist and creator but explicitly describing curatorial practice as a creative and expressive process, where curating is discussed through notions concerning all fields of art. These metaphors of action include: *to champion, to choreograph, to create, to cultivate, to design, to echo, to examine, to exhibit, to express, to experiment, to form, to frame, to illustrate, to imagine, to locate, to mirror, to mount, to orchestrate, to perform, to play, to position, to present, to produce, to re-create, to reflect, to rehearse, to reproduce, to sample, to select, to show, to stage and to visualize.*

With these metaphors, curators define the curatorial agency themselves as discursive, influential and creative. Accordingly, words *meticulous, effective* and *auteur* have a repetitious role in defining these metaphors of action, and the curatorial *épistémè*. Central here is to acknowledge the curatorial practice and its authoritative effects on the content, concept and actual definition of visual arts, where the artwork becomes an interface for the artist and the curator, and where the artwork eventually gains its existence through an encounter with its audiences. Accordingly, these metaphors of action, referring to this encounter, are overlapping, corresponding and intersecting with each other and they might be functional in the other categories as well. In the following, the metaphoric foundation provides for Ricoeur's action theory as a responsibility requiring, ethically varying, stating action.

The world of action implies a set of action-concepts and understanding concerning them.<sup>303</sup> Ricoeur defines human creativity inherently innovatively and semantically structured.<sup>304</sup> According to Ricoeur, an action is a quasi-text, in which symbols - embodied signs, rules and norms - provide the rules of interpreting behavior within the dialogue.<sup>305</sup> For Wittgenstein following a rule is not just imitating a particular behavior from one situation to another. Accordingly, rules are not explicit as they are reframed in situations through communication, dialogue and commitment. Following a rule, is manifested by claiming "*Now I know how to go on*" which is not a rationally articulable understanding.<sup>306</sup>

With considering curatorial *épistémè* metaphoric in nature I proceed in analyzing the domains of action and temporality.

#### **4.3.2 Responsibility for, Ethics in, Statement of Action**

Action changes the world. Ricoeur argues that every action involves initiative, an intervention of the agent of action into the course of the world.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Ricoeur 1984, p. 54-56.

<sup>304</sup> Ricoeur 1988, p. 207-208.

<sup>305</sup> Ricoeur 1988, p. 57-59.

<sup>306</sup> Wittgenstein 1953, PI. 151, PI. 179.

<sup>307</sup> Ricoeur 1992, p. 109.

What then is the nature of the world, if human beings are able to change it? And what is the nature of action, if it is to be understood as a potential to change to world?<sup>308</sup>

Through the metaphors of action in the categories of language, influence and creativity, *The Exhibitionist* endows the curator with a potential to initiate and create new, artistically relevant and practice defining content, and so enforces them to participate in changing the world, in describing the world and in creating something new for the world.

Action theory describes agent's capacity to act, while moral theory describes agent's obligation to act. With Ricoeur, the curatorial statements mediate between the theories of actions and ethics of an individual, where action cannot be ethically neutral.<sup>309</sup>

action means having to choose, hence having to state preference, hence having to exclude something in favor of others.<sup>310</sup>

Recognition of values and goods which provide reasons for action.<sup>311</sup> Therefore, our choices cannot be ethically neutral, because

an action has been already interpreted, evaluated, in terms of what is allowed and what is forbidden.<sup>312</sup>

For Ricoeur, the dialectic of sameness and selfhood assigns responsibility. The self responsible for an action must be the same self imputed to be the agent of the action. This responsibility can be accepted prospectively or retrospectively. In *The Exhibitionist* curatorial responsibility is formed towards the profession, to the artist and to the artwork.

Their freedom is limited by the artworks ... Curators responsibility is to make the work say what the work wanted to say. (Massimiliano Gioni 2011 No 4).

So, the curatorial statements entail features of stating one's beliefs that are not inferior to knowledge. This for Ricoeur leads to an attestation of truth, to an assurance that the self believes in the truth or validity of something. The validity of attestation as distinct from verification is crucial for Ricoeur, who notes that initiating something involves desire, which not only motivates a person but is a reason for the entire initiative in question and gives the initiative intelligence and meaning. Curating thus becomes loaded with ethical decisions, where every decision is a participation in changing the world. Reading Ricoeur here, the curatorial decisions are contextualized as

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<sup>308</sup> Ricoeur 1992, p. 137.

<sup>309</sup> Ricoeur 1992, p. 59.

<sup>310</sup> Ricoeur 1987b, p. 40.

<sup>311</sup> Ricoeur 1974<sup>a</sup>, p. 35.

<sup>312</sup> Ricoeur 2002, p. 286.

every value is a compromise among an exigence, a recognition, and a situation.<sup>313</sup>

Where the curatorial values are

the compromise between the desire for freedom of individual consciousness and the situations which are already qualified as ethical situations.<sup>314</sup>

For Ricoeur, this evaluation is scaled through *valoir-mieux* and emphasizes the importance of decision, a preferential choice by analyzing Aristotle's *proairesis*.<sup>315</sup> He creates a dialectic relation, that is evident also in the analyzed curatorial statements. His divalent evaluation scale resonates between the 'worth-more' and 'the worth-less'. This evaluation process should however transcend any subjective condition through rules and norms. Thus, subjective, arbitrary aspects are to be eliminated as

value is experienced as a norm by the being who is split or divided between something preferable which is already objectified and a desire which closes over his subjectivity.<sup>316</sup>

One of the main dialogues in the statements defining the curatorial practice is the single curatorial subject in opposition to curatorial collaboration entailing a variety of artistic professions and perspectives. Whereas the emergence of the independent curator happened through acknowledging the fundamentality of curatorial perspective the curatorial practice is proposed how

to try to reinstate art and its possibilities could be to move away from the curator as a person, and a position and to concentrate more on the method and the effects of the work of curators (Maria Lind No 3, January 2011).

Whether art has an instrumental ability to convey political change or prevailing human condition the curatorial effort is aimed at an entity comprising of these singular artistic views and with a responsibility towards the work of art.

The exhibition is a curatorial narrative, a site in which practices of comparing, distinguishing, and selecting are trained, cultivated and refined (Dorothea von Hantelmann No 4 June 2011).

The very question of quality constitutes the subject of art (Dieter Roelstraete No 4 June 2011).

Thus considering

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<sup>313</sup> Ricoeur 1978b, p. 183.

<sup>314</sup> Ricoeur 1978b, p. 183.

<sup>315</sup> Ricoeur 1992, p. 90-95.

<sup>316</sup> Ricoeur 1978, p. 184.



how to position the exhibition in relation to the theoretical constructs previously associated with the (art)work. (Nancy Spector No 1 January 2010)

is often considered as the underlying process behind the debate over status and power.

Curatorial initiative, as any, requires an agent with specific capabilities inhabiting a worldly situation providing a context of opportunities for and obstacles to the agency of initiation. On Ricoeur's analysis, every action is both purposive and related to other actions, unfolding in a context of meaningfulness. It is responsive to past action and anticipates that there will be future responses to it. As a task, action is always oriented toward the future, and as a motivation, it inherently carries the past.<sup>317</sup> Ricoeur calls for causality in initiating and sustaining something new in the world that can be manifested in conjunction with other causal processes as the temporal character of experience is implicit in action.<sup>318</sup> Through this analysis I understand curatorial *épistémè* as a professional capacity and obligation to act responsibly, contextualized in meaningfulness with a desire to act.

#### 4.3.3 Temporality of the Curatorial Character

The curatorial practice is temporally contextualized in *The Exhibitionist's* editorial categorization of typologies and practices creating a comprehension of the relevant history of exhibitions. The statements are composed through professional selections and introductions of meaningful exhibition and curatorial practices. The definition of the curatorial practice eventuates thus through the acknowledged, categorized and debated exhibitions.

Characteristic to the definition of the curatorial practice has been the retrospective sequencing of exhibition history. As noted, for example with Harald Szeemann, it has been customary to take the 1960s and 1970s marking a turning point when contemporary art initially found itself as a counter force to modernist art and characterized the contemporary curatorship, where object history was replaced by a conceptual approach and the work of art became staged within a performance of ideas.<sup>319</sup> As I am in the process of formulating the curatorial *épistémè*, we will take into account the retroactive validating power (as defined by James) in revealing the quality of knowing or if it was truly there. Accordingly, this retrospective understanding is relevant for Ricoeur in defining the responsibility to past action, which simultaneously anticipates future responses to it.

In the case of *The Exhibitionist*, the curatorial practice is defined in relation to a historical overview of moving from the museological selection of artworks to temporary exhibition making outside the museum institution and so from the

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<sup>317</sup> Ricoeur 1992, p. 59-64.

<sup>318</sup> Ricoeur 1984, p. 102, 109-112.

<sup>319</sup> Obrist 1994; 2001.

art historical reading towards intellectual production and reflective exhibition forms.

We are in a moment in which there is an urgency to writing a history of exhibitions but the methods for writing these histories are not yet congealed or even all out on the table (Tara MacDowell No3 June 2011).

The curatorial practice is described in relation - agreeing with or escaping from - the canonized historical development of the practice. The more traditional perspectives of curating entail

that the first curatorial urge is precisely to try to locate work within its proper category (Rob Bowman No 1 January 2011).

Whereas the history of exhibitions is generally agreed to have initiated through the museological practice, the disagreeing perspective sees potential in the curatorial experimentation to create new understanding of the preceding of the practice by noting that the

curatorial analysis allows the discussion of individual exhibitions and curatorial projects simply on their own terms, without the need to situate them within larger trajectory of historical development, and thus could ascribe meaning, value and intellectual power to them without recourse of comparison (Christian Rattemeyer No 4 June 2011).

Temporality is thus contextualized through the exhibition practices.

This tension between a temporary institutionalized exhibition such as Documenta and the exhibition making of a permanent museum is of enormous interest because it addresses the way an audience is structured through ideas that are present in the exercise not only of making art, but of showing it (Chusztartines No 1 January 2010).

Where the temporality becomes a focal foundation for a singular exhibition.

It inaugurates a new type of montage show where high and low, past and present, premodern and modern are brought together and assembled into a hybrid visual language that conveys something of the human condition today (Jean-Hubert Martin No 1 January 2010).

This developing continuum of temporalities provides for initiating and sustaining something new in the world, which manifests itself essentially in the curatorial *épistémè*. Essential here is to consider the temporality of knowledge as a practice-defining feature. As we will negotiate with Wittgenstein later on, the curatorial, professional frame of reference - a form of life - is temporal in its nature through its efforts of providing the artwork for an encounter with its audience. In the following I will consider what this act of providing for encounter entails as a practice-defining feature.

#### 4.4 Spatiotemporal Action – Providing Spaces for Encounters

In order to proceed with Foucault's definition of the curatorial *épistémè*, we will continue discussing curatorial epistemic efforts from a theory to a practice. As noted, the curatorial *épistémè* comprises these two features always simultaneously. Thus, the metaphoric analysis will now take turn towards the spatial practice of the curatorial *épistémè*. *The Exhibitionist* defines curators to provide an approval of authenticity and tools for representation, this then is a part of a process enabling artworks to emerge in a given setting and in an encounter. This spatial practice is seen fundamental in the attempts to break free from the typical thematical or invitational biennial-like structure of exhibitions. As discussed by now, starting with the curatorial *épistémè* and metaphors of action, curatorial practice contextualizes as a form of life, initiating meaningfulness and is temporally loaded with causality. Curating thus becomes a process of drawing meaning from such connections while translating this process in spatial experiences and ideally enabling the processes of resisting the hierarchical space.

As Harald Szeemann states, he is not

willing to merely fill up an available space, but then more and more to projecting my own ideas into it.<sup>320</sup>

The metaphors of action, the curatorial initiative and temporality eventuate in the case of *The Exhibitionist* by acknowledging the exhibition as a creative medium, as a larger argument than individual artworks. This we have already agreed to with Lyotard's consideration of artist creating an idea, and a curator presenting it. In these efforts, the space and its practices become fundamental. And in these efforts of breaking the autonomy of an artwork and disagreeing with its freedom limiting definitions are mandatory in order to support the experience of it. This we will now proceed to negotiate with Henri Lefebvre. Defining curatorial practice within its spatial responsibilities and references considers

practice as an unsteady condition that thrives on the spaces its experimentation opens up (Johanna Burton No 4 June 2011).

In the *Vers une architecture de la jouissance (Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment, 1973/2014)* Henri Lefebvre defines architecture as a social practice in the case of inhabiting and in the case of the practice of the architect himself exercising a profession that has developed over the course of history. With its own place within the social division of labor, the profession produces, or at least contributes to, the production of social space.<sup>321, 322</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Szeemann 1981 p. 119ff

<sup>321</sup> Lefebvre 1973.

<sup>322</sup> Stanek 2011.

Lefebvre participates in the discussion of architecture's professional crisis that of space and its production. I consider parallels, as discussed also in the Chapter 3, between the curatorial and architectural professions and their spatial practices. I will thus include Lefebvre's consideration in the conversation. So, for him, if an architectural space is understood to encompass all other spaces, agreeing to the vision of the architect merging partial and divided practices into temporary entities, architecture's disciplinary crisis is inevitable: since space is produced by multiple agencies, architect's will be held accountable for something they cannot control.<sup>323</sup>

Taking this emergency of control into consideration here, I would note that even if for Lefebvre the space can only be based on an architectural project it does have references for the curatorial epistemic practices. Here acknowledging the professionalization of architecture, where organizing the process of creating intentional form became an authoritative practice requiring specialization<sup>324</sup> - defined pro et contra modernity - Lefebvre's analysis of space as produced by varied, heterogeneous, and antagonistic social practices embraces the emergence of the curatorial epistemic practices. This analytical decision is based on the few fundamental similarities between architectural and curatorial practices. It does start with the recognition of social reality marked by contradictions and it can thus be understood only through the understanding of these contradictions.<sup>325</sup>

Lefebvre's spatial theory is built on triads. Whereas he formulates the first triad through *spatial practice - representations of space - spaces of representation*, and the second through *perceived - conceived - lived* his philosophy is founded on a dialectically interconnected moments with Marx's material social practice, Hegel's language and thought and Nietzsche's creative, poetic act.<sup>326</sup> These interconnections are also to be found with Ricoeur's metaphoric action. For Lefebvre, spatiality is utopian.<sup>327</sup>

Concrete utopia has its point of departure in spatial practice, in the effective appropriation of a dominant space, an opportunity for a space of representation to take shape.<sup>328</sup>

As we are negotiating the spatial practice of the curatorial *épistémè*, it is essential to discuss Lefebvre's formulation more thoroughly. For him, spatial practice designates the material dimension of social activity and interaction. The spatial feature necessitates the simultaneity of activities. The representation of space provides imagery, such as maps, plans and information, and there define a space. Representations of space emerge at the level of discourse, comprising verbalized forms e.g. descriptions, definitions, and theories of space. Spaces of representation concern the symbolic dimension of space and they so do not refer

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<sup>323</sup> Stanek 2014, 2012, p. 48-53.

<sup>324</sup> Brain 1991, Guillen 1997, Weintraub & Kumar 1997, Shvartzberg 2012.

<sup>325</sup> Schmid 2008, p. 30.

<sup>326</sup> Schmid 2008, p. 30-33.

<sup>327</sup> Lefebvre 2014, p. 148.

<sup>328</sup> Lefebvre 2014, p. 141.

to the spaces themselves but to the process of signification that associate itself to a symbol and topographies.<sup>329</sup>

So, space is to be comprehended as a complex web of relationships that is continuously produced and reproduced. This production identifies three moments, namely: material production, the production of knowledge and, the production of meaning. Here the idea of the curatorial *épistémè* as a meaning creating agency finds a foundation to land its efforts on. We can thus conclude that Lefebvre understands space as a production process taking place through three dialectically interlinked dimensions. This process of the space seeks to encompass the entirety of social practice and not merely a partial aspect of this practice. As the space embodies the materiality of social practice and the central role of the human body, the transformation of spaces into places requires a conscious moment. Following Hegel, Lefebvre understands production as a concrete universal, unfolding temporally from the universal moment to the singular moment. The process of production is characterized by a rationality that transcends the rationality of particular agents involved with it.<sup>330</sup>

Lefebvre presents a spatial dichotomy between the abstract, absolute space and the social space. Here, space is a product of something that is produced materially and simultaneously operating on processes from which it cannot separate itself because it is a product of them. For Lefebvre, the obvious dialectical conflict between abstract space and differential space is in the dissolution of old relations and the generation of new. Thus, according to Lefebvre, abstract space brings forth a differential space, because a new space cannot be produced unless it accentuates differences. For Lefebvre emerging spaces act as a resistance to the forces of homogenization present in abstract space.

Here we can return back to where we started with Foucault's power/knowledge strategies. As noted, for Foucault, power and knowledge directly imply one another. There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose, and constitute power relations. It cannot be localized nor found in the hands of the few, nor is it ever appropriated in the way wealth or a commodity can be appropriated. Furthermore, institutions represent power but do not produce power. Both Lefebvre and Foucault define a dialectical relationship between space and society, which are treated as ontologically distinct categories. Foucault analyzes the connection of political technologies and their associated knowledge strategies as spatio-temporal matrices of power in the transition from the absolutist form of power to disciplinary society.<sup>331</sup> Lefebvre, considers the spatial to the reproduction of capitalism. Space is presented as the result of a concrete, aforementioned, production process. For Lefebvre, things are not separate from space. He considers space as social product, which production may reveal social relations. This, for him, is characterized by the totalizing tendency of urbanization, and that, therefore, necessitates an epistemological

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<sup>329</sup> Schmid 2008, p. 33-34.

<sup>330</sup> Stanek 2011, p. 141.

<sup>331</sup> Poulantzas 2000, p. 102-104.

turn.<sup>332</sup> I would say all considerations from temporality, to action, to space and its practices, necessitate this.

Lefebvre's aims to search for new interpretations for the potential of revolutionary social processes as well as his recognition of space as an on-going social construction affecting spatial relations, practices, perceptions and meaning – thus subsuming produced things and encompassing their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – can be applied to the curatorial practice through the afore analyzed elements of spatiotemporal action. Characteristically in *The Production of Space* Lefebvre searches for new interpretations of the possible revolutionary social processes. For him the revolutionary potential entails creativity.

A social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character, must manifest a creative capacity in its effects on daily life, on language and on space.<sup>333</sup>

The notion that an exhibition is an evolving series of diverse iterations exemplifies a more comprehensive method of curatorial practice altering the spatial and temporal parameters of an exhibition.<sup>334</sup> The curatorial spatiotemporal action unfolds with Lefebvre as he discusses the decoding of space by means of its associated time; he avoids attributing an anachronistic application of categories of a later time, generated subsequently by the intellectus. Time contains a spatial code. Lefebvre notes that as long as time and space remain inseparable, the meaning of each is to be found in the other immediately.

The curatorial spatiotemporal action entails an urge to produce and transform spaces as

We seem to desire any and all space as potentially available for penetration by some type of art activity, whether or not this activity is recognized as an art activity in a particular situation. (Okwui Enwezor No2 2010)

This is also noted in the resource material as an ability

To insist on exhibitions as topographies of critical practice is to insist on developing a place for, constructing sites for, the advancement of the singular ideas of individual artists and groups of artists who share critical common ground. (Okwui Enwezor No2 2010)

The spatiotemporal action is described as a fundamental definition in the research material as the traditional definition of spatiality in the action of exhibition making has sifted

the conventional idea of curating as bound to exhibitions in a physical space ... to a conceptual space, a productive space of encounter where different forms of knowledge and practices may intersect, a methodology that is in process, through which problems

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<sup>332</sup> Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, 3, 119, 127, 44, 69–71, 76–78, 81.

<sup>333</sup> Lefebvre 1974, p. 227-230

<sup>334</sup> Altshuler 2013 p. 39

may be inhabited and grapples with without the need for objective distance (Emily Pethick No 4 June 2011).

I consider these modes of spatial practices equating with curatorial spatiotemporal action. Lefebvre analyses the history of spaces and develops a conceptual triad in explaining how space is produced. Social space is a social product serving as a tool of thought and action. Every mode of production has its own spatial practice, producing its own space. Here Lefebvre refers to spatial practice as the production and reproduction of spatial relations between objects and products. It also ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion implying a level of competence and of performance. Representations of space refer to conceptualized space, where what is lived and what is perceived merges with what is conceived. Representational spaces refer to the lived experiences emerging as a result of the dialectical relation between spatial practice and representations of spaces. This underlying continuity does not exist solely in spatial reality, but also at the representational level. For him, pre-existing space underpins both durable spatial arrangements and representational spaces as well as their related imagery, narratives and cultural models.<sup>335</sup>

Instead of only producing the space, Lefebvre's utopian goal transforms the space through an act of opposing the generic spatiotemporal distribution of the everyday, which focuses on the division of place and time of work and of leisure. Opposition is at a continuous play between abstract and concrete utopias.<sup>336</sup> Here critical thought can take its form.<sup>337</sup> For Lefebvre the spaces of leisure disrupt the hegemonic social regime so that it can be experienced as fundamentally incomplete. He calls for an approach towards a utopian space by avoiding abstraction and revealing its relation to practice and to lived experience.<sup>338</sup>

I would thus propose that the curatorial *épistémè*, the spatiotemporal action, merges these two creations of spaces into its own utopian space as it is able to free itself completely from this basic division of production. The space for work is the space for co-creation, for participation of the creative process of an artwork within the professional practice. The space for leisure is this same co-creative space for the participatory audience. The curatorial spatiotemporal action involves Lefebvre's threefold definition in considering curating as creation of spatial relations between objects, implying a level of competence referring to a conceptualized space, where what is lived and perceived merges into what is conceived, which then, finally, emerges into experiences. The curatorial space is a utopian space providing for critical thinking and the *épistémè*.

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<sup>335</sup> Lefebvre 1974, p. 227-230.

<sup>336</sup> Lefebvre 2014, p. 148.

<sup>337</sup> Lefebvre 2014, p. 149.

<sup>338</sup> Lefebvre 1973/2014.

## 4.5 Curatorial Justified True Belief and the X

Epistemologically knowledge development is generally agreed to build on the concepts of plausibility and of probability. Probability is one of the main theoretical frameworks for scientific reasoning and decision making, as knowledge processes are often based on partial knowledge and uncertain information.<sup>339</sup> However, these evidence-based reasoning methodologies are not relevant in our current discussion. The curatorial *épistémè* is thus constituted through an epistemological analysis through central philosophical tools.

In *The Foundations of Knowing* Roderick M. Chisholm (1982) argues that we can and do have knowledge of the external world. His epistemological theorizing draws a relation between directly evident foundational knowledge and indirectly evident beliefs about the world, the past, perception and other matters.<sup>340</sup>

Plato epistemologically and influentially formulated knowledge as *justified true belief*. In the *Theaetetus* (369 BCE) Plato states that justification of the object of true belief distinguishes knowledge from a mere true belief and by bounding it with the question of why the true belief is so. Justification is required as a belief might be true even though it is formed improperly and thus would not identify as knowledge.<sup>341</sup> This figure (Figure 3) I drafted, is based on the classical formulation of justified true belief. It shows that true belief can exist without justification and by so being not gaining the epistemic status of knowledge. Accordingly, justified truth and belief lack epistemic elements and so remain outside the kernel of knowledge.

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<sup>339</sup> In *An Essay Toward Solving a Problem in the Doctrine of Chances* Thomas Bayes (1764) describes the probability of an event, based on prior knowledge of conditions that might be related to the event. This is known as the Bayesian theorem. In *Probability Theory: The Logic of Science* (1998) E. T. Jaynes outlines that the Aristotelian logic reduces to deductive logic in the special case that our hypotheses are either true or false.

<sup>340</sup> Chisholm 1982.

<sup>341</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus* 201c-d; *Meno* 97d-98a.



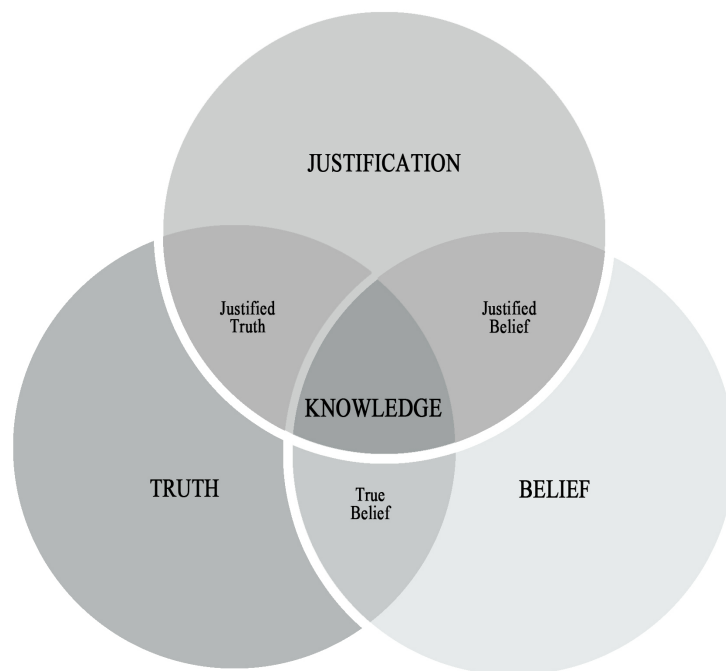


FIGURE 3. *Knowledge understood as Justified True Belief*

Justification gains a central role within the scientific epistemic practices, where instead of considering justification internal or external, it is considered through certainty and as an element with uncontroversial poles of propositional and doxastic. Propositional justification refers to whether a subject has sufficient reason to believe a given proposition; doxastic justification refers to whether this belief is held appropriately. As we will discuss in the following, the question of justification is not of the greatest essence for the curatorial *épistémè*. But let us start by discussing this prevalent epistemological theorization.

The Tripartite Analysis of *Knowledge as Justified True Belief* (JTB) explicating propositional knowledge follows:<sup>342</sup>

S knows that p iff  
 p is true;  
 S believes that p;  
 S is justified in believing that p.

Edmund Gettier (1963) famously demonstrated the problems of the justified true belief account of knowledge in *Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?* Gettier claims, and as generally accepted, the three conditions of the JTB account are not in general sufficient for knowledge.<sup>343</sup> The generally accepted Gettier problem shows that even justified true beliefs can be epistemologically simply fortunate

<sup>342</sup> A proposition entails assessment of truth, where the use of the words true and false may be constituent parts.

<sup>343</sup> Gettier 1963, p. 121-123.

and incidental (such as lucky guesses) in a way inconsistent with knowledge. This caused innumerable attempts to revise the JTB theory, by amending theories, complicating existing conditions or adding new ones, to unify knowledge and justified true belief. Eventually Linda Zagzebski (1994) suggested in *The Inescapability of Gettier Problems* that no analysis sufficiently similar to the JTB analysis could ever avoid the problems highlighted by Gettier's Smith and Jones cases. The options, thus, are either (a) to strengthen the justification condition to rule out Gettier cases as cases of justified belief or (b) to amend the JTB analysis with a sufficient fourth condition preventing justified true belief from being "gettiered." Thus amended, the JTB analysis becomes a JTB+X account of knowledge, where the 'X' stands for the needed fourth condition.

The fourth condition is supposed to be part of the sufficient conditions for knowledge and if accepted, all the four conditions must be fulfilled for any knowledge claims.<sup>344</sup> The main criticism for any inadequacies is due to the condition being too vague, weak or strict.<sup>345</sup> This request for a fourth condition is accepted among the traditional epistemological theories, whereas the non-traditional approaches require a refinement of the concept of reliability, indicating that justification is not necessary whereas reliably produced true belief is satisfactory.<sup>346</sup> I do appreciate this consideration, but will proceed to bear with the requirement for the fourth condition in our attempts to create a professional, analytical knowledge formulation of the curatorial *épistémè*. With the case of *The Exhibitionist* presented, I proceed to formulate the propositional curatorial knowledge with Zagzebski's JTB+X request.

#### 4.5.1 Curatorial Knowledge Contextualized

For when Moore says 'I know that that's ...' I want to reply 'you don't know anything!'<sup>347</sup>

In the posthumous *On Certainty* (1969) Wittgenstein considers the relevance of context, epistemologically. *On Certainty* investigates the foundations on which we claim to know something, and the conditions for these claims to gain meaning. Wittgenstein negotiates certainty with G. E. Moore's reply to skepticism about the existence of the outer world. He argues that any investigation of the world must rely on some sort of foundation, which is made out of assumptions about the world which we simply never question and so grant them a status of absolute certainty.

Wittgenstein argues (OC 114, 115, 315, 322), that any due inquiry presupposes certainty, i.e. some unquestioned prior commitment.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> Tan 2006, p. 38.

<sup>345</sup> Hospers, 1995; Zagzebski, 2002.

<sup>346</sup> i.e. in Dretske 1971, 1981; Nozick 1981.

<sup>347</sup> Wittgenstein 1969, OC 407.

<sup>348</sup> Wittgenstein uses a variety of expressions in describing the scope of knowing with words such as *Bestimmtheit* certainty; *Versicherung* assurance; *Überzeugung* conviction; *Sichersein*

he implies an importance of the context of inquiry as without a precise context, we lack a proper possibility to raise a sensible question or a doubt.

The truth of certain empirical propositions belongs to our frame of reference (OC 83).

Here these empirical propositions are curatorial. As discussed, the discursive nature of the curatorial practice suggests a shared epistemic practice. Encouraged by Wittgenstein, I will formulate a professionally contextualized epistemic practice and discuss knowledge in this given frame of reference.<sup>349</sup> The question is thus, of how knowledge can be gained and attained in the curatorial work and what this knowledge is, i.e. how to know. Epistemic language-games are the structured means of which we can achieve such knowledge. Wittgenstein outlines that when the notion of a direct trajectory between human consciousness and truth is renounced, objectivity depends on rules that language-use generates within a language-game. Here objectivity is subject to the possibility of communication.

We have established that the curatorial *épistémè* overreaches theories, philosophies and approaches in preparing the work of art for its encounter across different social and cultural contexts. In order to negotiate the idea of knowledge within this given context, let us consider it through the following simple exemplification: *An artist creates a work of art. A curator facilitates for this creation and prepares the work of art for an encounter with its audiences.*

Let us consider the content of this exemplification by reducing curatorial knowledge into simple propositions such as

- i. *Modern and contemporary two-dimensional works of art are to be hung at 155 centimeters from the floor level, to the middle of the work.*
- ii. *The curator narrates the story evolving around the work of art.*
- iii. *The audience creates its own experiences.*

These propositions can be considered generally accepted, curatorial knowledge. Knowledge, that is defined through an engagement with the work of art. However, by considered as such, the propositions strongly revolve around the work of art, where the content defining encounter happens in an object and may not facilitate for a larger understanding of art as a meaning creating agency. In order to negotiate curatorial *épistémè* through conditions of possibility of all knowledge, as suggested by Foucault, I aim to introduce it to this larger philosophical formulation of knowledge. I thus equate knowledge within this context.

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being sure; *unbedingt vertrauen* trust without hesitation; *Glaube* belief as well as *es steht fest für mich* it stands fast for me.

<sup>349</sup> Idea of specified knowledge, such as expertise, stems from the Greek reference of sage (*Sophos*), a wise individual, a profound thinker that Plato defines someone righteous and holy and wise. Plato, *Theaetetus* 176b.

Given the specialized, contextualized knowledge formulation proposed here, I suggest the following:

Knowledge as Justified True Belief:  $JTB + X = K$

Curatorial Knowledge as Curatorial Justified True Belief:  
 $CJ + CT + CB + X = CK = C(JTB)+X = CK$

Here

*C = Curatorial*

In order to negotiate the curatorial *épistémè*, I will apply the curatorial condition to modify each variable. By so doing I give every JTB+X variable a curatorial value that in this context refer to an agency pursued within the multitude of arts. A curator composes a précis epistemic horizon for the work of art providing versatile audiences access to the artistic practices. In this equation curatorial condition is the *épistémè* defining frame of reference. As noted, and suggested by Wittgenstein, context of inquiry enables epistemic elaborations such as questioning and doubting. Without such frame of reference knowledge cannot be attained.

*J = Justification*

The properties of knowledge and belief are a subject for Epistemic Logic whereas justification condition has been debated epistemologically irrelevant since von Wright (1951) and Hintikka (1962), for example. Accepting the Gettier problem and Moore's paradox, justification is understood as a sufficient propositional reason identifying knowledge with true belief.

In the case of our exemplars, justification refers to the validating power of the curator to facilitate for a work of art as well as providing for its presence in front of audiences, whether participatory or receiving. As a process of receiving, organizing and accepting sensory information, perception has even been considered as a source of knowledge. In art, meanings obtained through perception are concentrated for example in visual expression that is an interpretation, a way of depicting the world.<sup>350,351</sup> We will, however, focus our attention to the process of acknowledgment.

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<sup>350</sup> Merleau-Ponty, Johnson, Smith 1993, p.238.

<sup>351</sup> As noted, perception plays a central role in definitions of art, from the phenomenological perspective to say the least. With *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) Maurice Merleau-Ponty stated that the indeterminate and contextual aspects of the living reality cannot be removed from the account of the sensory as it is the "*living communication with the world that makes it present to us as the familiar place of our life.*" For Merleau-Ponty, the unfinished character of painting, is not an oscillation from objective observation to subjective vision, but rather a testimony to a "*paradoxical logic of all expression.*" Accepting this, we can agree, that perception as a means of justification in arts is foundational. While appreciating the strong phenomenological turn of the philosophy of art guided by Merleau-Ponty, I will focus on the curatorial from a professional perspective. Let us just agree that as the object of acknowledgment - art - mainly engages with all kinds of perception, the justifiable can be

Gottlob Frege connected the concept of truth with the theory of acknowledgement.<sup>352</sup> For Frege, judgement is a logically primitive activity. This he characterizes as acknowledging the truth (*Anerkennen der Wahrheit*):

Ein Urteil ist mir nicht das bloss Fassen eines Gedankens, sondern die Anerkennung seiner Wahrheit.<sup>353</sup>

Frege's remarks about judging as acknowledging the truth gain non-propositional features, such as perception. Here truth-value becomes a relation between a thinker, a thought and an object.<sup>354</sup> A triad very central for the curatorial *épistémè*, can be translated to the given exemplar, where the thought is shared between an artist and a curator and where the curator presents this thought as an object to the audiences. Here justification, as understood through Wittgenstein's empirical propositions, refers to our understanding of truth.

It is needed to note here that I do acknowledge Gettier problem's relevance in emphasizing epistemologically problematic instances of luck. However, the question of luck in the given frame of reference is rather irrelevant, especially when considering justification as an acknowledgement rather than an aim at singular truth.

T = *Truth*

For Foucault it is possible to separate true from false within an *épistémè*. The neo-classical theories - correspondence, coherence, pragmatist - consider the nature of truth, stemming from Plato and Aristotle. As our point of negotiation revolves around art, let us be reminded that Hegel considers art being a form of the infinite, absolute Spirit (*Geist*). For Hegel art focuses on its truth. The truth, for Hegel, is the universe as the realization of what is conceptual or rational, which is superior to any sensory experiences. Accordingly, for Heidegger truth can happen as and in art. The essence of truth reveals itself as freedom.<sup>355</sup> Heidegger considers art as the means of creating truth, and thus freedom.

Understanding truth through art gives us a possibility to negotiate it within the Wittgensteinian frame of reference as he conceived questions about truth as questions about meaning. I will therefore concur that questions of truth within this frame of reference are questions of meaning creation, where the curatorial *épistémè* takes a knowledge facilitating and providing role, and where as noted, the curator presents the thought of this meaning creation as a work of art. So, as Wittgenstein considers truth though our frame of reference.<sup>356</sup> Curatorially, therefore, truth can be conceived within its own frame of reference. Curatorial

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agreed through the perceivable. As the object of acknowledgment - art - is a subjective tour de force, understanding the creative and expressive dimensions of perception is foundational.

<sup>352</sup> In the preface to *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921), Wittgenstein acknowledges inspiration to his thoughts to "the great works of Frege and the writings of my friend Bertrand Russell."

<sup>353</sup> Frege 1892, p. 164.

<sup>354</sup> Textor 2019, p. 615.

<sup>355</sup> Heidegger 1943, 1950.

<sup>356</sup> Wittgenstein 1969, OC. 83.

truth is contextualized and shared. So being, curatorial truth is plural. Curatorially we should negotiate truth as truths.

For Wittgenstein this is only possible in a language in which we agree on conventions for predicating true, factual, evidence-based, and certain. Here truth is founded, positioned and defined within a language game. For Foucault, experiences of oneself are not a given, but constituted in the interplay of truths and power relations.<sup>357</sup> Consequently, agreeing with Wittgenstein, the truths are defined within a language game. Agreeing with Foucault,

truth isn't outside power or deprived of power ... As it ... is produced by virtue of multiple constraints it induces regulated effects of power.<sup>358</sup>

What Foucault calls a *regime of truth* is

a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and functioning of statements<sup>359</sup>

Such a regime is prevailing within the structures of the curatorial *épistémè*, in a theory and in a practice as the system of power produces and sustains itself, ceaselessly.

B = *Belief*

Curatorially, belief refers to an attitude towards knowledge.

What I know I believe.<sup>360</sup>

The curatorial belief system is ethical in nature. Here aesthetic values are to be applied on it. Foucault's aesthetics of existence, is an invitation for the individual to problematize their relationship with the self and by so doing applying '*self-techniques*' into a work of art.<sup>361</sup> Accordingly, as Wittgenstein famously noted in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922), that aesthetics and ethics are one. Here the necessary preconditions of value, that is the underlying form of any given ethical or aesthetic attitude, merges with the philosophy of language, logic and meaning creation and so resists separation into a single, unifying problem. Aesthetics is thus multi-faceted human cultural phenomenon loaded with value where connections have more essence than any causal relations. As for Wittgenstein

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<sup>357</sup> Foucault 1976, p. 112 claims that

- 1) "the types of discourse harbours and causes to function as true"
- 2) "the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements"
- 3) "the way in which each is sanctioned"
- 4) "the techniques and procedures which are valorised for obtaining truth"
- 5) "the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true".

<sup>358</sup> Foucault 1976 interview *The political function of the intellectual*.

<sup>359</sup> Foucault 1976, p. 113.

<sup>360</sup> Wittgenstein 1969, OC. 177.

<sup>361</sup> Foucault 1976 p. 113-114.

Every judgment of relative value is a mere statement of facts and can therefore be put in such a form that it loses all the appearance of a judgment of value.<sup>362</sup>

TB = *True Belief*

A frame of reference contextualizing *what I know I believe*.

As agreed, our aim is to formulate the suggested fourth condition through the curatorial frame of reference. This frame of reference originates from the source material of *The Exhibitionist*, where the acknowledgement (*Anerkennung*), is founded on system of professional ethics. Ethics, just like aesthetics, are a merger of value-driven complexities. As noted with Foucault, the values in art can be aesthetic in self-definition processes. For Wittgenstein, ethics is an inquiry into what is valuable, meaningful or important.<sup>363</sup> However, ethics lack any concrete description of the form of ethical normativity for in this inquiry experiences gain the status of facts, as the subjective ways of life. Ethics thus fluctuates among us, appearing, disappearing and reappearing through negotiations and acknowledgments.

Ethics so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science. What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense.<sup>364</sup>

Wittgenstein thus asks us to accept the subjective feature of ethics and acknowledge the equal meanings of each subjective experience in defining any ethical implications.

Considering these ethical implications with the epistemic features of the curatorial practice and inquiry, the frame of reference becomes conclusive. It is in this curatorial frame of reference the empirical propositions become acknowledgements (*Anerkennung*), a professionally agreed epistemic efforts to define the curatorial knowledge.<sup>365</sup>

Here the X = EA, *Ethics of Acknowledgement*

I thus propose the Curatorial Knowledge to be epistemologically defined as

$C(JTB)+EA = CK$

EA = *Ethics of Acknowledgement*

This frame of reference – a shared, curatorial system – is founded on a mutual agreement to contribute to the definition of the curatorial *épistémè*. And it is this agreement that now provides the framework within which knowledge is formulated.

That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life.<sup>366</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Wittgenstein 1929 Lecture on Ethics

<sup>363</sup> Wittgenstein 1929 Lecture on Ethics

<sup>364</sup> Wittgenstein 1929 Lecture on Ethics

<sup>365</sup> Gottlob Frege connected the concept of truth with the theory of acknowledgement.

<sup>366</sup> Wittgenstein 1953, PI 241.

As my aim is to define a specific professional *épistémè*, the ethics of acknowledgement are considered as professionally fundamental, mutually agreed, shared and practiced form of ethics. I thus propose as my finding of the JTB+X theory that JTB can be defined as knowledge within a given system, as discussed in more detail in the following.

For example, Aristotle regards ethical knowledge in reference to habit and acculturation distancing itself from other kinds of knowledge. Relevant here is the potential of moral propositions and their truth-values.<sup>367</sup> Wittgenstein's ideas concerning epistemological positions and language imply to the domain of ethics providing meanings with their reasons. For him ethically evaluated concepts are formulated within contexts and have thus no ultimate foundations.<sup>368</sup>

Let us be reminded of the exemplar – *an artist creates a work of art. A curator facilitates for this creation and prepares the work of art for an encounter with its audiences* – and consider it with these ethical connotations. As Gioni outlines in the metaphoric analysis, the Ethics of Acknowledgement have reference to a *responsibility to make the work say what the work wanted to say*.<sup>369</sup> This responsibility charges the curatorial *épistémè* with ethical decisions, where every decision is a participation in changing the world. And these decisions are mutually acknowledged in the curatorial frame of reference. As analyzed through the metaphors of action in the categories of language, influence and creativity, the curatorial *épistémè* is loaded with potential to initiate and create new, artistically relevant and practice defining content, and so to participate in changing the world, in describing the world and in creating something new for the world.

As we are in negotiation with Gettier, we need to take into account his consideration of epistemic luck and how justified true belief can be accidental, coincidental, or fortuitous. It is precisely justification that has the main relevance in ruling out the lucky guesses as instances of knowledge. If we found justification within the curatorial frame of reference on perception, ethics and acknowledgement, we can accept with Wittgenstein that the ethical facts are based on subjective experiences. We can so consider the ethics of acknowledgement succeeding in eliminating epistemic luck as knowledge is in our equation only possible within a frame of reference<sup>370</sup> and always based on acknowledgement.<sup>371</sup>

K = *Knowledge*

Knowledge in the end is based on acknowledgement<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> Adler 2002; Textor 2004.

<sup>368</sup> McGinn 2013.

<sup>369</sup> Gioni 2010.

<sup>370</sup> Wittgenstein 1969, OC. 83.

<sup>371</sup> Wittgenstein 1969, OC. 378.

<sup>372</sup> Wittgenstein 1969, OC. 378.



Wittgenstein reconstructed knowledge as a cluster concept that encompasses a variety of relevant features but that is not adequately captured by any definition. Thus, knowledge evolves around distinct ways of talking about conviction and how “knowledge” is used in languages as a case of a family resemblance (*Familienähnlichkeit*) in which things have overlapping similarities with several features. Incorporating Moore’s paradox<sup>373</sup> Wittgenstein states that we must have evidence for what we know but we do not have evidence for what we are certain of. All of this is agreed upon within a frame of reference, where acknowledgment is a foundational part of the features.

To conclude CK in the equation, Curatorial Knowledge is professionally acknowledged in its frame of reference. Curatorial Knowledge is, as discussed in the following, negotiated within this frame of reference through language-games.

Curatorial Knowledge facilitates for meaning creation, where a thought and an idea becomes a work of art. This process is shared and provides for the work of art to be presented and encountered to its audiences. This contextualized process is in the core of Foucault’s knowledge/power relation as (and as noted)

it produces reality, it produces domains of objects, and rituals of truth.<sup>374</sup>

The power controlling constituted social body, Foucault is referring to, is the curatorial entity. Considering our exemplar – *an artist creates a work of art. A curator facilitates for this creation and prepares the work of art for an encounter with its audiences* – this constituted social body producing reality, domains of object and rituals of truth is embedded in the facilitation and preparation. Knowledge is power.

#### 4.5.2 Curatorial Knowledge Defined as A Form of Life

We have already agreed in considering the curatorial *épistémè* semantic and metaphoric in nature with Paul Ricoeur. As we proceed in our negotiation of the curatorial *épistémè*, I want to embed Wittgenstein’s concept of a language-game (*Sprachspiel*), that he developed throughout *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), into the formulation as I consider it relevant for the formulated  $C(JTB) + EA = CK$  approach as well as the frame of reference in the case of *The Exhibitionist Journal for Exhibition Making*. This gives us an epistemological potential to elaborate more thoroughly on the actual resource material presented in *The Exhibitionist Journal for Exhibition Making*. By so doing, we create an epistemological analysis to our negotiation and so enable its further developments.

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<sup>373</sup> Moore’s paradox concerns the apparent absurdity involved in asserting a first-person present-tense sentence. As Hintikka (1962) formulates it “*P and NOT(I believe that P)*” or “*P and I believe that NOT-P.*” Moore’s paradox (1993 pp. 207–212):

- (i) can be true,
- (ii) is (logically) consistent, and
- (iii) not (obviously) contradictory.

<sup>374</sup> Foucault 1991, p. 194.

As discussed, in our curatorial frame of reference, for the epistemic practice we call knowledge, the features of acknowledgement (*Anerkennung*) and family resemblance (*Familienähnlichkeit*) are foundational.

So, for Wittgenstein, a language-game (*Sprachspiel*) defines the rule-governed character of language. A language game designates forms of language simpler than the entity of language itself,

consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven.<sup>375</sup>

In order to give language its meaning, language-game intents

to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life.<sup>376</sup>

And by so stating he refers to plain examples of language use and the actions into which the language is intertwined by bringing out the openness of our possibilities in employing language and in describing it.<sup>377</sup> However, this rule characteristics does not entail definite set of rules for every language-game, but points to the conventional nature of this form of human life. Wittgenstein thus considers that we cannot state

what is common to all these activities and what makes them into language or parts of language.<sup>378</sup> Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, – but that they are related to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all "language".<sup>379</sup> (PI 66)

This idea of language-game gains relevance in our analysis of *The Exhibitionist* for it is here curators create their own language, the negotiated metaphors of action. As acknowledged, context is a focal variable in meaning creation. So, for Wittgenstein, in determining a meaning of a word, the context fulfils a central role. The meaning of a sentence, such as of word or phrase, is connected to the

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<sup>375</sup> Wittgenstein 1953, PI. 7.

<sup>376</sup> Wittgenstein 1953, PI. 23.

<sup>377</sup> Wittgenstein (PI. 23) gives an extensive list of exemplary language games, including

Giving orders, and obeying them –

Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements-

Constructing an object from a description (a drawing) –

Reporting an event –

Speculating about an event –

Forming and testing a hypothesis –

Making a joke; telling it –

Solving a problem in practical arithmetic –

Translating from one language into another –

Asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying.

<sup>378</sup> Wittgenstein 1953, PI. 65.

<sup>379</sup> Wittgenstein 1953, PI. 66.

criteria of our understanding. Understanding necessitates either production of a sentence in appropriate circumstances or reaction to a sentence in a way appropriate to the circumstances. Both indicate that a language-game is part of a form of life.

As agreed, the participation in the definition of the curatorial *épistémè* is based on an agreement to endorse the practice in question. For Wittgenstein, an agreement is a part of a form of life.

"So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?" - It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life.<sup>380</sup>

Based on this understanding of the form of life, I would say that the curatorial *épistémè*, as any agency according to Wittgenstein, is founded on its own language-game. In order to keep with the C(JTB) + EA = CK formulation, it is imperative to consider how acknowledgement of this, and the agreement to participate in the shared epistemology, as agreement in form of life, is our agreement on a shared world picture.

But I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No: it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false.<sup>381</sup>

And indeed, true and false are plural. With the case of *The Exhibitionist* language-games are founded on an agreement to contribute to the curatorial *épistémè* through agency defining statements. Through our understanding on Wittgenstein these statements constitute our ability to communicate, to argue and to inquire. It provides the framework within which these agreements in contributions may or may not exist. Within the form of life, language commits us to an evidence for affirming and denying statements.

Agreement in form of life is our agreement on a set of grammatical propositions or hinge propositions which describe what counts as compelling grounds for certainty of statements within our different language games.<sup>382</sup>

Here the Ethics of Acknowledgement creates a context, a professional frame of reference, based on mutual agreement to contribute, with sincerity, to the given system. So, in this system of statements, a form of life can be examined but questions for the examination cannot be answered at once, for the form of life is a framework, the curatorial form of life, within which curators contribute in their aims to create the entity of the *épistémè*.

I thus propose that the curatorial *épistémè* is contextualized within its frame of reference, based on mutual acknowledgements to contribute to a form of life. As negotiated with Wittgenstein, this form of life is a priori founded on the Ethics

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<sup>380</sup> Wittgenstein 1953, PI. 241.

<sup>381</sup> Wittgenstein 1969, OC. 94.

<sup>382</sup> Wittgenstein 1969, OC. 270-271.

of Acknowledgement. Agreeing with Foucault, we have defined the curatorial *épistémè* simultaneously in a theory and in a practice.

## 4.6 Conclusions

On a cosmic scale, our life is insignificant, yet this brief period when we appear in the world is the time in which all meaningful questions arise.

Paul Ricoeur (Time and Narrative II 1985)

In order to define the ever-evolving definition of the curatorial *épistémè* I started by agreeing with Foucault that *épistémè* defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge. The special dual character of the curatorial *épistémè* is in the knowledge conditions that are always founded simultaneously in a theory and in a practice. I thus negotiated this special dual character firstly in theory and secondly in practice.

I initiated this investigation by defining the curatorial *épistémè* in a practice. For this, I considered the temporal and spatial dimensions of the curatorial practices, how the physical acts of working with art and artworks take place. Proceeding in negotiating the curatorial *épistémè* in theory I composed a metaphoric analysis of first four issues (No. 1-2/2010 and No. 3-4/2011) of *The Exhibitionist Journal for Exhibition Making*. With Paul Ricoeur's metaphoric tools, I claimed that curators define their practice metaphorically as linguistic, influential and creative. Considering curatorial practice as epistemologically definable, metaphoric in nature and encounter providing, my analysis considered curatorial *épistémè* as a professional capacity and obligation to act responsibly, contextualized in meaningfulness and with a desire to act in a temporal contextualization, which causal in nature and provides for a continuum.

Stemming from this analysis I stated that the curatorial *épistémè* is spatiotemporal action. I noted that temporality and action unfold in a space, whether physical or conceptual, immediately. I thus finalized the negotiation of the curatorial *épistémè* in practice by considering Henri Lefebvre's formulation of the production of space and its threefold development of spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces referential to curatorial practice as it entails curatorially acknowledged activities. With this formulation the Lefebvrian utopian space is applicable as a form of curatorial *épistémè*.

As for Ricoeur, creativity is inherently innovative and semantically structured, for Lefebvre the revolutionary potential manifests in a creative capacity. With this consideration I conclude that the potential of revolutionary social processes grounds the curatorial spatiotemporal action and thus create spaces for epistemic practices, which, then, is the main aim for exhibiting and contextualizing art. The curatorial spatiotemporal action has a possibility and ability to respond to the need to

turn the world upside down using theory, the imaginary, and dream, to contribute to its multiform practical transformation.<sup>383</sup>

Continuing from here, I acknowledged Wittgenstein's understanding of the importance of the context of inquiry. For him, a precise context enables epistemological analyze. I thus formulated a professionally contextualized epistemic practice and discussed knowledge in this given frame of reference.

In order to consider the epistemic practice and its frame of reference in question, I formulated a constituent epistemology in order to propose a foundation for the curatorial *épistémè* in theory as amended Justified True Belief, JTB+X, where the X = EA. In theory, Curatorial Knowledge can be epistemologically defined as

$$C(JTB)+EA = CK.$$

With this I propose a possibility to appropriate Justified True Belief within a frame of reference of a professionally acknowledged epistemic practices. As Wittgenstein states, knowledge is founded on acknowledgement. In the case of *The Exhibitionist* this epistemological frame of reference is based on a mutual agreement to contribute to the epistemological process of defining the curatorial *épistémè*. To conclude, curatorial *épistémè* exists simultaneously in a theory and in a practice. The curatorial *épistémè* is metaphorical in nature and temporally space, concept and content productive. Curators participate in the potentiality to change the world within their professional capability, stating their action through co-creating utopian spaces, where experiences merge, art is encountered and meanings are created.

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<sup>383</sup> Lefebvre 2014.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In this doctoral thesis I performed an epistemological concept analysis on the meaning creating agencies in arts, i.e. an inquiry of the specific nature of knowledge produced in arts and how it relates to philosophical concepts such as truth, belief, and justification. In this analytical process I formulated two epistemological concepts: those of curatorial *épistémè* and Intellectual Sustainability. By doing so I aimed to define the special features and characteristics that constitute as knowledge, within arts, while simultaneously introducing these characteristics to the wider philosophical conversations about knowledge and epistemic practices.

The curatorial *épistémè* is founded simultaneously in theory and in practice on the meaning creating agencies in art, as suggested by Michel Foucault. An *épistémè* defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge that can be formed and practiced within a frame of reference. Within this frame of reference knowledge is based on acknowledgment.

Intellectual Sustainability is founded on reciprocal knowledge production between the human and artificial intelligences. Here I outline the human intelligence with Heidegger as *poiēsis*, remaining as the human potential of Being and employing *technē*, the artificial intelligence. In order to break free from the constrains of object-oriented theorizations of art, I outlined the meaning creating agency merging these two in its processes.

As I aimed to negotiate one of philosophy's most debated concepts - knowledge - I stayed outside scientificity and aimed therefore not to define knowledge objectively, universally nor scientifically but to create a coherent understanding of the epistemological endeavors practiced in arts. Therefore, while classical definitions of art characterize artworks by a type of property, including representation, expression and form that philosophy of art considers participating in larger systems of thought, such as epistemology, ontology, value theory and so forth, I focused on the philosophies negotiating art's epistemic features and practices.

A work of art, for Hegel, is an Idea, an articulated entity realizing its own, original concept and by so doing reveals the absolute idea, the self-realizing nature of the world and thus inherently a medium of knowledge. Art at its best conveys truth. The truth, for Hegel, is the universe as the realization of what is conceptual or rational, which is superior to the sensory experiences. Continuing from Hegel, I considered the thoughts of Martin Heidegger, John Dewey, Paul Ricoeur as well as Jean-Francois Lyotard and Michel Foucault as some of the most influential philosophical means towards the curatorial *épistémè*. Agreeing with Hegel's theory of Art as an Idea, Lyotard sets the Idea in the focus of the curatorial *épistémè* by claiming that an artist creates the Idea, while a curator presents it.

John Dewey's *Art as Experience* (1934) is an extensive overview on the meaning of experiencing art. Dewey proposes that the artist and the viewer encounter each other through an artwork, in an experience of this encounter, a process that forms their environments, and their culture at large. In Foucauldian terms, the *épistémè* of art considers itself through the theory of work of art and the practice of making it. Let us conclude the main idea of the curatorial *épistémè* in the following.

## 5.1 Curatorial *Épistémè*

The opening for my formulation of the curatorial *épistémè* is to be founded in *The Order of Things* (1966/1970) where Michel Foucault formulates *épistémè* through the understanding of the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether in a theory or in a practice. I claimed that the curatorial *épistémè* involves these knowledge conditions always and simultaneously both in theory and in practice. The curatorial *épistémè* emerges through an extensive overview of a variety of epistemological philosophies.

As for Foucault *épistémè* is a structured field of knowledge, conditions and historical and cultural patterns that determine what counts as knowledge, truth, or reality in a given time and place. According to Foucault, history runs from one episteme to another, and then yet others. He finds coherence in systems of knowledge within an *épistémè*, but discontinuities between and across them, even with content similarities.

In order to define the curatorial *épistémè* contextualized within its frame of reference, I considered the meaning creating agency through Paul Ricoeur's idea of a '*capable human being*', an agent with specific capabilities inhabiting a worldly situation providing a context of opportunities for and obstacles to the agency of initiation. Here the structure of agency is intelligible capability responsive to past action and anticipates that there will be future responses to it. As a task, action is always oriented toward the future, and as a motivation, it inherently carries the past. Ricoeur calls for causality in initiating and sustaining something new in the world that can be manifested in conjunction with other causal processes as the temporal character of experience is implicit in action. Through this analysis I

understand curatorial *épistémè* as a professional capacity and obligation to act responsibly, contextualized in meaningfulness with a desire to act.

I considered the redescription that Latour (2013) calls for in science to be our task at hand, but in relation to art. Since for Latour, scientific knowledge is not a cognitive process but as an epistemic, cultural practice it is enabled by instruments, systems and specific historical conditions. He claims in that the human condition is most prevailing in any scientific process. Epistemologically he underrates the logic and relevance of justification, while simultaneously emphasizing the relevance of context as well as the persuasive and political work behind the emergence of a prevailing scientific or technological fact.

Accordingly, Dewey and Foucault criticize the epistemic traditions, those of rationality, objectivity, method and truth. Dewey equates knowledge and science with a work of art and they so hold the potential to converse into things and features, which they did not previously entail. Dewey claims that artistic practices entail the prospects for abandoning the obstructions of given socio-cultural conditions and so hold an immense potential for attaining knowledge residing in the activities of the arts.

As encouraged by Latour, I considered art as an epistemic practice, as a meaning creating agency. And again, as encouraged by Latour, I encouraged us to reconsider what the epistemic features and values of such agency are. I instigated that this reconsideration is aimed at the results of our short overview of the philosophy of art. It brings forth a prevailing understanding of art through its objecthood. In order to reconsider this orientation towards a work of art, or the work of an artist, we need to understand art not only as a process, practice, or inquiry but as we aim to define here, as a meaning creating agency.

Accordingly, this agreement with Latour, allowed to acknowledge relevance of context, or the frame of reference as I negotiated with Wittgenstein. Proceeding from this notion of context, I concurred, that justification has minor relevance in the epistemic practice in question.

Accepting these considerations and acknowledging with Foucault that *épistémè* defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge. The special dual character of the curatorial *épistémè* is in the knowledge conditions that are always founded simultaneously in a theory and in a practice. I negotiated this special dual character firstly in theory and secondly in practice. I initiated an investigation by participating in the philosophical debate of knowledge as well as through a metaphorical analysis of a selected variety of curatorial statements published in the first four issues (2010-2011) of *The Exhibitionist Journal for Exhibition Making*.

So, I started the definition of the curatorial *épistémè* in a theory, by aiming to comprehend what knowledge means in the curatorial reference. As the philosophical definition of knowledge has long been founded on Plato's definition of justified true belief and reconsidered through a proposal known as the Gettier problem, I formulated the curatorial *épistémè* as a methodological position through this foundation and analyze it with contextualized knowledge efforts as suggested Wittgenstein.



From here I proceeded in negotiating the curatorial *épistémè* in a practice, considering the temporal and spatial dimensions of the curatorial practices, how the physical acts of working with art and artworks take place. This I did by using Paul Ricoeur's metaphoric tools I claimed that curators define their practice metaphorically as linguistic, influential and creative. And finally, I formulated the curatorial action in space and time with Henri Lefebvre's revolutionary social processes to produce spaces.

I thus conclude, that by agreeing with Wittgenstein we can outline the importance of the context of inquiry as for him, a precise context enables epistemological analyzing. I formulated a professionally contextualized epistemic practice and discussed knowledge in this given frame of reference.

In order to consider the epistemic practice and its frame of reference in question, I started by formulating a constituent epistemology in order to propose a foundation for the curatorial *épistémè* in theory as amended Justified True Belief:

JTB+X, where the X = EA.

In theory, Curatorial Knowledge can be epistemologically defined as:

C(JTB)+EA = CK.

With this I proposed a possibility to appropriate Justified True Belief within a frame of reference of a professionally acknowledged epistemic practices. Here the professional contextualization is a form of life validating knowledge. In the case of *The Exhibitionist* this epistemological frame of reference is based on a mutual agreement to contribute to the epistemological process of defining the curatorial *épistémè*.

Considering curatorial practice as epistemologically definable, metaphoric in nature and encounter providing, my analysis considered curatorial *épistémè* as a professional capacity and obligation to act responsibly, contextualized in meaningfulness and with a desire to act in a temporal contextualization, which causal in nature and provides for a continuum.

## 5.2 Intellectual Sustainability

I started the concept formulation of Intellectual Sustainability by noting how in the era of digitalization of the knowledge technologies, parameters of intellectual production have profoundly changed. In order to understand knowledge in a digital environment, we distinguished the three main epistemic terms: data, information and knowledge. Data is seen to locate in the world, knowledge in its agents and information between them. I noted that for Latour and Woolgar (1986) a required measure to be "knowledgeable" necessitates that its internal dispositions to act are adjustable upon receipt of data that contains information value. Therefore, data itself possesses information value only as a potential to

become knowledge through a contextualized process that is organized, collected and embedded in a meaningful way within a context of application.

It was thus relevant to note that whereas the original aim of artificial intelligence is to assist users of a system in an intelligent manner to gather, search, filter and by so doing gain information that can become knowledge, it is feared that the escalating independence of these artificial intelligences may lead to changes in knowledge/power relations. Throughout the thesis we agreed that for Foucault, power is based on knowledge and it employs knowledge, while simultaneously reproducing knowledge by forming it and recreating its own fields of practice through this process. As artificial intelligence is built to exercise this power through data collecting and information access defining algorithms and so provide us with modifiable data on users and their habits, tendencies interests and locations, this dreaded power-knowledge game is seen to form our everyday life drastically.

As the digital environments escalate to merge with our physical realities, it is topical to negotiate the conditions of future epistemic practices. The ongoing sustainability debate is evermore involved with epistemic practices, such as research and innovation, that are a part of this intellectual agency. Thus, acknowledging that the global crises of digitalization and climate change are increasingly challenging the sustainability agenda at large, I took the overlapping complexities of these two crises as a foundational context for the meaning creating agency within arts. I evidentially defined intellectual sustainability is a shared awareness, created in the meaningful continuum of any human intellectual effort, whether successful or failed, where immediate effects become secondary to the entity of meaning creating agency.

The dichotomy of syntax and semantics is thus to be found in this process of revealing as Heidegger states that modern technology differs from *poiēsis*. As noted earlier, for Heidegger, in the process of revealing, art as *technē* belongs within the realm of *poiēsis*. This is due to modern technology's foundational relationship to modern physics as an exact science. The revealing of modern technology, therefore, is not bringing-forth, but rather challenging-forth. As I consider it, therefore, syntax is this challenging-forth and semantics bringing-forth.

So, I locate intellectual sustainability within the human context of knowledge, within this Heideggerian continuum of revealing where syntax and semantics are differing. As for the meaning creating agency, Heidegger defines art as poetry. As noted, art belonged within *poiēsis* as the poetical pervades every revealing of coming to presence. It pervades art. It pervades truth. This happens in poetry through the form of Being in language. Being in language calls for a total clarification of human existence through the revealing of inherent meaning.

Let us consider this within the curatorial *épistémè*. Here works of art are not only representations of the prevailing conditions of existence but provide foundation for the clearing and there produce shared understanding.<sup>384</sup> As focal part of the meaning creating agency, human existence is revealed. We were

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<sup>384</sup> Heidegger 2008, p. 143.

reminded that for Heidegger true thinking is human's most essential manner of being human.<sup>385</sup> It is never performed in abstraction from reality but manifests the relation between human and Being. In true thinking human is used by Being. Thinking is the ultimate utility for Being to manifest itself on whatever is. Being is the human existence, the semantics of poetry that the syntax of knowledge technologies can never attain.

For the curatorial *épistémè technē* becomes the theory and practice facilitating power. Here *Gestell – Enframing* defines its essence,<sup>386</sup> something that curatorially speaking provides for art's presence in the world through its *enframing*. As Heidegger states, the essence of technology is not technological.<sup>387</sup> It is thus the essence that enables intellectual sustainability that is founded on reciprocal meaning creation between the human and artificial intelligences.

Considering that the prevailing and on-going sustainability debate lacks process and method defining strategies in the aims at sustainable communities, lives and futures, I aimed to define intellectual sustainability through this negotiated meaning creating agency, where the tensions created by the escalating empowerment of technological intelligences should be considered reciprocal for the human intelligences. Instead of focusing on concerns created by this tension, I acknowledged the potential of the Heideggerian bringing forth.

Considering the features of artificial and human intelligences, I involved sustainability in this ongoing epistemic consideration. I outlined a difference in artificial and human knowledges based on a simple syntax and semantics division. Here I formulated intellect as the agency possessing contextualized knowledge, i.e. the meaning creating agency in arts that in our frame of research is defined as the curatorial *épistémè*. Notable in our formulation of intellectual sustainability was to agree on intellect as an active, shared agency that cannot be attained artificially or digitally, but remains to be elevated, refined and sustained between and among individuals.

*Poiēsis* remains as the human potential of Being. *Poiēsis* employs *technē*, and thus syntax is subordinate to semantics in the process of intellectual sustainability. Yet again, they co-exist. Intellectual sustainability thus entails human and artificial intelligences that necessitate a balance in their means and results as a continuum of cultural contributions, the Latourian discontinuities that are responsibly conducted by the Ricoeurian capable human being.

I founded the dichotomy of syntax and semantics in the process of revealing, something that Heidegger claims in art as *technē* belongs within the realm of *poiēsis*. This is due to modern technology's foundational relationship to modern physics as an exact science. I consider therefore, syntax as challenging-forth and semantics as bringing-forth. Negotiating this further, I locate intellectual sustainability within the human context of knowledge, within this Heideggerian continuum of revealing where syntax and semantics are differing. As for the

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<sup>385</sup> It is customary to call the subject in Heidegger's consideration as man, I prefer a gender neutral subject of human.

<sup>386</sup> Heidegger 1977, p. 19-21.

<sup>387</sup> Heidegger 1977, p. 20.

meaning creating agency, Heidegger defines art as poetry. As noted, art belonged within *poiēsis* as the poetical pervades every revealing of coming to presence. It pervades art. It pervades truth. Agreeing with this, and with Lyotard, I repeatedly returned to an introduction to Auguste Rodin's *La Porte de l'Enfer* (The Gates of Hell, 1880-1917), as his eternal process contended with the idea of an artist as a meaning creating agent, debating philosophically about the nature of art and its conditions to exist.

### 5.3 A Context

We started by noting that the curatorial practice is considered to be founded on an immediate socio-political context and having the potential to address, visualize, and question the central effects of the changing status and function of things, ideas and ideologies. Stemming from this, the curator has become one of the main characters advancing globalization by creating presentations as a mode of being in the world.

Looking into the relevance of the imperial exhibition efforts, the modernist discipline and control of the white cube and concluding with the origin of art as a pluralist process in its immaterial forms I considered how the emergence of the curatorial profession has created a new authoritative position defining context and content of an artwork in its temporal, immaterial and installation-based forms. I aimed at a synthesis of the establishment of the curatorial profession as one of the focal practices in defining contemporary art, its practices, content and accessibility. I claimed that art is defined as an immaterialized notion requiring acts for engagement and gaining its existence through a curated encounter with its audience. Artwork thus becomes the shared ground for artistic practices, where the artist and the curator meet and prepare the artwork for this encounter.

In order to frame this thinking, I negotiated through Wittgenstein, who in the posthumous *On Certainty* (1969) considers the relevance of context, epistemologically. *On Certainty* investigates the foundations on which we claim to know something, and the conditions for these claims to gain meaning. Wittgenstein argues that any investigation of the world must rely on some sort of foundation, which is made out of assumptions about the world which we simply never question and so grant them a status of absolute certainty.

Wittgenstein states that any due inquiry presupposes certainty, i.e. some unquestioned prior commitment.<sup>388</sup> Accordingly, he implies an importance of the context of inquiry as without a precise context, we lack a proper possibility to raise a sensible question or a doubt.

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<sup>388</sup> Wittgenstein uses a variety of expressions in describing the scope of knowing with words such as *Bestimmtheit* certainty; *Versicherung* assurance; *Überzeugung* conviction; *Sichersein* being sure; *unbedingt vertrauen* trust without hesitation; *Glaube* belief as well as *es steht fest für mich* it stands fast for me.

The truth of certain empirical propositions belongs to our frame of reference (OC 83).

We agreed these empirical propositions to be curatorial. Encouraged by Wittgenstein, I formulated this professionally contextualized epistemic practice by discussing knowledge in this given frame of reference. This led me to consider how knowledge can be gained and attained in the curatorial work and what this knowledge is, i.e. how to know. I conclude the epistemic language-games to be the structured means of which we can achieve such knowledge.

## 5.4 Remains to be Discussed

A lot remains to be discussed and considered. As the sustainability agenda is gaining validity in the era of global crises, the efforts at livelihoods, practices and futures defining actual, applicable principles are still however lacking. As the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contextualize our efforts, I would like to, with this research initiative at hand, to conclude with a final suggestion.

As noted, whereas the artistic engagement with sustainability entails an understanding of ecological equality, I want to propose a redefined sense of social responsibility drawing from comprehensive critiques of the global art world establishment and its structural systems to lay a foundation on the immaterial artistic practices providing for the sustainable agenda. This does not only regard confronting the ecological deficit and unethical corporate partnerships of large institutions but more importantly relates to the entire process of producing a work of art, from the initial conceptualization of an idea all the way to its mediated existence, where the curatorial *épistémè* takes its form.

Relevant here is to recognize the ever-evolving definition of resilience within the sustainability agenda. While sustainability, and the 17 SDGs, target development by reducing and eliminating impact of change and by improving quality of life, resilience designs lives to endure these changes without major shock. Resilience is an acceptance towards an ongoing, prevailing change. It is a way to find new life and ways to live. I would thus like to consider aims at resilience also within the meaning creating agency and through the curatorial *épistémè*.

In order to gain any relevance within the sustainability context, the participatory practices, whether individual or collective, require Ricoeurian ethics intrinsic to an agency to believe that action has a potential to change the world. I thus suggest a threefold conceptualization for the meaning creating agencies in art:

- i) expressing concern in a visual form;
- ii) taking responsibility in production and dissemination;
- iii) reaching to ethical implication on a global level.

As noted, the cultural sustainability in the formulation of Duxbury, Kangas & De Beukelaer (2017) gains four roles for this relevant agency.<sup>389</sup> Thus, Cultural policy can firstly safeguard and sustain cultural practices and rights; secondly, green some of the operations and impacts of cultural organizations; thirdly, raise awareness and accelerate initiatives about sustainability and climate change; and finally, encourage eco-cultural citizenship. Here sustainability can be met by forging and guiding actions along these co-existing and overlapping strategic paths.

Here art's partaking in the definition of the sustainability agenda merges with the threefold conceptualization (FIGURE 4).

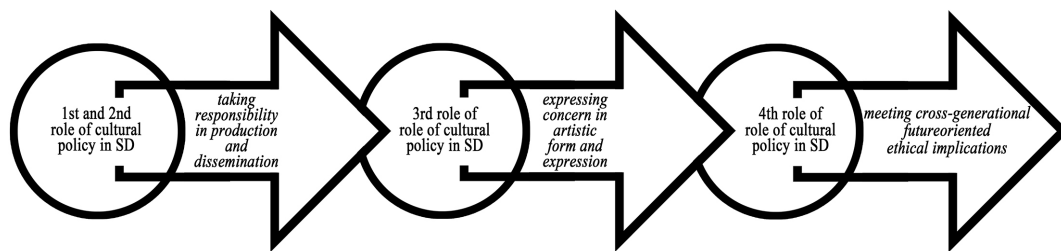


FIGURE 4. *Threefold conceptualization of Sustainability in Arts.*

The first and second role of cultural policy in the sustainability, those of safeguarding and sustaining cultural practices and rights as well as greening some of the operations and impacts of cultural organizations are founded in the meaning creating agencies as the initiative of taking responsibility in production and dissemination of art. The third role of cultural policy in sustainability, those of raising awareness and accelerating initiatives about sustainability and climate crisis, are founded in the meaning creating agencies as expressing concern in artistic form and expression. And finally, the fourth role of cultural policy in sustainability, that of encouraging eco-cultural citizenship, is founded in the meaning creating agencies as setting and meeting cross-generational, future-oriented ethical implications. Here sustainability can be met by forging and guiding actions along these co-existing and overlapping strategic paths.

Finally, as our consideration of Intellectual Sustainability involves intellects in plural, I would like to conclude with an acknowledgement of the co-existence of multiple intelligences in the equilibrium. Intellectual sustainability is founded on this appreciation that each intelligent organism can partake in the process on an equal footing.

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<sup>389</sup> Duxbury, Kangas & De Beukelaer 2017, p. 214-215.

## SUMMARY IN FINNISH

Tutkimukseni on epistemologinen käsiteanalyysi taiteiden merkityksiä luovista mahdollisuuksista eli taiteessa tuotetun tiedon erityisluonteesta ja siitä, miten taiteessa tuotettu tieto liittyy filosofian peruskäsitteisiin, kuten totuuteen ja tietoon. Tutkimukseni analyysi kontekstualisoituu nykytaidekuraattorin ammatillisuuden ja toimijuuden kautta. Muotoilen analyyttisen prosessin tuloksena kaksi epistemologista käsitettä: kuratoriaalinen *épistémè* ja älyllinen kestävyys. Täten määrittelen taiteen tiedollisia erityispiirteitä tuoden ne laajemman filosofisen, epistemologisen keskustelun piiriin niin tiedosta kuin tiedon luonteesta.

Tutkimukseni pohjaa Hegelin ajatukseen taideteoksesta Ideana. Lyotardin mukaan taiteilija luo idean, kuraattori esittää sen. Tutkinkin tätä ideaa merkitystä tuottavana toimijuutena. Keskustelen laajasti Martin Heideggerin, John Deweyn, Paul Ricoeurin, Jean-Francois Lyotardin ja Michel Foucault'n kanssa.

Michel Foucault määrittelee *épistémèn* tapahtuvan joko teoriassa tai käytännössä. Väitän kuratoriaalisen *épistémèn* tapahtuvan aina yhtäaikaaisesti sekä teoriassa että käytännössä. Tämän lisäksi väitän, että älyllinen kestävyys toteutuu taiteessa vastavuoroisena tiedontuotantona inhimillisen älyllisyyden ja tekoälyn välillä. Keskeisintä älyllisyyden määrittelyssäni on taiteen ymmärtäminen merkitystä tuottavana toimijuutena. Tutkimuksessani inhimillinen älykkyys vastaa Heideggerin *poiēsis* käsitettä, joka hyödyntää *technēä*. Vapautuakseen taiteen teoskeskeisistä määritelmistä, taiteen merkitys luodaan yhdistämällä näitä kahta älyllisyyttä toisiinsa.

Käyn läpi kuratoinnin kehityksen taidetta kontekstualisoivana toimijuutena, jossa taideteoskeskeisyys laajenee historiallisessa tarkastelussa tilaan, tilallisuuteen sekä jaettuun kokemuksellisuuteen. Taiteen merkityksellisyys avautuu kielellisenä mahdollisuutena. Etenen tarkastelemaan tutkimukseni pääkäsitettä – kuratoriaalista *épistémèä* – Foucault'n innoittamana sekä teoriassa että käytännössä. Analysoin lähdemateriaalini *The Exhibitionist Journal for Exhibition Making* joulukuun neljän ensimmäisen numeron (1-2/2010 ja 3-4/2011) kaikki tekstit kategorisoimalla metaforisen menetelmän kautta kuraattorien itsensä käyttämät teos sanat. Heidän teksteissään kuratointi esiintyy metaforisesti kielellisenä, vaikuttavana ja ilmaisullisena toimijuutena. Jatkan *épistémèn* määrittelyä käytännössä lähdemateriaalista nousevien tilallisten käytänteiden analyysinä. Väitänkin, että kuraattorit tuottavat sekä fyysisiä, että abstraktia ja kokemuksellista tilaa osana *épistémèään*.

Lopulta tarkastelen *épistémèä* teoreettisesti asettamalla kysymyksen taiteellisen tiedon tuotannon mahdollisuuksista tietoteoreettisessa kontekstissa. Muotoilen Gettierin ongelman mukaisesti perinteistä tiedon määritelmää hyvin perusteltuna totena uskomuksena. Annan matemaattisen kaavan mukaisesti tiedon määritelmälle sen jokaiselle osalle kuratoriaalisen arvon ja analysoin Wittgensteinin kielellisyyden ja viitekehyksen kautta tiedon määritelmän puuttuvaksi X ammatillisen viitekehyksen. Täten yhtälöksi muodostuu

$$C(JTB)+EA = CK.$$

Tähän yhtälöön perustuen väitänkin, että voimme määritellä tietoa viitekehyskohtaisesti. Taiteellisella tiedolla on siten oma erityispiirteensä yhteisesti määriteltynä, merkityksiä tuottavana jatkumona.



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