
Changing Roles

Artists' personal views and wishes

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Foreword

Renske Janssen and Nicolaus Schafhausen

To finalize the period of institutional self-questioning, also touched upon in the group exhibitions *Don Quijote* and *Street: behind the cliché*, this publication reflects on the personal views and wishes of artists that Witte de With has worked with during 2006 and 2007. Our aim for this book was to generate a symbolic platform on which a social network could be rendered visible and where the role of art and cultural institutions as well as the critical role of artists in contemporary society would be addressed. The result became a time document, one of Witte de With's source books that provides an overview of contemporary artists' opinions. *How are you involved in the art world? Are you related to any art scene? What would be the most productive place to present your work? What kind of curators do you like to work with and why? What does the art market mean for your work? In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for? What would you like to see them presenting?*

We asked these seven questions to all participants of our program. The technique of open questioning evoked an equally open answering, like a non-confrontational form of communication giving the option of answering in depth, or indeed with a simple yes or no. The outcomes reflect the variety of our program, and functions as an inspiring information source for many collaborations, conversations, exhibitions and projects to come.

The title *Changing Roles* refers to the book's two faces: On the one hand, it simply implies that as a cultural producer, one has to be flexible, to be open for changing one's own position, one's role in the realization of art production. On the other hand, the critical question that is triggered by the title is of course: Are we indeed acting all the time? Why? Because we do not dare to be ourselves in a given situation? Or is it made impossible from the outside? *Changing Roles* is about all that, and challenges the reader to think about his or her own position.

By enacting a platform for exchange (as this book offers) on different topics that concern us, we reveal who we are, what we want to make, and what possible roles one could play to attain the best conditions for the production of art.

The questions asked touch upon different topics on several aspects of today's art and cultural field, the art institution, the market, the artist, the curator, and how cultural production leads to knowledge and insight on how societies function. We used the form of a standardised interview technique that is often used as a method for social-scientific research. In the history of the cognitive interview technique, this form is often understood as a somewhat naïve way to evaluate many different, heterogeneous mentalities and positions that are visible within a given social network. Besides that, this specific form of questioning shows a great deal of trust in the results, the answers, beforehand. The words used in the questioning, general expressions like "art world", "art scene", or "art market", were used merely as triggers. We thought that these expressions would be confirmed as indeed existing or instead be deconstructed, redefined or re-evaluated as complex social constructs.

The answers confirmed some of our presumptions. For example, that perhaps socially careful answering is at stake where, except for a few people who did so, hardly anyone mentioned specific names of artists, art centers, museums, collectors or curators they liked or disliked. Another assumption was that there is a need, or preference, for an art center to show developments in art and culture by using unexpected combinations of artworks and artistic positions. Especially because we tend to draw from the same resources of books, people, exhibitions artfairs and biënales. Sometimes the questions were interpreted differently

than we had intended. Some felt they were meant as pure provocation, meant to confuse rather than to unravel difficulties. Some felt they were too general. Some people thought the questions were tricky and it took them many weeks of thinking before they could answer them. A few people did not answer because the questions did not seem applicable to their practice. But most participants enjoyed the opportunity to take up writing space, to be able to speak their minds.

The results form *a tour d'horizon* of the views and wishes of the people involved. Their answers on the current art field and serve as knowledge for the future role of an art institution such as Witte de With, its people, and its program. Certainly seen from the diversity of answers, new questions can be raised, and ideas or thoughts that come out of this book will be a source of a new discussion and lecture program in 2008, where different positions and practices from artists, critics and curators will be researched.

We would like to thank all the participants for collaborating on this publication and especially the Mondriaan Stichting, without their support this publication would not be possible.

Questions and Answers

Joachim Baan

“We should not settle
into the paved ways
of functions and
disciplines.”

Joachim Baan

How are you involved in the art world?

JB: I'm more an observer, not very involved. But in my work as a graphic designer, I'm very inspired by today's contemporary art scene. It's interesting to see waves of styles, following the waves of time. Today, there's a new kind of cubism in the work shown at art fairs, and you see it in every creative expression, from interior to graphic design, illustration, fashion and architecture. That inspires me in my work as a graphic designer, seeing these movements, participating in them and bringing them to a broader public.

Are you related to any art scene?

JB: Not really to a specific scene. I'm doing the things I love, and in my autonomous work, I'm trying new things – new forms and materials.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

JB: For me, that would be in a place where a restaurant, a shop and a gallery are blended into one space, one experience. When people are in a space where they can enjoy food, have a little drink, are surrounded by beautiful books, toys, clothes, music and art, where everyone feels at home, we experience everything as full, complete, a synergy of emotions. For me, that is the level at which I like to experience art.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

JB: Multi-disciplinary. Someone who is not only a curator, but also an artist, publisher, entrepreneur, commercial director, you name it... I think that by being multi-disciplinary, we are able to create completely new links, new ways of presenting work, telling the story, cross-linking everything. We should not settle into the paved ways of functions and disciplines. Because then we won't be able to tell the story of the artist in a way that's worthy of the artist.

What does the art market mean for your work?

JB: At this time there are a lot of people who use the art market only as a good way to invest their money. But I

Joachim Baan

believe that the art market has to have a bigger voice in world problems, rather than only having a shocking or pleasing function, or being a good way of investing your money... I want galleries to participate in education, in opinions, in politics. It happens already, but is only visible for a very small group of people.

So for me, the art market at this time is quite passive.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

JB: Today, centers for contemporary art have a double role in society. First, they have to inspire a broader public, to show them what is going on in the national and international art scene. Secondly, I think these centers also need to play a role in inspiring artists to go further, to challenge them. Not by saying what is good or wrong, but by letting them participate in projects, themed exhibitions, publications, etc. And again, not in a passive way, but in a passionate and active way.

What would you like to see them presenting?

JB: A mix of art, products and publications, in a combination of new and old. I love it when I see art of the past century side by side with contemporary art. There are always so many parallels that it is lovely to see them manifested in one exhibition.

Marc Bauer

“I don’t think there is
a good or best place;
I think there are projects
that each fit in very
different spaces.”

Marc Bauer

How are you involved in the art world?

MB: As an artist.

Are you related to any art scene?

MB: I've lived here and there, so I don't know if I belong to any specific art scene; I think people connect according to some value, aesthetic or position they take in their works.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

MB: I don't think there is a good or best place; I think there are projects that each fit in very different spaces. Bad places, I guess, are just inappropriate to the works.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

MB: The smart ones who really involve themselves, and the not too egomaniacal ones, as then it's easier to collaborate.

What does the art market mean for your work?

MB: The possibility of financial independence, the possibility of being dependent on the production of the production of the...

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

MB: They are places where the public can see art, where the public can have an overview of what's happening on the contemporary art scene, to show what is going on in reality. They should be independent from state politics and the economy, to prevent censorship etc...

What would you like to see them presenting?

MB: They have to present a diversity of points of view. They should take risks, even on artists who aren't established, on defending experimental ideas, on everything – really anything – without worrying about mainstream tastes or trends.

Michael Beutler

“The show usually
got productive when
it entered some
unpredictable,
uncommon ground.”

Michael Beutler

How are you involved in the art world?

MB: I am an artist.

Are you related to any art scene?

MB: I wouldn't say so.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

MB: I think 'productivity' is a funny notion in this context. I don't believe there is such a relationship in any kind of measurable way. Even looking back at shows in the past, it is quite hard to tell which would have been the most productive. The show usually got productive when it entered some unpredictable, uncommon ground. This can happen in any place, a metropolitan center or the shed of some village art club.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

MB: Which are the different kinds? (The ones that have absolute and unconditional confidence in the artist whose work they are showing.)

What does the art market mean for your work?

MB: When somebody buys one of my works, I get some money. For the rest, the market has no influence on my work.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

MB: Leaning out into as yet unseen and unknown areas of what art can be, do, move, trigger, discuss, create...

What would you like to see them presenting?

MB: A great, independent and admirable spirit.

Johanna Billing

“I like them to show
things from all kinds of
art scenes...”

Johanna Billing

How are you involved in the art world?

JB: I am showing my work in art institutions and art galleries.

Are you related to any art scene?

JB: I am not sure. I don't know which one that would be. I feel happy about showing things in different contexts and places, film festivals, art shows, music venues, etc., and I try to communicate with people from the different genres that the work itself is moving in between – documentary, fiction, music, dance, history, etc. I have always somehow found it a little bit easier to have discussions about what the work actually is about, when moving a bit away from the art world. But having said that, I realize at the same time that my work is in many ways dependent on the art world, and that those frames and preconceived ideas that people have about art itself are often also the starting point for the communication and the discussions.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

JB: All the places mentioned above, perhaps. In general, I think that as long as there is a generous atmosphere in the place where the work is shown, and there are people coming to see the work, I can't think of one that is more productive than another. But at the same time, I do feel that the experience I get out of the actual differences – of showing works in these various contexts – is for me very productive, the way it triggers unexpected interpretations, discussions and thoughts.

What I try to avoid, as an artist, is to think about or pick or rank some places above others; then a productive place to present something could, in a selective and in the end hierarchical way, mean that it would lead to something on a more practical production level, perhaps to another show in another place for example, depending on who's watching. So that kind of question, even though it is good sometimes to be aware of the situations you are in, is in the end something I deliberately try not to think about too much.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

JB: People who are passionate about art, people who really

Johanna Billing

care about the audience and don't forget for whom they are doing the shows. People who like to experiment and who have visions and ideas about how to present art in different ways. People who are not caught up in thinking about careers and who look at things with a long perspective.

What does the art market mean for your work?

JB: Until very recently, nothing at all, as my work has not been part of it. I still do not have a lot of experience with it, but at this very moment it means that I don't have to go completely bankrupt after finishing a work, as I have done up till now. But still it does not mean that the production of the work is dependent on it.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

JB: Gathering people, gathering art, making things accessible for people, also outside the art world. If it weren't for these public institutions – I can only speak from my own experiences, from growing up in Sweden and my perception of the art institutions here as being very democratic – I would not have been able to become an artist to begin with. They are tremendously important as long as they are democratic and have a generous attitude. The art world is still so closed; it sometimes does not try hard enough, I think, to include people from outside. To make people feel that they could take part in art is work that, I think, needs to be done again and again. And I think it is very sad sometimes to come across snobby attitudes towards, for example, educational and pedagogical work around art. I think people sometimes forget how they themselves might have got into art and start to take the luxury of being involved in art for granted.

What would you like to see them presenting?

JB: I don't wish for any specific thing personally. I like them to show things from all kinds of art scenes. I like it when things are given enough room and depth of focus for people to feel they can enter a whole universe of somebody's work. I think that what is needed is to go deeply into some things and not only try to do surveys. I like it when people in these centers consider presenting works in a local and historical perspective and think about the people who live in the

Johanna Billing

specific city the center is situated in, rather than being more focusing on traveling art professionals, and what they might have seen or not. I think it is possible to think more about the audience without having to compromise, or become too populist, as long as the art that is exhibited is in itself the most uncompromising.

David Blandy

“The art market requires something that necessarily has been seen before – “I want one like that one – can’t you just do one with blue flowers instead?”

David Blandy

How are you involved in the art world?

DB: I am an artist, so only indirectly.

Are you related to any art scene?

DB: I suppose I'm part of the London art scene, through living in London. But I wouldn't say I am a very active member.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

DB: I think that the gallery and museum are still intriguing spaces to think about, but probably the arena that would make the most sense for my work would be television. I like to infiltrate, subvert and resist accepted forms, reconfiguring and analyzing our relationship to this media-saturated world, art being an integral part of that world. The site is always part of the work, so I try to consider it as such.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

DB: I like to work with curators who have faith in an artist's ability to produce, and are prepared to take risks, to accept that they won't full know what they will get until they are given it.

What does the art market mean for your work?

DB: The art market is not something that I court, in fact I find the idea that anyone would want to buy what I produce quite strange. But art is a commodity; even resistant forms like performance have been appropriated into the art market. I think that the line between "art object" and ephemera is getting increasingly blurred, while artists are pursuing forms that deliberately target wide appeal, such as video and comics. And we all need to eat. But like KRS-One said "Make money elsewhere, hip-hop you won't abuse it". What I mean is that if your prime motivator for creating work is financial gain, you end up making safe choices and making unchallenging work. Which is boring. Whenever I make a piece, I want to see something that I've never seen before. The art market requires something that necessarily has been seen before - "I want one like that one - can't you just do one with blue flowers instead?"

David Blandy

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

DB: Challenging entertainment. I think that art spaces have the potential to be very exciting spaces, celebrating all forms of creativity that subvert the mainstream, that challenge people's assumptions. Too often they end up merely preaching to the converted. However, I also believe that art is a research-based entity, and this research should be supported regardless of public interest. So that's a dichotomy.

What would you like to see them presenting?

DB: Art as process and product. Black Heat once sang "Live the life you love, so that you can love the life you live", and I think that this is a pretty good mantra to disseminate, in an oblique way, through art establishments.

Manon de Boer

“A mix of solo shows (which I usually enjoy most) and group shows that revolve around questions more than around themes.”

Manon de Boer

How are you involved in the art world?

MdB: As an artist.

Are you related to any art scene?

MdB: Mostly to the Brussels art scene, via Jan Mot (the gallery that represents me in Brussels) and through international exhibitions, I'm in touch with artists from other places.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

MdB: There's not just one place, I'd say the more "traditional" places like galleries, art centers etc.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

MdB: I like to work with curators with whom I can have a good dialogue about my work, who can give me unexpected input, for instance on other artists or writers in whose work they see parallels with my own; who have a good sense of space, who really know the space they're working with and know what could be interesting and what not when installing an exhibition.

What does the art market mean for your work?

MdB: I don't sell enough that I could say the art market is important for my work, but I can see that in general it does have an influence on the art world.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

MdB: To show art.

What would you like to see them presenting?

MdB: A mix of solo shows (which I usually enjoy most) and group shows that revolve around questions more than around themes. A mix of young unknown artists and more well-known artists who are not often shown in museums.

Henning Bohl

“I have the feeling that a lot of things could be different to how they are, but I really have no idea where to start.”

Henning Bohl

How are you involved in the art world? Are you related to any art scene? What would be the most productive place to present your work? What kind of curators do you like to work with and why? What does the art market mean for your work? In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for? What would you like to see them presenting?

HB: When I got your questions I first thought of very simple answers like:

I don't know.

Then I thought that they of course relate to very complex social systems worthy of an examination.

What made me hesitate so much in answering (as I realize now that I go through the notes I made before but didn't want to send) was that I don't really operate with these terms (like "curators", "scene", "art world") myself.

Of course I use these words too, but somehow they still make me shiver.

Maybe it's because they involve so many different interests, speculations, expectations that I can't really figure out what they relate to (and what my general opinions or even wishes towards them would be).

For example, I have the idea that each of the people I know seems to be his or her own scene already.

That would mean I'm in as many scenes as I know people.

Further, I feel as if I am more than one scene, even quarrelling ones.

But it might look from the outside as if it is limited to only a certain range of a spectrum, and of course it is in fact limited.

And then there are things, "the market", that I don't like to talk about, since I realized that the most pro-market magazines do stretch out the most on all this rhetoric of market-as-speculative-bubble-stuff. Or art fairs themselves with their symposiums on "Art and the Market I-VI".

It occurs to me that by all this speaking about itself, the system only creates a self-referential volume to gain even more and I don't want to add to that, as talking about things with hatred (or with love) is often just a way to stabilize circumstances.

I have the feeling that a lot of things could be different to how they are, but I really have no idea where to start.

Martin Boyce

“ I’ve said in the past
that I would show in a
shoe box, providing the
situation was right.”

Martin Boyce

How are you involved in the art world?

MB: I'm an artist.

Are you related to any art scene?

MB: Some of my best friends are artists.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

MB: I like to present my work in different places. I've said in the past that I would show in a shoe box, providing the situation was right.

Every situation and place and space presents the artist and the work with possibilities and difficulties. A work in one place is different from the same work in another. This is why making exhibitions is exciting.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

MB: I like to work with curators who have something to bring to the work and can open the work up in new ways, both for myself and the viewer.

What does the art market mean for your work?

MB: It means I can make a living making art.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

MB: Is this a trick question?

What would you like to see them presenting?

MB: Really great exhibitions, a good bookshop and a good place to eat with friends.

Keren Cytter

“I have the feeling sometimes that museums and galleries (and humanity in general) just accept a certain reality like a herd of buffalo, without thinking where they’re going and without wondering why they’re going there.”

Keren Cytter

How are you involved in the art world?

KC: I'm exhibiting in galleries and museums, getting paid if one of the galleries is selling anything, and endlessly Googling my artistic enemies.

Are you related to any art scene?

KC: I know few artists that are my friends... I hardly see or talk about art. I'm doing videos that are presented as art and sometimes I get invitations for exhibitions in my mailbox.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

KC: In ordinary bookshops, museums, galleries and cinemas... but generally every place that asks me to present my work is suitable for me.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

KC: I like to work with honest curators, that don't smile too often. I also like curators with what I consider to be good taste. I like curators that are interested in art, I don't like curators with no opinion, or curators who try to create some kind of interaction with the artist's work. I'm not the biggest fan of group shows.

What does the art market mean for your work?

KC: Generally the art market is none of my business, it is something I mostly read about. It doesn't interest me. It's stupid.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

KC: To exhibit art for the public and to preserve pieces of artwork.

What would you like to see them presenting?

KC: I would like them to present interesting shows that aren't only designed and exhibited in the best possible way, but that also try to raise questions concerning the quality of these pieces and their meaning or importance, or their role in (art) history. I have the feeling sometimes that museums and galleries (and humanity in general) just

Keren Cytter

accept a certain reality like a herd of buffalo, without thinking where they're going and without wondering why they're going there. I would also like these art centers to exhibit such 'unquestionable' artists as Picasso, Rembrandt or Warhol, and try to make them 'questionable' again.

Jason Dodge

“It is always an interesting process, seeing what a curator does with what, and how, and with whom.”

Jason Dodge

How are you involved in the art world?

JD: As an artist.

Are you related to any art scene?

JD: Yes.

What does the art market mean for your work?

JD: I make work that generally attracts only collectors that are passionate about my work; in this regard, my work is excluded from the market. I don't think many people would think of my work as a commodity.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

JD: I find that anything can be interesting if I can get my head around it – I try to use whatever situation is at hand to serve the work. Galleries are most productive for making money, and institutions are most productive for me to make my best work.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

JD: I like to work with curators who are true to their own vision and true to the artwork simultaneously – I think this can make for messy exhibitions, but in the end more challenging exhibitions. It is hard for me to judge curators because I imagine there are sometimes pressures from boards, the need to attract visitors, and funding, too, has an impact on an institution's program. It is always an interesting process, seeing what a curator does with what, and how, and with whom.

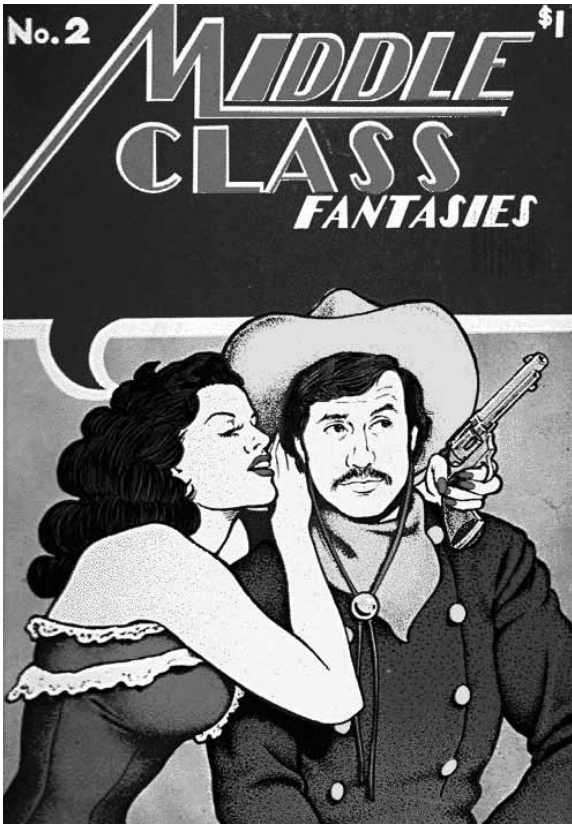
In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

JD: I would hope each art center would want to be used for unique purposes that are as individual as the director and curators.

What would you like to see them presenting?

JD: A program that identifies that institution from others.

Mariusus Engh



Mariusus Engh

How are you involved in the art world?

ME:



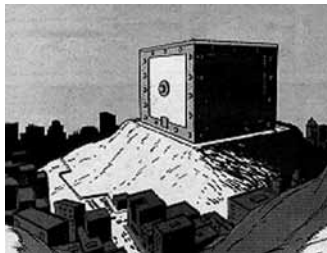
Are you related to any art scene?

ME:



What would be the most productive place to present your work?

ME:



Marius Engh

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

ME:



What does the art market mean for your work?

ME:



In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

ME:



What would you like to see them presenting?

ME:



Matias Faldbakken

“The job of an art center is to be the spearhead (no, seriously) the spearhead of cultural production. Whatever that means. And however unpleasant it is.”

Matias Faldbakken

How are you involved in the art world?

MF: I exhibit art from time to time in art spaces, galleries and fairs. Sometimes I contribute to art-related publications like this one. I talk about art in interviews once in a while. I try not to give too many talks anymore. I never do panels anymore. I teach as little as I can. I never do workshops. I don't write criticism. I don't join "groups". I generally try to un-involve myself with the art world except for using it as a place to present things that are pointless to present anywhere else, which is of course a comfort.

Are you related to any art scene?

MF: No. Art scene? No, it doesn't feel like it. I feel related to a few other persons with certain mentalities who are also doing art or art-related stuff, but they don't necessarily know each other and they don't make up a scene. Some of them are even dead.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

MF: For my art: in a white cube situation where art people would come and look. For my writing: in printed matter of some kind, preferably with a more mixed audience. For other things: other channels with other audiences.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

MF: The ones who are so well-informed about what I do that they can teach me something about it, and at the same time have the capacity to leave me alone.

What does the art market mean for your work?

MF: Money. (Sometimes I think that the art market is a bit slow to pay up what it owes me, though.) Whether it enables me to make more art or makes me make more art is a bit unclear. But, sure, I make more art after getting in touch with the art market.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

MF: The job of an art center is to be the spearhead (no, seriously) the spearhead of cultural production. Whatever that means. And however unpleasant it is. It might be

Matias Faldbakken

impossible for an art center to really, really be the spear-head of cultural production, but that is what it should be.

What would you like to see them presenting?

MF: Things I haven't thought of before. In other words, I can't think of one thing I would like to see them presenting.

Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard

**“We like curators
who shield us from
bureaucracy.”**

Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard

How are you involved in the art world?

IF & JP: As artists, one of our strongest desires has always been to contribute to the ongoing pursuit of questioning what art can be. We make art for ourselves, but also to challenge others. We sincerely hope that our practice is recognized within the art world, but it's never our primary concern.

Are you related to any art scene?

IF & JP: Not intentionally. When we first began working together in the early nineties, we often used re-enactment as a device within our practice. As it became increasingly common for artists to explore re-enactment, we've increasingly found ourselves being positioned by others within a "re-enactment" scene, but it's not something we've embraced or encouraged. The artists and works that tend to get assimilated into this so-called "scene" are extremely diverse and mostly it's difficult to feel any sort of kinship. It's a construct, like scenes in music, literature and no doubt all other creative disciplines. The nature of our practice means that we tend to operate between scenes, be it art and music, art and science, or art and belief structures. For us, this way of working opens up different expectations and creates a space for broader audiences. This has always been important to us.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

IF & JP: The most straightforward answer is that we love spaces that allow us to manipulate the context to the degree that we require, while still being accessible to as many people as possible.

We like spaces where the audiences aren't made outsiders – where people don't feel there's a code or a system for viewing that they don't understand. Open, accessible spaces. We were extremely fortunate that a number of our early live projects were presented in the ICA theater in London, which is a public space where people were used to going for gigs and other 'non-art' events.

Ultimately, spaces that are passionate about what they're presenting and work hard to bring new audiences to the work are, for us, the most productive.

Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

IF & JP: We like curators who don't wake you up at 3am with stupid questions (trust us, it's happened!).

We like curators who are confident, passionate and secure – and who trust in our ability.

We like curators who allow us space to exceed expectations.

We like curators who know when to ask questions.

We like curators who work out how best to work with us.

We like curators who see our weaknesses and support them.

We like curators who see our strengths and exploit them.

We like curators who back us when we take risks.

We like curators who shield us from bureaucracy.

We like curators who let us resolve our own problems.

We like curators.

What does the art market mean for your work?

IF & JP: In real terms, it means the potential sustainability of our practice. It also means our work reaching audiences now and in the future.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

IF & JP: The most important thing a center for contemporary art can do is to challenge its audience. To provide experiences that can't be categorized. To pose questions that can't be answered. To pass time in an engaging way and to actively connect with an audience. Centers for contemporary art should be entertaining and questioning. They should reflect and refract the wider culture.

What would you like to see them presenting?

IF & JP: Art. Music. Theatre. Parties.

We'd like to see centers for contemporary art focusing on the experiential. Presenting stuff they're passionate about, and are capable of communicating honestly and effectively to an appropriate audience.

Ryan Gander

“Good curators are
curators that care about
practice, not works.”

Ryan Gander

How are you involved in the art world?

RG: I guess I am an artist. However when I am asked, I always seem to say I am a teacher, as the other role has an annoying stigma attached to it of people who are more interested in the Art World or being An Artist, than in Art.

Are you related to any art scene?

RG: Yes, it is a collection of people who met by chance with similar interests, concerns and objectives within their practice, but it is no more of a scene than you would expect from a handful of people who liked knitting, or work cooking or Formula 1 racing. People do naturally gravitate towards other people who like similar things, no? But the word 'scene' suggests a social aspect; I think the people who make good work are too obsessed with making work to just hang out at openings. So it's not social, no.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

RG: An Art School? No?

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

RG: Ones that work consistently with artists on solo projects, weaving and developing together with the artist and their practice. Not the ones that do massive group shows with lots of cultural coat-hangers, in which they know little about the work. Good curators are curators that care about practice, not works. Everyone makes shit work half the time, good curators know that and embrace it anyway.

What does the art market mean for your work?

RG: A better quality of life and an ability to make what I want when I want. (It's just that place you have to enter sometimes to be able to get money to buy things.)

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

RG: This question is charged and directed to rile up people who live in provincial cities and towns and to create a "debate" on the geographics of the art market, to which there is no answer, therefore making it a highly uninterest-

Ryan Gander

ing question to pose. Half the time I spend teaching is spent listening to students ask if they should be living in London. There are two answers to that question. 1: Not if you make shit work. 2: If you want to sell your pig, you had best to take it to market.

What would you like to see them presenting?

RG: Good shows by good people.

Liam Gillick

“The notion of an art world is an exterior construct that doesn’t provide accurate tools to examine the specificities of any particular practice.”

Liam Gillick

How are you involved in the art world?

LG: There is no “given” sense of being involved in an art world at any particular moment. The notion of an art world is an exterior construct that doesn’t provide accurate tools to examine the specificities of any particular practice.

Are you related to any art scene?

LG: It is assumed from this question that there are specific groupings or sub-sets within the notional art world. Such alliances are convenient and can be productive. They should always be questioned and often refer to the future or the past.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

LG: The most appropriate environment in relation to the ideas presented in the work. This is not a stable situation. It would be ideal to operate in a place that questioned the nature and value of cultural practice within that society.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

LG: This is not a question that can produce a stable and consistent answer either. There are many curatorial models. An ideal one continues to question the notion of the productive potential of cultural work within society and operates in terms that accept a degree of implication alongside artistic practice.

What does the art market mean for your work?

LG: The art market is something that people complain about when it appears to affect people other than themselves. There is no singular art market. This is a territory that requires more analysis and a concurrent questioning of the increasing instrumentalization of cultural work.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

LG: Art centers should find new ways to present cultural work while attempting to avoid the pressures of instrumentalization and the multiple-markets/exchange strategies in art. Yet they should do so in a non-tokenistic and interventionist manner.

What would you like to see them presenting?

LG: This is not a question that can provoke a generalized answer.

Pieterjan Ginckels

“The output of this process should not necessarily fit a preconceived format. It can be an exhibition, a workshop, a book, a TV show, a building, music, a color, a font, a T-shirt, a name, a new breed of a plant or all of those at once.”

Pieterjan Ginckels

How are you involved in the art world?

PG: As a visual artist; my output consists of tangible ideas that are presented, corrected and commented on as works of art.

Are you related to any art scene?

PG: I've been studying architecture since 2000 and, since 2002, as an autodidact, I started exhibiting works of art. All this time, I was quite isolated from any active visual art scene in Belgium, which I still am. Currently I still study architecture, in Stuttgart.

In terms of being an individual artist with strong geographical, ideological, educational and/or technical connections to other artists, and actively communicating with them about our mutual interests, I think I am not related to any specific art scene. Neither am I looked upon – by institutions, curators, etc. – as being part of one.

Of course I relate to specific “scenes” in visual art, design, music, politics, etc.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

PG: The most productive place to present my work is a place where I can also produce my work. New works mostly linger around in a very vague form – some sketches, but mostly ideas I can only talk about – until a presentation possibility arises: an exhibition. Then, in a process that is very much related to the situation/context, these ideas crystallize into a new work, into one of many potential outcomes. So the question becomes: what would be the best place to produce a work?

The second exhibition in which I showed an installation – the first time the context was shaped around the work and not the other way around, although the works in themselves reshape the situation once the two are brought together – was *Street: behind the cliché*.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

PG: I like to work with curators – people in general – who make you literally want to work; a curator who initiates an open dialogue and tries to push the final result: the work

Pieterjan Ginckels

in itself, the context for our ideas and the way they are communicated.

What does the art market mean for your work?

PG: I am represented by two galleries. These galleries don't merely promote me, but fit the description I gave above very well. The economic factor of the art market has little significance at this time.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

PG: Centers for contemporary art are public places. They are places where people meet. Here people share, develop and produce ideas and ideals. The output of this process should not necessarily fit a preconceived format. It can be an exhibition, a workshop, a book, a TV show, a building, music, a color, a font, a T-shirt, a name, a new breed of a plant or all of those at once. The conception behind the project has to be communicated, but does not necessarily have to be communicative *an sich*; it can be hardcore abstract, or highly political, and the way the institute opens itself to the audience should be planned accordingly.

What would you like to see them presenting?

PG: Young artists, old artists, monotonous projects, multidisciplinary projects, famous works of art, experiments, errors, works in progress, concerts, films, books, the city, other cities, remixes, philosophy, sports, sun, sea, fun. Repeat!

Tue Greenfort

“The art – which these institutions frame, develop and make public via exhibitions – is an important reaction to the contemporary cultural-political situation.”

Tue Greenfort

How are you involved in the art world?

TG: Art world...I find it a difficult word. I would more like to refer to an art system. As an artist, I am involved in a system of cultural, political and economical interests and exchanges. Often, my ambition and way of working is an attempt to re-shape and extend the coordinates within such a system by making its rules and boundaries visible. Lately, there has been a curatorial interest in relating art to topics such as ecology, climate change, pollution etc. For me this has been an interesting conceptual basis to further develop art that is concerned with the idea of nature as an ideologically loaded concept and construction. Thinking about art and nature leads me to see mostly hidden relationships between the two notions.

Are you related to any art scene?

TG: If you think of Berlin, where I live and work as an artist, it's quite difficult to define that as my art scene because my work develops and is produced very much in relation to the exhibitions I am involved in. And these have lately been more of an international character (art venues, biennials, residencies etc.) than one that is centered on a certain geographically defined art scene. So you might say that I am related to an international, multi-centered art scene.

What would the most productive place to present your work?

TG: I am interested in developing projects in very different contexts, from off-spaces to private galleries and public art institutions. I have no favorite space or place but it's certainly very important for me to be within a good exhibition team. That is what makes the most productive frame. One that wants to engage in my working process and in a reflective manner can define a productive place or exhibition concept for me to interact with.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

TG: Curators who are interested in a long-term process of dialogue with artists...keywords – themes of interest – institutional critique, art and ecology – environmental art, process and project based art production. Why: the idea

Tue Greenfort

that you can co-operate over a long-term learning process. Curators who consciously work with art within a specific political climate and as a reaction to that, specifically working with art because it has the ability to be political without being locked to a certain party or traditional frame of political involvement.

What does the art market mean for your work?

TG: Paradoxically, it means everything and nothing. I couldn't make a living from my art without working with my gallery and taking part in an art market. On the other hand, I am not trying to make products for sale. I continue my interest in art without thinking of the outcome as commercial products.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

TG: They are there to develop interesting art. And they emerge within a cultural situation where they are a reaction to a certain political conflict or vacuum. The art – which these institutions frame, develop and make public via exhibitions – is an important reaction to the contemporary cultural-political situation.

What would you like to see them presenting?

TG: Exhibitions and books of a challenging character. To see them explore and expand the notion of art and curatorial praxis and to have the ambition of directly political involvement.

Sascha Hahn

“The art world is a
somber site, mostly
illuminated with cool
light which seems to be
located far underneath
the subway’s railway
system.”

Sascha Hahn

How are you involved in the art world?

SH: The art world is a somber site, mostly illuminated with cool light which seems to be located far underneath the subway's railway system. I'm only familiar with the weekend public. During the week, I prefer natural sites, even if it is raining out there most of the time.

Are you related to any art scene?

SH: Does the art scene really exist? I have a friend who is playing chess with a guy whose brother knows someone who claims to have been in contact with the art scene. But I would not bet on it.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

SH: My hallway: private but efficient.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

SH: They should be friendly, beautiful – but not too beautiful – competent and humorous. They should be fans of my work and not be critical about it. In that case, of course, I would sign personalized autographs as well.

What does the art market mean for your work?

SH: So far I do not go shopping on the art market, but I do go window shopping.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

SH: This is a question I just wanted to ask you. In my opinion they exist to show contemporary art.

What would you like to see them presenting?

SH: Something I won't forget. Quid pro quo! Here are some questions for you: How is art interesting for you and what does it mean for you?

RJ: Art is about dialogue, commitment, feeling and form, friendship, nature, survival and trauma. And as long as there is an adventure of thought involved, I'm your man. And an adventure of thought means for me that you encounter someone who you like and who you can relate to intellectually and emotionally. This connection to someone

Sascha Hahn

is to a large extent an unconscious process, which makes it extremely interesting. One way or another, somewhere along the line you start to think and work together. You work together on a mutually challenging prospect, an idea, a fantasy or just a mutual feeling or thought for which you try to find a certain form or reason. Art is a result, a production, of an exchange of feelings and thoughts I guess, and therefore very important. Cultural expressions are human rights, by the way.

SH: What was the most profound and deep experience about art when you were thinking and reflecting about it?

RJ: That it was a mirror...

SH: Did you come back safely from that journey?

RJ: Sometimes yes, sometimes no.

SH: In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

RJ: To show, to develop, to produce and to look for new mirrors.

Rob Hamelijnck and Nienke Terpsma

“A curator who is
prepared to act as the
artist’s accomplice.”

Rob Hamelijnc and Nienke Terpsma

How are you involved in the art world?

RH/NT: We are involved in the art world on different levels. We occupy various roles: as artists, book designers, teachers, researchers, editors, producers, and publishers. Our work almost always involves collaborative elements and takes on various forms. We produce a critical art magazine called *Fucking Good Art*, audio works, video, and photography.

Are you related to any art scene?

RH/NT: Yes, to many art scenes! But loosely.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

RH/NT: Our art practice has changed immensely. We no longer work as 'studio artists', and *Fucking Good Art* has proven to be an effective tool to report on art research. We create the magazine with the help of others: each edition of *Fucking Good Art* is compiled by a different team, an organically growing (or shrinking) network of artists and curators who have very different, urgent reasons for writing about art, for sharing knowledge and observations, and for voicing institutional criticisms. At present our ideas are much more suitable for distribution via a publication like that than in a white cube. Frankly, what is most important for us is to have a decent publishing house with a good distribution network.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

RH/NT: Independent curators, co-dependent curators, free curators, artist-curators, curator-artists, activist-curators, star-curators, curator-authors, or just curators... A curator who is prepared to act as the artist's accomplice.

What does the art market mean for your work?

RH/NT: Nothing, absolutely nothing!
Incidentally, one of the themes in the next edition of *Fucking Good Art – International edition/Switzerland* is the art market.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

RH/NT: For contemporary art!

Rob Hamelijnck and Nienke Terpsma

This question is really too general. Perhaps you mean how do we envisage the future for Witte de With? *"...Then there is institutional self-criticism, which is the same game, but to a different tune. The game of hide-and-seek is no longer funny – the institution is asking for help. It is asking the artists that once criticized from within to help define ways for the institution to keep the position of power that they used to have..."* (Kristina Ask – 'Freedom Track 1 + 2', *Fucking Good Art*/Copenhagen edition, April 2007. www.fuckinggoodart.nl/www.kristinask.net)

Judging by the mission statements and plans posted on the Internet by other CCAs such as ICA in London, CCA in Glasgow, KW in Berlin, or P.S.1 in New York, the future certainly looks very bright. Nothing to worry about.

The sixty-year-old ICA in London – founded by artists in 1947 – posted the following as one of its statements: "The ICA is home to the best new art and culture from Britain and around the world. A meeting point for exploration between artists and audiences, the ICA examines the questions that shape our culture, society and individual lives. We believe in creative adventure. In art as inspiration. Ultimately the ICA is not so much a place as a principle. A belief in the new. An enduring faith in the creativity of tomorrow." (Ekow Eshun, director of ICA).

CCA in Glasgow – founded in 1992: "CCA is committed to presenting a challenging and diverse artistic and educational program across art forms." KW in Berlin also founded by artists, in 1990: "...views itself as a laboratory for communicating and advancing contemporary cultural developments in Germany and abroad by means of exhibitions, workshops and resident artists' studios, as well as by collaborating with artists or other institutions and by commissioning works." P.S.1 – founded in 1971 by Alanna Heiss as The Institute of Art and Urban Resources Inc. – aims to stand out by offering a "cutting-edge approach to exhibitions and direct involvement of artists within a scholarly framework. Its focus includes recognizing the work of emerging artists, placing disparate media into new and meaningful contexts, and defining alternative movements and endeavors."

Witte de With is said to be modeled after P.S.1. and intended

Rob Hamelijncx and Nienke Terpsma

to offer an alternative to the Rotterdam artists' initiatives. Its task (and this is not a mission statement, but an assignment imposed by politics) is to introduce contemporary art and theory in the Rotterdam and Dutch contexts. It has been working on that task for seventeen years. The poignant thing is that Catherine David, who placed more emphasis on the development of theory perhaps than anyone else, had to leave the institute after only two years. We are curious about the plans of Nicolaus Schafhausen and his team for Witte de With over the next few years.

What would you like to see them presenting?

RH/NT: Art!

Laura Horelli

“In my opinion, any kind of change is only possible from within a structure.”

Laura Horelli

How are you involved in the art world?

LH: As an artist, I exhibit my work mostly in institutions, museums and at Biennales. I have been part of the program at Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin, since 2001. I've worked at artist residencies, including AIAV in Yamaguchi, OCA in Oslo and Villa Aurora in Los Angeles. I am currently a visiting professor of photography and film at Universität der Künste, Berlin, and an advisor in the Research Fellowship in the Arts program at Bergen National Academy of the Arts.

Are you related to any art scene?

LH: Most of the artists I know personally live in Berlin and some of them I know from Städelschule, Frankfurt a.M., where I studied between 1997-2001. In Helsinki, I am in contact with FRAME, the Finnish Fund for Art Exchange, and am a member of the artist union MUU and the video distribution center AV-Arkki.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

LH: I don't think there is one single most productive place to present my work; displaying work in different geographical contexts and spaces (including publications, web, TV) is most interesting.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

LH: I like to work with people who are prepared to discuss and be involved in the production of work, due to the research-oriented and process-like nature of my practice. It is great if a curator can introduce me to (or place my work in context with) other artistic, filmic or literary perspectives.

What does the art market mean for your work?

LH: It means visibility and presence. In my opinion, any kind of change is only possible from within a structure.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

LH: Mainly art institutions are there to display and inform the public about local and international artistic production today in all its nuances. Art centers are important meeting

Laura Horelli

places for the artistic community and encourage dialogue with other disciplines. Institutions should be places where relevant social questions can be reflected on, employing different, unconventional forms.

What would you like to see them presenting?

LH: Exhibitions, video and film screenings, concerts, discussions and publications.

William Hunt

“It gets difficult when people have a fixed idea of what they think the work is about.”

William Hunt

How are you involved in the art world?

WH: I am an artist. I am currently working with performance art from a background of sculpture and film-making.

Are you related to any art scene?

WH: I don't feel related to a scene, but there are artists who are my peers that influence me, even though we work in completely different ways.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

WH: This varies from work to work. You have to embrace the fact that nothing is perfect. You are not always in control of where and how you get to show the work. The challenge is to overcome the problems of the space and lose these problems by finding elegant solutions.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

WH: It gets difficult when people have a fixed idea of what they think the work is about. What is important for me in my current performances is the real-time real-space relationship between the audience and myself. This changes in every new situation so the conversation around the work has to be fluid.

What does the art market mean for your work?

WH: My relationship to the art market is one of production. Making art is an expensive activity, and that it can generate income for its own production is a good thing. The trouble is that sometimes it gets mixed around and people don't make money to make art, but make art to make money.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

WH: As an artist they provide me with a route for producing work and an audience to show it to. For a viewer, they provide an opportunity to see work that you might not yet know about. I don't have the time or the funds to get to all the places I should to see work. It's great that there are curators that do and then can exhibit this work to a wider audience.

What would you like to see them presenting?

WH: Always something I don't know...

Brian Jungen

“I like to think the art centers are a place to communicate revolutionary ideas to the public.”

Brian Jungen

How are you involved in the art world?

BJ: Although my artwork has been widely exposed in the art world, I personally remain truant.

Are you related to any art scene?

BJ: No.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

BJ: A campground.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

BJ: Curators who are very patient, to put up with my email aloofness.

What does the art market mean for your work?

BJ: A steady pay cheque.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

BJ: I like to think the art centers are a place to communicate revolutionary ideas to the public. Whether the public go to these spaces and feel empowered by the experience is another question.

What would you like to see them presenting?

BJ: More art work in public spaces. Satellite projects in campgrounds and other rural areas.

Sven Johne

“I think that truly intelligent exhibitions dare to use form, to provide a powerful setting.”

Sven Johne

How are you involved in the art world?

SJ: In the sense of exhibitions, criticism, grants, institutional sponsorship, etc. And, of course, the gallery connections.

Are you related to any art scene?

SJ: Actually I avoid "the" art scene. Of course, I have friends who are artists and I have loose contacts to a few collectors who support me, and I have contact to my two galleries. I don't like art parties, they often seem very pompous to me. Here in Leipzig one sees the same faces all the time anyway. In fact that is true too of Berlin, and probably of Tokyo too. I prefer to socialise with "normal" people: having a beer, the local pub.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

SJ: Naturally, non-art-spaces can be exciting for art. But then they're already exciting themselves without the art. My work is only partially suited to subway tunnels or employment exchanges. I like "classical", good art spaces, white cubes which retain their reserve, which I can play with. I find it exciting to control a space. Put in a more flowery way: creating an exhibition is like writing a poem – whereby the space is the sheet of paper.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

SJ: Curators who have a feel for art! That sounds banal, but form belongs to art just as much as content. That is the wonderful thing about art, that it can seduce us with its sensuality and can force us to think.

But sometimes one sees curated exhibitions and has the feeling that one is at a university seminar. Then I don't need an exhibition, I can just buy the catalogue. I think that truly intelligent exhibitions dare to use form, to provide a powerful setting.

What does the art market mean for your work?

SJ: It allows me to live from my work. Without the market, I would have to work on the side on a building site. I don't want to do that because I am an artist and not a builder. But one has to be careful not to let oneself be lulled: the

Sven Johnne

praise of the market, gallery success – in other words, sale – doesn't necessarily mean work. As a young artist, dizzy with happiness that one can buy a second-hand Mercedes, one forgets that sometimes. But the market is far less critical than one's colleagues. And I guess that one can be "out" again very quickly.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

SJ: In Germany: Berlin. Leipzig, where I live, is definitely not a hotspot even though half the world is saying just that. Outside Germany I have no idea. It's about time that I took a look somewhere else.

What would you like to see them presenting?

SJ: Berlin: I don't care what they present. The city and its artists are developing by themselves and that's good. Leipzig: painting – for another ten years – now's the right time!

Kai Kaljo

“Everywhere else,
I am a passerby,
a guest. But at least
an invited guest.”

Kai Kaljo

How are you involved in the art world?

KK: Well, I'm not sure if I am involved in the "art world", but when somebody asks me that question, there must be a basis for it. My works have been shown internationally for about ten years now, at video/film festivals and in various art institutions.

Are you related to any art scene?

KK: As an Estonian artist, I am supposed to be related to the Tallinn art scene, but I'm not really – the Estonian Art Museum has never bought any of my works or invited me to exhibit there, for instance. Everywhere else, I am a passerby, a guest. But at least an invited guest.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

KK: Productive... if that means "the opportunity to gain more opportunities" – then the bigger the audience, the bigger the center or event, the better – and I think it must be the same for every artist.

If it means getting more intelligent feedback that's essential for my own personal development and motivation – sometimes artist talks or well-organized festivals are good. Meeting similar-minded people, wherever that may be.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

KK: I expect the curator to understand my thinking and to be actually interested in my work, not just to use it to illustrate his or her own concept or to include me in the show for political, gender-related or any other secondary reasons.

I would like to get the opportunity more often to create a new work for a particular show, to be inspired by curators' ideas. To feel trusted, not used.

What does the art market mean for your work?

KK: I am probably too stupid to consciously produce works for sale, but recently I caught myself thinking that I should print the new photo series bigger than the previous ones... but I'm not sure yet.

Kai Kaljo

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

KK: There are many possible functions; not all of them should carry the same one. It also depends on where they are situated and what other art institutions exist there. The CCA in Tallinn functioned mainly as a database (there was no gallery) and was basically the only link between Estonian contemporary art and the “outside world” for years. Not healthy but better than nothing. Nowadays, when the databases could maybe at least partly be moved onto the Internet, I think they should focus more on the other functions, such as organizing international art events and putting on shows. In the bigger cities I think they should be, or remain, “beacons”.

What would you like to see them presenting?

KK: That, for me, is easier to recognize than to verbalize.

Art that no-one has seen yet?

Art that would reflect what's in the air?

Contemporary yet eternal?

Somebody tell me please, why does everything important sound so pathetic when written down?

Annette Kelm

“I like public art spaces a lot, because the commercial aspect is not so evident there.”

Annette Kelm

How are you involved in the art world?

AK: Some of my friends are artists too and we talk about each other's work and what we like about it. I don't like to be regarded as a member of anything. I have always liked to expand my horizon beyond a particular group or "scene", and I have always had friends who are involved in very different kinds of fields.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

AK: I like public art spaces a lot, because the commercial aspect is not so evident there. And I would like to present my work in a book, because it's a very democratic medium and photography works very well in books.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

AK: I have fairly little experience in working with different curators, and I haven't really thought about who I prefer to work with. I just collaborated with people when it felt right.

What does the art market mean for your work?

AK: When I first got involved in the art market, it was really irritating. When I saw my pictures hanging at an art fair, I felt really sick, because I'd never been to an art fair before. I was really naive about the commercial aspect of art. Now I'm very happy that by selling art I earn enough to pay my bills, which is more than I had ever expected.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

AK: These are all very tough questions! I don't really know what to say. I suppose art centers should show exciting artwork and they should dare to make big mistakes. Sometimes the most interesting shows are the really bad ones.

What would you like to see them presenting?

AK: I prefer to see unexpected collaborations.

Ian Kiaer

“I have a group of friends who try to meet up and read stuff, texts that we wouldn’t normally read...”

Ian Kiaer

How are you involved in the art world?

IK: I make works of art and have occasionally written things for magazines. I go to see shows and museums. I read magazines, and newspaper reviews. Sometimes I attend openings and conferences. I have friends who do the same and we talk about such things.

Are you related to any art scene?

IK: Not really, if a scene suggests some kind of self-defining group linked to a particular locality. I have a group of friends who try to meet up and read stuff, texts that we wouldn't normally read, but that is not really a scene. I live in London, I suppose that's a scene.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

IK: My work does tend to be reliant on some kind of allocated space for art. This can range in anything from a shop to a more formal gallery space. I think it would get lost if it strayed too far from some kind of intentional frame for "art."

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

IK: Various kinds.

What does the art market mean for your work?

IK: Money, sometimes.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

IK: There isn't one answer. It really depends on each place to find and continually redefine its position. Locality provides a flavour to either work with or against. Inevitably an art center is defined as much by the people serving it and visiting it as by any abstract principle. I have tended to enjoy shows, events where there seemed to be clarity of purpose/inventiveness that comes not just from the autonomous work but from the context produced by the particular place and curatorial team.

What would you like to see them presenting?

IK: Pass.

Suzanne Kriemann

“In response to your e-mail I took a concept out of my drawer of unrealized projects.”

Suzanne Kriemann

Being an odd number rules out the possibility of being an even number

4i agency

Concept, edition 3 + 1 AE

A main way for art to exist in contemporary life is in investigating new roles of its inherent economy.

Capitalism engages ideas of value, encourages virtual ways of escalating numbers for real living. Economy is, more than ever, related to flux, concept, idea and abstraction. Let's forget about modernist limitations in the art market in terms of what sells and what doesn't, how it sells and for how much! This is a sincere proposition by a couple of conceptual artists, framed within the Dutch art system.

For artists who do conceptual, research-based, flux, text and/or performance art, or any of the practices that have historically been labeled "difficult to sell", the Netherlands is a magnet. And here we meet with the outstanding works produced. They are the capital on which this concept is based.

Intercultural

International

Informative

Intellectual

4i

As a group of international, Dutch-based artists and art professionals frustrated by both a local lack of commercial opportunities and by a community-centered focus on "multicultural" public subsidies and commissions, we are seeking to create a flexible, mobile office that promotes the work of Dutch-based artists and, in so doing, creates an international, professional and commercial network.

Suzanne Kriemann

Agency

The agency takes the form of a mobile, light-weight, non-bureaucratic office, located in the Groothandelsgebouw in Rotterdam.

..... - 4i agent I

A full time post: researcher and manager

..... - 4i agent II

A full-time post: curator and public relations manager

..... - 4i agent III

A half-time post: writer and cultural matchmaker

..... - 4i agent IV

A full-time post: gallery coordinator and economist

Artists*

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Advisors*

... Director of Townhouse Gallery, Cairo

... Head of exhibitions Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam

... Director of Homeworks, Beirut

... Artist based in Amsterdam

... Gallerist, London

... Gallerist, Warsaw

... Director of Art Gallery, Bahrein

... Curator of the Center for Contemporary Arts, Shanghai

... Director of IASPIS, Stockholm

Suzanne Kriemann

... Director of ISCP, New York

... Curator Gamec, Italy

... Artist based in Moscow and Berlin

... Freelance curator and writer based in Moscow

... Director of Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

... Writer and freelance curator, Berlin

... Gallerist, Mexico City

To be completed

To be in flux

Composed by the selected artists' network, in dialogue via e-mail and meetings during large-scale art events and art fairs, where travel is already inherent in each advisor's profession.

Aims

1. INTERCULTURAL

4i agency focuses primarily on the distinction between the notion of the "multicultural" and of the "intercultural". Our intercultural focus aims at improving the international and local exchange of knowledge about art and the interconnection between different art networks. From this perspective, Rotterdam – the city chosen as the venue for our activities – represents one of the most interesting European examples of a hub for people with different cultural heritages. This variety is not only due to an international migrational flow of people but, in particular, to the aggregation of artists and cultural practitioners/promoters from all over the world.

2. INTERNATIONAL

Our intent is to help Dutch-based artists to see beyond the Dutch situation, to escape the potential "trap" of the subsidy system by giving their work a place in the international art market. In particular, by connecting artists, institutions, writers, collectors and cultural producers, we will base our promotional activity on creating symbiotic links between different art-economical situations around the world. This important exchange activity will trigger the production of a new reference culture (on a local and international level). The activities we've planned include: hosting international visitors, collaborating with art spaces all over

Suzanne Kriemann

the world, exchanging portfolios, developing cross-cultural projects, and facilitating fluidity and mini-migrations of contemporary artistic practice.

3. INFORMATIVE

Our role is also to provide information about Dutch artists and make them more visible outside of the Netherlands, by means of promotional events and campaigns scheduled to take place during international art fairs (Basel, London, New York, Berlin, Miami Beach) and large scale art events (Biennials). To this end, we will also create a network among both Dutch and international museums and institutes, maintaining regular contact with the national and international press, as well as with art professionals: critics, curators, galleries and collectors.

4. INTELLECTUAL

4i agency publishes a semi-annual magazine detailing the artists' new works, including texts by 4i agents, advisors, artists and friends. The magazine is distributed via the web, at the 4i agency office, at selected book shops in the Netherlands and abroad, and is handed out at art venues.

Concept by Susanne Kriemann and Aleksander Komarov

This has been elaborated, discussed, reformulated and transformed in an active exchange of ideas with Lucia Babina, Bart de Baers, Anke Bangma, Mariska van den Berg, Liesbeth Bik & Jos van der Pol, Hilde de Bruijn, Lonnie van Brummelen & Siebren de Haan, Bernie Dekens, Donatello D'Osti, Zoë Gray, Renske Janssen, Folkert de Jong, Annick Kleizen, Melvin Moti, Wendelien van Oldenborgh, Sophie von Olfers, Steve Rushton, Christine Thome, Martijn Verhoeven, William Wells and Rein Wolfs.

Germaine Kruip

“What matters more to me is to feel a connection to the mentality involved in the creation of the works or events, rather than to what is made or shown.”

Germaine Kruip

How are you involved in the art world?

GK: I'm involved in different ways in different worlds that are referred to as the art world sometimes. I like to call myself an artist as an alibi to make things possible that otherwise would be called useless (but hopefully play a changing role when they find a place in or outside of the art world).

Are you related to any art scene?

GK: Not really, but I do feel connected to a lot of other producers of art. Some I know, some I don't. Some are from my generation; others are from the past. Some are from my surrounding; others from far away. What matters more to me is to feel a connection to the mentality involved in the creation of the works or events, rather than to what is made or shown.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

GK: A productive place would be a place that adds an additional meaning to the event or exhibition (context wise, relation wise, or space wise).

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

GK: For me, a good curator is someone who thinks of this additional meaning and creates a theoretical context. Someone who is independent (even when affiliated with an institution) and deals with each work and situation individually. (This may sound self-evident but it isn't.)

What does the art market mean for your work?

GK: I would like to see the art creating the art market. I would like to ask: What does my work mean for the art market?

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

GK: I would like to see contemporary art centers as independent institutes. At art fairs, you not only see collectors (some have been shown lately as being very good curators) but also curators shopping. On one hand, this is a good development: the content should be connected to the market.

Germaine Kruip

Art fairs are meeting places where lectures have helped add depth to the dialogue about art. But the real value of art can't be measured by commercial success, and using these places and moments to engage in discussion could create confusion.

What would you like to see them presenting?

GK: Works that are independent, innovative and based on theory.

Erik van Lieshout

“In the beginning
I wanted to be involved,
and did the most
dangerous things
to get involved.”

Erik van Lieshout

How are you involved in the art world?

EvL: In the beginning I wanted to be involved, and did the most dangerous things to get involved. Now that I am involved, I want to get out because I am involved.

Are you related to any art scene?

EvL: I'm related to many art scenes but I try to see them as my own world.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

EvL: Any place.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

EvL: If they qualify as a kind, the people with a lot of ideas. So that when you begin there's constant discussion and then gradually it begins to grow. At some moments I really need them. They think with me, they are smart and funny.

What does the art market mean for your work?

EvL: This year it means a lot of money.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

EvL: No boundaries, no rules, no collection. To work with different artists all the time.

What would you like to see them presenting?

EvL: Freedom, mistakes, conceptual art, painting.

Ursula Mayer

“When it starts to be mainly about speculation and manipulation, I am less interested.”

Ursula Mayer

How are you involved in the art world?

UM: I am involved as an artist.

Are you related to any art scene?

UM: I don't see myself related to a specific art scene. But by being connected to the similar interests of producers, curators and theorists, we are all in a sense perhaps related to a 'scene'.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

UM: It always depends on the context in which you show a work. Every artist likes to present his or her work on a platform where it is a part of a related artistic discourse. This can be a range of very different venues.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

UM: Curators who do not just follow a trend but look at the strength of an artist's work, as it has developed over a longer period of time.

What does the art market mean for your work?

UM: I never produced my work primarily for a commercial market. When it starts to be mainly about speculation and manipulation, I am less interested. But it is important for me in the sense that I want to make a living from my work.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

UM: They are places for research, creation and the circulation of an artistic practice and of political and aesthetic concerns. They can be a catalyst for unorthodox artistic production that challenges the conventional art canon and the perceptions of the audience.

What would you like to see them presenting?

UM: They should not be conventional showrooms, but should explore modes of representation and develop an active dialogue around their program.

Tris Vonna-Michell

“I am involved in the art world by contributing to the circle of communicable and associative activities which form it.”

Tris Vonna-Michell

How are you involved in the art world?

TVM: I am involved in the art world by contributing to the circle of communicable and associative activities which form it. By exhibiting and performing in artist-run centers, institutions, galleries or media such as the radio, web and printed publications, I feel involved in an art world.

Are you related to any art scene?

TVM: No, I flutter between several makeshift, self-proclaiming or disclaiming art scenes perhaps, but I am often only a visitor – I have no fixed location currently and never felt comfortable being a part of a scene.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

TVM: A place that isn't governed by its sense of importance/value or architecture. A place which has fundamental virtue, and could help develop certain parts of my practice and endorse the inevitable risks; I would definitely distinguish this place from a place of a fixed, established site or institution, which has other valuable virtues. However, in hindsight, and in terms of "productive" places for presentation, I would say that artist-run spaces, or simply mobile, flexible places which are more concerned with dissemination of information or endeavors rather than in the presentation thereof, have been the most productive for me. In short, where the place of communication is rendered either invisible or is deliberately transposed and created, is integral to the concept.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

TVM: Someone who is obviously involved in the work from a perspective (long-term too) that goes beyond the context of the working environment. I guess it's best for me to revert the question to suit my inexperience: my ideal curator would be... a person that creates a positive challenge and danger to my pre-existing working method. Someone who is more concerned with the placement of non-existent works than the positioning of material objects or ideas, themes and content. A person who is willing to adapt to an active role within the work perhaps, if necessary and

Tris Vonna-Michell

suitable. To expect the unexpected and remain reliable. To be ambitious and patient enough to embrace and support larger “fragile” projects which lack the framework and cushioning that may be required or expected. And as a backdrop quality, a curator who has an insatiable liking for getting lost and confused while remaining stubbornly pedantic and focused (a great sense of humor).

What does the art market mean for your work?

TVM: Personally, the dominant presence of the art market has offered many opportunities for presentation to a wide and varying public, through participation in art fairs. These fairs suit my practice quite nicely on one level – that of visibility and non-diluted communication – due to the short and condensed time span of such events. I can perform frequently to an ever-present public, which is ideal. But, ironically, despite my previous appearances and efforts at the fairs, I have rarely sold works or attracted many collectors; this is largely due to my practice and refusal. What the art market (commercial galleries, fairs, etc.) means for me, is visibility and exhibition opportunities that are created by the incessant hunger for acquisition. I deliberately refrain from many potential economical transactions, but treat these activities as potential subject matter for most of my projects, and have done so already by making compositions of awkward yet intriguing adventures and commitments. These projects have generated questions that, without today’s art market presence, wouldn’t have been as easy to orchestrate, such as: what affect does money have on the duration and integrity of a spoken word? The presence of an art market is a healthy reminder to me, that it’s there and, in some circumstances, available, but needn’t be depended on in my current stage or way of working.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

TVM: In my opinion they are the arbiters of career orientation and indexing. I think a CCA says more about the articulation of a career and inherent agenda (of both artists and curators) than anything else. They are engines of orientation for new paths, careers and the formation of presentations and content, which can support and strengthen

Tris Vonna-Michell

the stances and directions already made by artists and curators; in that respect, a CCA can extend the invitation to orientate pre-existing qualities and directions and, in so doing, create new passages. Due to this twofold basis, CCAs are very useful for the indexing and orientation of both the careers of artists and curators. This can reduce necessary risk factors that could potentially produce new and exciting variations and, more commonly, leads to a neglect to acknowledge their public to a greater extent.

What would you like to see them presenting?

TVM: Shows that aren't inhibited by the whims of populism and comprehension. Dynamic projects that expand beyond the architecture of the institution. Works that explore larger mappings of involvement and research, and which include theoretical substance without reverting to a textbook hand-out. More events – performances, screenings, talks. Fewer projects whereby the work becomes dormant within a given location/context. A certain degree of integration between audiences and the means of creation, research and articulation would be an interesting and fruitful experience for both parties (artist/institution and public). To show more eclectic artists or approaches that may have had less visibility, perhaps due to the works' operating in other fields, instead of "continuously" opting for safer candidates such as established and so-called upcoming artists. The structuring of relevancy: works and shows that at least attempt to have relevancy to the current times rather than being devoid of or purposefully shying away from any convictions, or from drawing parallels with social changes.

Gareth Moore



With crew on adventure

Gareth Moore

How are you involved in the art world?

GM:



making things

Are you related to any art scene?

GM:



twins

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

GM:



uncertain encounter

Gareth Moore

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

GM:



mod but happy scientists

What does the art market mean for your work?

GM:



parallel dimension

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

GM:



odd conversation

What would you like to see them presenting?

GM:



This is as close as I could get

Sarah Morris

“It is not measurable
where conversations
and influences let off
and begin.”

Sarah Morris

How are you involved in the art world?

SM: ...

Are you related to any art scene?

SM: Tangentially, probably many scenes. The artist as chameleon. Architecture, politics, literature, design, the entertainment industry, fashion, etc. Starting in New York and then moving through. The distribution and exhibition of the work can impact discussion of what art can potentially be and change those respective arenas, how an artist can move and maneuver through subjects and people without stop. It is not measurable where conversations and influences let off and begin.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

SM: Cities, and in the mind. An after-image of sorts.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

SM: Ones that challenge you and help you to realize projects that are difficult to coordinate.

What does the art market mean for your work?

SM: It means you have money in your bank account and that you can bring into existence what is necessary.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

SM: Discussions, conversations and looking at things that are placed in a new constellation.

What would you like to see them presenting?

SM: New work by both established and emerging artists, internationally. Symposiums, books and debate...

Alex Morrison

“The art world is
an organizational
principal.”

Alex Morrison

How are you involved in the art world?

AM: I am asked to participate in exhibitions internationally and have been reviewed in press that is circulated internationally. I suppose this places me somewhere in the art world. I have often found myself trying to describe the art world to other artists! I usually end up trying to describe the hyper competitive aspects, the bureaucratic aspects, the behavior of curators and other artists, the habits of museums with regard to their collecting practices and how strange it is to be introduced to people who own your work but whom you have never met before. There are artists, and then there is the art world. The art world is an organizational principal. It provides me with a venue, it provides a platform on which to stage my practice.

Are you related to any art scene?

AM: I would say that I am related to every scene I have been involved with. My mother was taught by Ian Wallace in Vancouver in the late sixties and had a few of the early Vancouver School artists as friends. I was exposed to a lot of their work at a young age. Throughout my adolescence, I was involved in the culture of the punk and skateboarding scenes and was immersed in the cultural production that came out of them. In Toronto in the early nineties, I tagged along with a lot of graffiti writers. I went on to attend the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, and through other students as well as through some of my more seasoned professors came to be more aware of the international scene and its history. I don't consider myself a part of any one scene. I have moved around too much to identify with any one particular group. There have been moments of solidification throughout and there are attitudes, subjects and positions that I still carry with me. Primarily, I seem to be identified with the third generation of the Vancouver School. I have lived in Vancouver for seven years now, the longest I have lived anywhere in my life so far.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

AM: I am being productive when I am in the process of creating and thinking about the work, so the productive aspect

Alex Morrison

of its presentation depends on the viewer and the accompanying space the work is placed in. So I might guess the gallery or museum serves as a productive place to present my work. These spaces attract many potential viewers and the audience, often together with the help of the institution in the form of accompanying texts, is a productive part of the work's presentation.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

AM: In any typical job situation, I like to work with people who are confident, easy going, honest and open. They have a vulnerability to them that helps to spontaneously create fruitful and collaborative situations and, ultimately, friendships. The meaning of my work can change dynamically through these relationships. I like curators who have the confidence to perhaps not be considered *au courant*. They are in this for the long haul and have a genuine interest in art as a whole, not just in particular artists or movements that they present as trump cards. Curators can be like stage directors, and I seem to like the ones who trust artists and don't try to work against them. Cassavetes as opposed to Hitchcock.

What does the art market mean for your work?

AM: Coming from as far off as Vancouver, the art market seems very far away. In Canada we do not have the same climate for collecting contemporary art that other countries have. For the most part, my practice has remained on the institutional-critical-curatorial track rather than on the art fair circuit. Occasionally the art market calls and issues me with a check. But as far as what it means where my work is concerned? It means that if people continue to buy art then perhaps one day I might not have to be a bike messenger to support my practice.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

AM: Creating a dialogue between artists and the public. But, depending on the institution and where the funding for that institution comes from, these dialogues differ greatly depending on the space, funding and desired audience. In Canada, the publicly funded parallel gallery system has

Alex Morrison

allowed for a certain specialization from gallery to gallery. We have spaces for video artists, so-called new-media artists, artists of Asian descent, performance artists, photographers and artists who are mentally ill. I can imagine a time where this specialization was very important and perhaps reflected the refractions of a fragmenting, post-modernist cultural field. Each faction needed and deserved representation and recognition, but there is a danger in polarizing certain groups that could otherwise be in concerted dialogue with one another.

What would you like to see them presenting?

AM: If the centers for contemporary art are meant to create a dialogue between artists and the public then this might include more varied selections of artists and their more varied publics. I like group exhibitions; they can bring different sorts of people together and galvanize scenes and moments. I like the exhibitions that draw as of yet unrealized connections in meaning between different practices and disciplines. In a similar vein, perhaps contemporary art might benefit from opening up to more activist-based, grassroots practices. This could be a combination of lectures, discussions, potlaching or musical events, but then moderated and organized by non-art world participants rather than by the institution's staff. In general, the sort of programming that resembles a community center and involves volunteerism, pedagogy, outreach, etc., but somehow keeping the focus hovering around contemporary art practices.

Melvin Moti

“Our self-obsession is
producing confirmations
about who we are,
and how we’d like to
consider ourselves.”

Melvin Moti

How are you involved in the art world?

MM: I'm an artist.

Are you related to any art scene?

MM: No way.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

MM: A place where my ideas and the ideas of others can blend into another idea which brings forth more ideas, for an undetermined length of time.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

MM: Those who leave me rocking and reeling after every meeting. Those who are always ahead of us. Those who never speak in the words of others – never quoting. Those who sweat when they dance. Those ones.

What does the art market mean for your work?

MM: Remarkably little actually. Until now, I've managed without.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

MM: To destroy and set fire to conventions. To do it publicly, like an execution.

What would you like to see them presenting?

MM: Right now, we are in desperate need of a new vocabulary (in arts and culture). Centers for art, at this very moment, should focus on the development of new words, sentences and terms. Our self-obsession is producing confirmations about who we are, and how we'd like to consider ourselves. There are no more "others", there is only "we". And it's getting dreadfully boring.

Chris Moukarbel

“My involvement in an art scene tends to be the result of serendipity.”

Chris Moukarbel

How are you involved in the art world?

CM: I try to make work that engages the communities I'm involved in. Sometimes it directly intersects the art market.

Are you related to any art scene?

CM: My involvement in an art scene tends to be the result of serendipity. I'm not sure if it qualifies as a scene but I see the same faces around the world.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

CM: I would love to produce a show for HBO.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

CM: I like interacting with curators that draw on the social friction of the curator/living artist relationship. It's much more interesting to me than curatorial projections on an artwork.

What does the art market mean for your work?

CM: Editions?

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

CM: Centers for Contemporary Art give living artists the public validation that Centers for Modern Art have been taking for granted.

What would you like to see them presenting?

CM: I feel like the canon can be opened up to include more artists and less art.

Ivan Navarro

“All the bureaucratic elements of an art institution are very interesting too, because they indirectly shape the work on display, revealing a kind of domination that in itself can be fascinating.”

Ivan Navarro

How are you involved in the art world?

IN: First of all, what is “the art world”? I would say that “the art world” is a world made up of all the things you have mentioned in each of your questions: “art scene”, “productive place”, “curators”, “the art market”, “centers for contemporary art” and “what I would like to see them presenting”. I consider this to be the basic premise from which our conversation can evolve.

I will try to explain how I am involved in “the art world”... I live in New York where the “art scene” is very dynamic. I show my work there very often, I know other artists and “curators” who I like to talk to and work with. I have a studio where I work, which is also a very “productive place” for me and the people I collaborate with in my work. They are musicians, architects, photographers, sculptors and material suppliers. I also work with art dealers and galleries; they take my work to “the art market” where a lot of speculation and contagion takes place, which can be an intriguing phenomenon.

Since I am from Chile, I go there often to visit my family. My brother Mario is a very active artist living in Santiago. He connects me to the Chilean “art scene”, which I find very interesting because “the art market” doesn’t exist there, nor are there any professional “curators”, and yet it is a very “productive place”. The “art scene” in Santiago looks at the so-called “centers for contemporary art” as unreachable places because there are none in Chile, so most of the artists living there don’t even pretend to be part of “the art world” that we are talking about. Santiago has a very experimental and isolated art world... it is a different kind of art world.

In other words, it would be impossible for me to ask “what I would like to see them presenting” because in that particular art world there are no “centers for contemporary art”. In Chile, artists find alternative strategies to show their work. I think I’m getting to this point: isn’t “the art world” a very complex thing to define? Is it just information spread around the earth that creates different art worlds in different ways? Or is this what you call “art scenes” which are part of “The Art World”? In this case, do you think that there is only one “art world” on earth?

Ivan Navarro

Are you related to any art scene?

IN: Let's say that an "art scene" is a specific group of people interested in art; they talk and write things related to it. To be part of this I would have to be mentioned in conversations or in texts about art.

I'm very interested in what is going on in New York and Santiago because I show there very often.

At the same time, I've been working on a project called Hueso Records, which is a record label in a very open sense of the concept "record". The idea is to publish music, videos and books on artists' events that mostly happen in New York or in Santiago. The artists are those who I think should be seen by more people (a larger "art scene") so their work doesn't get lost or forgotten because nobody was exposed to it.

In this way, yes, I feel related to these two art scenes (New York and Santiago) because I want to spread the work of the artists who I collaborate with, so more people will read and talk about them. The basic idea of this recording project is to give intellectual substance to artists within their "art scene".

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

IN: Any place might be interesting to present my work. The creation of Hueso Records can take me to a level of work distribution beyond any art institution. For example, the work of one of the musicians who I collaborate with is being played on radio stations, and he is getting more and more attention as a pop-folk singer.

Usually the most "productive place" to present my work isn't an art institution. I'd rather present my work in a specific context, which adds real significance to the whole. I look for a place that will add content to the work, finalizing it as an art piece.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

IN: How many kinds of curators exist? I only know two kinds: the independent curators and the curators of art institutions. I hope this is what you mean...

Independent curators are more free and open to more subversive ideas, especially because they don't know much

Ivan Navarro

about building regulations and institutional bureaucracy, which is not the case with curators from art institutions, who have a fixed architectural space to show art and many restrictions to adhere to.

All the bureaucratic elements of an art institution are very interesting too, because they indirectly shape the work on display, revealing a kind of domination that in itself can be fascinating.

What does the art market mean for your work?

IN: Just money.

A couple of months ago a collector decided to put a piece in a very prestigious auction house. The collector bought the piece three years ago from a New York gallery. It was the first time such a piece was in an auction, so we were worried that no one would be interested in buying this piece on the secondary market.

People were saying: "the piece should sell very well but you never know... this business is very mysterious sometimes." Finally, after a nerve-racking weekend, we learned that the piece was sold for double its original price. So what does this mean? I am not really sure whether "the art market" means anything for my work, beyond the fact that it represents money that in turn allows me to make more art.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

IN: "Centers for contemporary art" are probably any place or any thing that promotes contemporary art in any way, as much as possible, and this is a very abstract thing. I cannot support the well-known mythology that North American or European "centers for contemporary art" are the most important ones in the world. In this sense, I can also say that Santiago, Chile might be some kind of center for contemporary art too, but in a different form... one that promotes art, even if it doesn't have the infrastructure of art collectors who support institutions or art magazines to advertise its art shows – things that North American or European "centers for contemporary art" do have.

What would you like to see them presenting?

IN: Just art.

Tuan Andrew Nguyen

“The art world is like a
snake swallowing its
tail.”

Tuan Andrew Nguyen

How are you involved in the art world?

TAN: I actually don't feel involved in the art world. But who does? I think most art careers are based on chasing that feeling: the feeling that we are artists and that we are involved somehow in something bigger than just the ideas running around in our own heads and the shows we make that might or might not get seen.

Are you related to any art scene?

TAN: How many art scenes are there? And why do they exist? Hmmmm, I don't think I am related to any art scene.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

TAN: In public.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

TAN: Curators who have made art.

What does the art market mean for your work?

TAN: The art market means compromise. But that may be a simple way of looking at the matrix of art production and art consumption. Of course there are always negotiations to be made when artists have to sustain their creative practices. But perhaps the most relevant question from an artist's perspective is, "How can artists re-activate the art market so that the market can serve an economic agenda as well as one that is socially relevant?" The art world is like a snake swallowing its tail.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

TAN: By 'centers for contemporary art' I'm assuming you are talking about galleries and museums. Could this include virtual spaces as well? Is the Internet a center for contemporary art? If so, I think that without these centers, finding 'output' for art production would be difficult and limited. These centers are a place where ideas are shared and they act as spaces for artists and thinkers to explore criticality.

What would you like to see them presenting?

TAN: Uh, good art.

Marcel Odenbach

“We shared production opportunities, many things were produced in collective.”

Marcel Odenbach

How are you involved in the art world?

MO: I've already lost track. Probably more than I want to be. But there are still moments when I can live a second life – that's really important to me to keep my head and gut free.

Are you related to any art scene?

MO: Membership of a scene can be very subjective. In the '70s work depended on belonging. We shared production opportunities, many things were produced in collective. The choice of the medium video and performance was also a socio-political statement.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

MO: For me, places have to be visionary. They are ideal for me if I can truly see in them what I want to see. When one has worked for so long with a technical medium like video, one has had to learn that there is no ultimate presentation form; technology wears out over time. Perhaps that's why I try to construct my installations in a simpler fashion. Many of my colleagues confuse precision with unnecessary airs and graces.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

MO: I love curators who know what they want from me. I admire curators who have a different interpretation of my works to my own, but at the same time, I expect them to respect me and my work.

What does the art market mean for your work?

MO: The market means showing and selling all the time. But I still try to stay as independent from it as I can. At first I thought that the medium of video could liberate me from many market mechanisms, but that was very naïve of course. But now it offers me opportunities which I can use.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

MO: I think that over the course of time, many things about me and about various works are constantly changing. Exhibitions depend on the medium and what I want to achieve with a specific work. There isn't one single ideal

Marcel Odenbach

place. A work can make different claims. Naturally, I always want the best for a production and its presentation.

What would you like to see them presenting?

MO: Things that surprise me and give me food for thought over the long term.

Pablo Pijnappel

“As my work has been considered art by some, I have therefore been put in the position of being considered an artist by others.”

Pablo Pijnappel

How are you involved in the art world?

PP: As my work has been considered art by some, I have therefore been put in the position of being considered an artist by others.

Are you related to any art scene?

PP: If you mean an art scene in the geographical sense, I feel totally detached. If you mean on a ideological basis, I don't know if any such scene has existed anymore for the past twenty years.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

PP: Any solo exhibition.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

PP: Any curator who has a vision of what art should be but it isn't.

What does the art market mean for your work?

PP: Pocket money.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

PP: I'm not sure if I really know what they are for but I know what I think they should be for: for giving artists who make relevant work the possibility of using the space/time that such an institution can provide for making a new step in their work.

What would you like to see them presenting?

PP: More solo shows.

Mathias Poledna

“Spaces – architecture, media, situations etc. – that allow for work to be presented in the most concise as well as most complex possible way.”

Mathias Poledna

How are you involved in the art world?

MP: As artist and spectator.

Are you related to any art scene?

MP: Various, by default, by choice, involuntarily, or in combinations thereof.

What would the most productive place to present your work?

MP: Spaces – architecture, media, situations etc – that allow for work to be presented in the most concise as well as most complex possible way. As different spaces interact with work in different ways and, ideally, generate new and specific dialogues, this can neither be the function of any given single space, nor can such a space be created. While individual spaces can be most productive under certain circumstances and at a given moment, the presentation of my work involves a relationship of difference and repetition that is equally important.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

MP: People, not necessarily curators, who on a basic level are able to provide and create conditions as described above. Anything above and beyond is rare and highly treasured.

What does the art market mean for your work?

MP: Hopefully I take my place among the sellers.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

MP: Learning, learning – and learning.

What would you like to see them presenting?

MP: Good sense tells us that earthly things are rare and fleeting, and that true reality exists only in dreams.

Bas Princen

“Normally, the curator is the last person to deal with the work before it is finished.”

Bas Princen

How are you involved in the art world?

BP: I'm an artist.

Are you related to any art scene?

BP: Not any one in particular, but I'm part of a "scene" that is on the edge of the art scene in general; my background is architecture, or more specifically "investigating urban-ity". It's a particular group of people, not really connected to a single institute, or city. Instead, we meet every now and then at exhibitions which are either halfway between or a combination of art and architecture. But most importantly we participate in each other's projects, workshops and books, and we are based in many different cities.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

BP: Right now I would say books because they have a clear context and defined space. They can travel very easily and they are collectable. By this I mean that a book in itself relates to other books or works that someone has collected, and at the same time it is a kind of time capsule for your own work.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

BP: When I create my work (mainly photographs), I send it to the same small group of people for critique. Next, I print the work, which is accompanied by plenty of animated discussions and experimentation with my printer, who contributes his expertise. The group of critics I mentioned do not know each other; I work with them exclusively and they know my work, and have become part of it. Normally, the curator is the last person to deal with the work before it is finished. Curators should be able to give the work a space and context, and in that sense they are (ideally) the final contributors to the work before it is shown.

What does the art market mean for your work?

BP: I still try to direct my work towards places and people who are willing to engage in it, and who I know will either display the work, or show it to others. Art fairs are the face of the art market, I suppose you could say. They

Bas Princen

are the main and practically only places where your work actually gets seen by an enormous amount and wide range of people. The ironic twist to these events is that the work is reduced to an individual photo (in my case), taken out of context and bought by people I never speak to, and somehow this does not give me a satisfied feeling.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

BP: They should be places where work is produced. They should apply their expertise and knowledge to make new art in collaboration with the artists.

What would you like to see them presenting?

BP: Specific projects (preferably by individual artists) made for their spaces and cities, and produced in collaboration with their team.

Mark Raidpere

“Straight male and female – they tend to be more stable and trustworthy.”

Mark Raidpere

How are you involved in the art world?

MR: As a commercial photographer-become-video-artist. And I still shoot for glossies.

Are you related to any art scene?

MR: Formally to the Estonian, somehow more closely connected and involved in the general European scene.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

MR: I am sort of stuck in the past, so basically gallery spaces created for the exhibiting purposes that can provide me with the optimal possibilities of installing and presenting the works according to my own vision for the dedicated viewer. I also adjust myself to structurally challenging spaces with pleasure, but do not imagine any exiting-unconventional-public landscapes or virtual rooms to be proper for experiencing my works.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

MR: Straight male and female – they tend to be more stable and trustworthy.

What does the art market mean for your work?

MR: Some income and added potential of exhibiting in new venues.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

MR: Primarily for promoting the urge to interpret new artworks.

What would you like to see them presenting?

MR: Contemporary art.

Robin Rhode

“Scenes can sometimes
be short-lived.”

Robin Rhode

How are you involved in the art world?

RR: I am an artist engaging in the art world.

Are you related to any art scene?

RR: I do not consider myself part of any art scene. Scenes can sometimes be short-lived.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

RR: I am fascinated with the idea of a kunsthalle developing and showcasing my work. The relationship between the kunsthalle and the public realm is just as important – for there to be an existing dialogue between society and art.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

RR: A kind of curator that has a sincere appreciation for my work. I find it interesting when curators have a certain understanding or appreciation for performance art and how this art can manifest itself in various mediums. A great curator is one that can allow the artist's practice to transcend discourses. As well as the work itself.

What does the art market mean for your work?

RR: The art market means a way to make a living.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

RR: To develop discourses between art and the general public.

What would you like to see them presenting?

RR: Work that is relevant and that touches on certain aspects of our reality.

Hannah Rickards

“Not curators who are involved in a hit-and-run or smash-and-grab exercise, but those who have confidence in a form or proposition.”

Hannah Rickards

How are you involved in the art world?

HR: I am an artist.

Are you related to any art scene?

HR: I don't think so.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

HR: Depending entirely on the particular work, it would be a place or situation in which the work could be realized, presented and disseminated in the way it needed to be, as far as possible. And I mean "as far as possible" very much in the sense that it be taken as far as possible, not in an apologetic way of allowing yourself space to stop short of how it needs to or should be.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

HR: Thorough curators, who have a sustainable approach to the work or practice with which they have chosen to work or present. Curators that are able to create, explain and retain a shape to what they are presenting. Not curators who are involved in a hit-and-run or smash-and-grab exercise, but those who have confidence in a form or proposition. Curators who maintain their part of the mutual responsibility between artist and curator in presenting work.

What does the art market mean for your work?

HR: What does the art market mean for my work itself or on how I work? The art market seems more hydra-like than a monolithic solid mass that could be said to have a singular effect or meaning on/for my work.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

HR: They are, individually, different prisms through which to view contemporary art.

What would you like to see them presenting?

HR: As wide or as narrow a range of works as they individually see fit. However, regardless of the specific range, it should be presented from a position or a center of gravity which allows it to function relatively unhindered in a

Hannah Rickards

structure that is not entirely impervious to the elements,
but is not blown apart by any particular prevailing wind,
and offers some kind of shelter to whatever it has taken in.

Margaret Salmon

“Stimulating work
that is relevant to
contemporary life.”

Margaret Salmon

How are you involved in the art world?

MS: I am an artist.

Are you related to any art scene?

MS: Not that I am aware of...

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

MS: Anywhere with an audience.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

MS: Professional, kind, respectful, inventive and definitive would be a good start. Really anyone who's interested in what I make and wants to work together towards realizing its potential.

What does the art market mean for your work?

MS: Nothing.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

MS: Supporting the public viewing of various forms of contemporary art.

What would you like to see them presenting?

MS: Stimulating work that is relevant to contemporary life.

Johanna de Schipper

“Are artists these days attracted by all the fanciness and the money that this profession comes with or do they still feel a deep need inside to make a piece that will upset the world?”

Johanna de Schipper

How are you involved in the art world?

JdS: I have been active as an artist for 8 years already; I studied at Tilburg ABV, the Rietveld Academy and then participated in the program run by De Ateliers. I am a performing artist who also makes collages, films and installations.

Are you related to any art scene?

JdS: An art scene is something that will not be recognized as such until time passes and people point it out as having been an art scene. For me, an art scene is a gathering of people who are naturally drawn together by a higher energy, sometimes even through conflict. People from outside feel the need to become part of this group and start to get involved. Characters mix and then a scene is created. At this moment in time, I don't think there is anything of this kind going on. The artist has become very individualistic and does not share ideas with, or show much sympathy for his or her colleagues. Yeah, maybe one could say there is a scene related to art, but it isn't dictated by the artist in the same way as we see, for instance, in the fashion world, where the designer has a lot of power. For artists, being part of a scene has lost a lot of its spontaneity and has become more and more of a cultivated activity.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

JdS: A productive place to present my work would be a place that is a studio and a gallery in one, a place that is located in the center of a city and is cheap, big and light. And of course has a bar in it.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

JdS: I never was a big fan of curators, there's only a few of them who really have the gift of recognizing talent and setting up an amazing show. Often they are following fashions, hypes created by a handful of people. Here in Holland there are a lot of influences that are coming from abroad. We are well-known for denying our own Dutch identity and disparaging our artists (Ann Demeester in the weekly opinion paper *De Groene Amsterdammer*). Although I know I sound quite sceptical, I cannot lie and

Johanna de Schipper

I know there are a lot of people out there (young artists in particular) who feel just the same but are unable to do anything about it because curators, especially nowadays, have so much power. The system is airtight. A curator is not an artist, he or she does not think or feel like an artist. An artist is special and should be guarded with care, not with money. To create art and to be an artist is extremely difficult, and in order to maintain integrity it is unbelievably important to always be conscious of maintaining the balance between money, power, fame and production.

I predict that there will be a reaction among artists; they will start up their own collectives again and regain old values, like discussion and doing things together out of passion instead of for monetary reasons. The career of an artist (and also the status of an artist) has changed dramatically over the last 20 years. It is now considered cool to be an artist, the idea of working as an artist has become fully integrated into society and, because it has become such an attractive profession, people will choose it far more often, meaning there are more artists. But of course, one is born an artist and can not just become one. Sometimes it seems everyone thinks they can be an artist: just go to a few conceptual schools and make some fancy videos. All of a sudden you find yourself at the Prix the Rome winning shitloads of money. A few years later they are forgotten and it is someone else's turn. It's a dream that is not too hard to achieve, and so other hopefuls hang about till it is their turn, or else they manage to work themselves up in the system. All this leaves us with such questions as what is the use of art and the function of the artist in society? And also: what happened to the so-called necessity of suffering in order to produce work? Are artists these days attracted by all the fanciness and the money that this profession comes with, or do they still feel a deep need inside to make a piece that will upset the world?

However, I have met some people that I've had good conversations with, people that were open and whom I would like to work with or have already worked with, like Cokkie Snoei, Ann Demeester, Renske Janssen, Joep van Liefland and Jelle Bouwhuis. They were sharp, had a sense of humor and understood. I think there is more, but I can not think of anything now.

Johanna de Schipper

What does the art market mean for your work?

JdS: The art market does not mean a lot to my work as it is difficult to sell performance and installations. It is very interesting for painters who work on canvas. If I were to work on canvas I'd sell, but with what I do now people stand around it, looking at it and saying how nice it is but how very fragile and hard to preserve.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

JdS: Centers for contemporary art should present art that is important and draw a picture of what's going on and has been going on. They can not be trendsetters, but they sure have an important role to play. They keep the general public informed.

What would you like to see them presenting?

JdS: My work in ten years' time... sorry, I think I am so funny and slick!

Markus Schinwald

“The most productive place is where people are willing to spend time investigating it.”

Markus Schinwald

How are you involved in the art world?

MS: I'm an artist.

Are you related to any art scene?

MS: Guess that's part of the job.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

MS: The most productive place is where people are willing to spend time investigating it.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

MS: The patient ones. They know why.

What does the art market mean for your work?

MS: For my work it doesn't mean too much, but of course that's how I make a living and finance work that I could never sell.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

MS: Hard to define. In different regions and countries with contrasting directors and curators they all serve such different purposes. Some are there to introduce people to art, while others focus on a very specific group like collectors or a small art community.

What would you like to see them presenting?

MS: Whatever is lacking in their community.

Kevin Schmidt

“It is more interesting to see a forceful argument, or an idiosyncratic vision.”

Kevin Schmidt

How are you involved in the art world?

KS: I am an artist. I also hold temporary part-time jobs as a gallery coordinator, as an art dealer and in photo-documentation. A large part of the rest of my time is spent socializing – going to art events and openings to meet and talk with other artists and curators.

Are you related to any art scene?

KS: I make work in Vancouver, Canada. The art there seems fixated on self-reflexivity, in which loops are created between the form and content of artworks, and between an artistic practice and the social and institutional frames it requires. My practice is very much informed by the dialogue there.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

KS: At this point in my career, I have shown in a few large group shows, had a few solo shows in Canadian artist-run centers, and one solo show in my gallery space. The most productive thing for me about the large group shows is traveling to the show and talking with the other artists. I learn much more about my work and practice from the small solo shows, where I have usually presented a single work. The tight focus allows me to better see the work for what it is.

I find that I usually get the most from other artists' art work when I visit their studios. Art seems so much more alive in the studio. I have had a similar experience when visiting a collector's house and seeing a good collection as it was lived with.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

KS: The curators I have worked with all seem to me to have very individual personalities. However, I appreciate the curators who have been supportive and helped me to present my work as I feel it should be presented, especially when it comes to details. Paying attention to small details is a way of showing people that you care about what you are doing or showing, and it encourages them to care as well. It has been my good fortune to work with several curators

Kevin Schmidt

who continue to show interest in what I do. This is also important, as I have learned a lot from the ongoing conversations with them.

What does the art market mean for your work?

KS: As I am not independently wealthy, it means that I can continue making art. It is difficult to maintain disinterest in the market, and concerns about what is sellable inform my artistic decisions even if I wished it were otherwise.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

KS: For maintaining a dialogue about what art is and could be. They play a huge role in legitimizing any artist's practice, thereby allowing it to continue. I understand that centers for contemporary art are necessarily competitive spaces, because showing everyone and everything all at once with equal emphasis is boring. It is more interesting to see a forceful argument, or an idiosyncratic vision. Hopefully these can be kept in dynamic flux.

What would you like to see them presenting?

KS: Variety. Not for its own sake, but in order to maintain a vibrant conversation about the potential of art. And not necessarily only the newest ideas, but also reconsideration of old ones.

Anj Smith

“A specific personal vision is obviously appealing.”

Anj Smith

How are you involved in the art world?

AJ: I'm a painter.

Are you related to any art scene?

AJ: Hopefully not.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

AJ: Anywhere it can make a contribution.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

AJ: Most kinds...A specific personal vision is obviously appealing.

What does the art market mean for your work?

AJ: (Complex dynamics aside) it facilitates the making of it.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

AJ: Opening discussions.

What would you like to see them presenting?

AJ: More of my work.

Matt Stokes

“Without wanting to sound too idealistic, they should be places that fulfill the idea of an open and accessible social space.”

Matt Stokes

How are you involved in the art world?

MS: I am an artist based in Newcastle upon Tyne in the northeast of England.

Are you related to any art scene?

MS: Geographically speaking, I have been a part of the "scene" developing here in the northeast since 1997. In more general terms, I am part of a generation of youngish artists whose practice focuses on social participation and collaboration, and broader investigation of our culture.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

MS: Somewhere that allows for an open interaction with the place and its context.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

MS: Those who are incisive, but not controlling.

What does the art market mean for your work?

MS: I've had limited contact with the art market, perhaps due to the nature of much of the work that I produce, which doesn't fit so neatly into it. Potentially, it could provide a platform for supporting elements of my practice that I currently support through other related work. However I feel wary about producing work that other people, and/or I, perceive as fitting more easily into the art market – something I hope I never do.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

MS: To show work that challenges general perceptions of what contemporary art is. To engage both those involved in the art world and the wider public – without being patronizing to the latter. Without wanting to sound too idealistic, they should be places that fulfill the idea of an open and accessible social space.

What would you like to see them presenting?

MS: The same as the above.

Aram Tanis

“Curators and directors have the obligation to work with artists who are not their friends or close contacts, and to go further and try to make a statement that has to do with the society we live in today.”

Aram Tanis

How are you involved in the art world?

AT: As an artist, I put my work out there for people to see and this year I started to organize and curate shows and projects.

Are you related to any art scene?

AT: No...

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

AT: Museums and centers for contemporary art. The white cube works for me.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

AT: I like to work with curators with a vision. Someone who has a clear opinion how art can play a role in the society we live in. Art is not there to be pretty or just to show off the big names. Art is social and I think it is important that a curator carries this out. Curators can be difficult; so can artists, but I don't care about that as long as they stand for something and carry that out.

What does the art market mean for your work?

AT: The art market is something that is there and as an artist you have to deal with it. This doesn't mean that you have to make compromises. The art itself is more important than the buyers. A lot of artists repeat themselves over and over, including the "big" names in the art world – I won't mention any names. They have lost the drive to reinvent and to challenge themselves. It is important for an artist to make a living, but for me this doesn't mean choosing the safe way.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

AT: Centers for contemporary art are there to present work that goes beyond aesthetics. They have the responsibility to push boundaries and to stand for something. Curators and directors have the obligation to work with artists who are not their friends or close contacts, and to go further and try to make a statement that has to do with the society we live in today.

Aram Tanis

What would you like to see them presenting?

AT: What I like to see is art that moves, shocks, provokes and makes me think. That's what I need to see, as both a visitor and an artist. When I go to a movie, I want that movie to do something to me, so why shouldn't I expect the same from art in an institution. The art world in the Netherlands is quite boring and safe with the exception of a few exhibitions. Non-commercial art is what I miss in the institutions.

An Te Liu

“They are a kind of critical halfway house between production and consumption, informing both, but giving artists and thinkers a unique kind of permission.”

An Te Liu

How are you involved in the art world?

ATL: Somewhat accidentally.

Are you related to any art scene?

ATL: Not as far as I know.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

ATL: Any place where it can reach people – and not just other artists and curators, although this is important – and where a good discussion can take place.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

ATL: Ones who like good food and drink. Fortunately, this counts for many of them.

What does the art market mean for your work?

ATL: It is easier for me to be focussed and critical when there is a recession going on, so these days I try not to think about the art market too much.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

ATL: From my experiences in working with several centers, it seems that they encourage and allow for a range of production that is the most direct (and unmediated) reflection of what is on an artist's mind – their ideas and the way(s) in which they can be best enacted. Centers such as the Witte de With provide a venue for forms of display, performance, and debate that are more difficult to come by in other institutions. I think of a fashion industry analogy – for a designer the runway show is a platform to demonstrate their vision, to try things out, to take risks. The stuff may be not be developed for wider consumption, but the idea is there to consider.

What happens when stores decide what to buy and what they can sell to their clients, that is a related but distinct process with different parameters. I like to think that centers of contemporary art can and should be places for works and ideas which are not yet validated or canonized, which are still dangerous in a way. They can deal with things and discourses that are new, or in process, that which may

An Te Liu

be too cumbersome or not safe enough for museums and galleries and their constituencies. They permit production to develop with some distance from the mandates and logistics of these other art entities. They are a kind of critical halfway house between production and consumption, informing both, but giving artists and thinkers a unique kind of permission.

What would you like to see them presenting?

ATL: I don't know for sure – surprise me.

Kostis Velonis

“Curators have a better connection to their activity if they share similar sensibilities with the artist.”

Kostis Velonis

How are you involved in the art world?

KV: As an artist, and sometimes I curate exhibitions and write texts.

Are you related to any art scene?

KV: To the “Bulldozer fighters” scene that fights the ghosts of post-minimalism and its diverse idioms, all of which represent the kingdom of boredom: from typical conceptual and clinical objects to protests against political journalistic texts and photographs.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

KV: Anywhere, and especially in my studio.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

KV: Hmmm. Curators have a better connection to their activity if they share similar sensibilities with the artist. With the exception of my girlfriend, the better curators are usually artists themselves. Although some curators do indeed behave idiosyncratically, following their artistic intuition. Some time ago we would have defined curators as Cartesian administrators specializing in recent strategies of artistic production. But now curators think of themselves in terms of their creative forces and this is much better.

What does the art market mean for your work?

KV: The art market is not my cup of tea. If someone likes my work for his living-room and likes the way that I'm thinking too, that's OK, if not, that's OK too. Of course, like any other human being I need money for my work.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

KV: A center is a mechanism for the distribution of art practices to the wider public! Their directors should not forget that, for otherwise there will only be “fashionably alternative” institutions that merely add to an inside joke....

What would you like to see them presenting?

KV: Any particular curatorial strategy is welcome as long as good art is presented above all!!!!!!!!!

Silke Wagner

“They are protected areas that offer opportunities for developing new paths for the communication of knowledge/information and for political publicity.”

Silke Wagner

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

SW: As I often work tied to a specific location, for me there is no "most productive place" or, to put it another way, any place is the most productive place for the particular piece of work I am doing.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

SW: Ideally, collaboration leads to a constructive debate and to a discussion regarding the development of joint exhibition projects or contributions. A prerequisite for this is certainly a fundamental interest in the work of the other and respect for individual positions regarding the content thereof. Such working associations can then remain in existence over a longer period of time and the work can be accompanied by productive discussions.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

SW: One of the duties of art institutions is to reflect developments in society and to make contemporary art comprehensible as part of the general development within that society. They are protected areas that offer opportunities for developing new paths for the communication of knowledge/information and for political publicity.

What would you like to see them presenting?

SW: Institutions ought to dare an attempt to bring together different disciplinary, theoretical and methodical perspectives to create a multitude of temporary cooperative projects – not indiscriminately, but in the course of the search for common ground or, at the least, for productive misunderstandings. Institutions should have the courage to dare to test the limits of the scope that they themselves impose.

Richard T. Walker

“At times, I feel it is a relationship of mutual distrust, but occasionally one of great support and enlightenment – this is a common disposition I guess, and something that not only is manifest within one’s relationship to the art world but is symptomatic of making art.”

Richard T. Walker

How are you involved in the art world?

RW: I tell myself I make art and therefore I guess I am an artist. And I show in galleries, therefore I have some involvement with the art world. But I like to think that the relationship is kept at an arm's length, although my arm tends to bend very easily at the elbow. I like the world that is the art world, but also I don't. It's taken me a while and I am still very much in the process of working out my relationship within it and to it. At times, I feel it is a relationship of mutual distrust, but occasionally one of great support and enlightenment – this is common disposition I guess, and something that not only is manifest within one's relationship to the art world but is symptomatic of making art.

Are you related to any art scene?

RW: I wouldn't say that I am related to any scene. My art/social network isn't coherent enough to suggest that it is scene-like. Although I do believe that there are types of work that relate to a certain geographical dogma. I mainly show on mainland Europe, though I have been based in London for many years. It seems to me that London is very much preoccupied with a fast "next thing"-type attitude, it doesn't seem to give any space for something that could even be considered current, or new. It is what will be new that seems to matter. So naturally certain work gets cast aside. Work that is perhaps slower, work that doesn't play the game in the same way, that isn't symptomatic of this catwalk-like perspective. Of course this is a very capitalist-friendly position, something that is perhaps linked to my distrust of the art world. Spain, for example, where my gallery is based, sees things differently. I like it there, they let things gestate and develop. There is more space, so to speak. Art-time is different.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

RW: The most productive place? I'm not sure. I was very pleased with *Don Quijote*. On first impression, the space seemed somewhat chaotic, potentially over-complicated and very 'curated' but, with time, things started to open up and the work began to converse – it was indeed a

Richard T. Walker

conversation. Like a huge group of people sitting in a circle choreographing their voices to allow for each to be heard in relation to the whole. So, yes, I was pleased with that show and I think that it was productive for me; it made me see my piece differently somehow and thus encouraged me to produce new work with a slightly new mindset – a little more open – it expanded my mental perimeters. I have never really shown my work outside a gallery context, and as a result I don't ever think of making work for anywhere other than a white (or dark) gallery space. Unless I am performing music, but that is something different I think.

Sometimes I give myself a hard time with the conventionality of this approach and try to pry myself out of the safety of it, but usually to no avail. I realize the gravity of context in a given exhibition situation but often, to me, a projection appears very autonomous, in its own light-box world, so if I am to be honest I generally think inside the film and allow for additional positioning to define alternate points of view. I prefer shows to screenings for obvious reasons, I think the film/viewer relationship is a little static and binary in a screening. To me, they are the most formal way of viewing. More importantly, they highlight my ongoing anxiety of never making objects that exist. At least in a show the projector is on for a given number of days, the sound loops and becomes almost solid. Screenings are so fleeting. It's very sad really.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

RW: When I talk to people about their work and their relationship with curators there seem to be many conflicts of interest. So far I haven't really had any difficulty and I wonder why this is. I have enjoyed working with curators because it is mainly while discussing my involvement in a show that I have received the most constructive criticism. Curators give feedback in a very different way from how artists do, they seem more aware of the context within the whole – there is less bias or something. Or at least this is what I have led myself to believe. I particularly like to work with curators who see themselves as facilitators – catalysts so to speak; such that they appear both independent from and intrinsic to a show, depending on the angle from which

Richard T. Walker

the event is pursued. But I also believe that my work stands on its own terms; so as long as the practical things, such as image quality, sound, etc. are good, then I have enough faith that I can believe they will somehow pull through even if the context is a little awkward. It is actually occasions like this, for example when I had a projection right next to a painting of the same size, that I enjoy the most.

What does the art market mean for your work?

RW: I recently made some photos. I like the photos, but I also think that I made them because I wanted to sell something. I never thought that I would do such thing, but I did, and it felt OK. The market is there, I feel it, but I try my best to not acknowledge the feeling.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

RW: To me centers for contemporary art are for making things happen that don't happen outside centers for contemporary art. They allow a space around things, and that space is what is of value to me when I visit a gallery. It is important for the gallery to define this whilst at the same time maintaining the overriding potential for that space to dissolve.

What would you like to see them presenting?

RW: Museums should have more project spaces. They should be less precious about creating coherent shows and be prepared to allow things to go out of control once in a while. Not all the time, just sometimes. But it seems that it is in the nature of an institution to keep things in order, which I am sure has a lot to do with the way these spaces are funded. This is easy to say and is perhaps the most obvious thing to say – but these places should take more risks. If I am to be honest, I don't really think about this, I don't know what I think they should be showing. I dislike a lot more of what I see than I like. But what I like is often limited by slim criteria, so I wouldn't expect or want them to just show what I like, especially because some of the appeal of this art is partly due to its context amongst the other less likable art.

Emily Wardill

“It would be interesting to see more large retrospectives of non-white, non-male artists from the past who have been written out of historical canons: a kind of redressing of the balance from the beginning, rather than starting from now.”

Emily Wardill

How are you involved in the art world?

EW: I am an artist and I teach at Central Saint Martins College of Art on the BA Fine Art Course.

Are you related to any art scene?

EW: I don't think so. "Itchy Park" is the closest I get – a one night performance, music and film festival that I co-run with Laura Lord and Eleanor Brown once a year.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

EW: It depends what the work is. It seems largely to do with presence. If people are willing to give themselves to a piece of work and attempt to involve themselves with it, then that is the most productive place.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

EW: Curators who get involved, who give a shit and aren't obsessed with issues of status but who are truly and unavoidably moved by certain work and will go to the wall to make sure that it is given space. Curators who stick their neck out because they believe in work and they believe that it is important for it to be seen. Ones that you can talk to about art where you are both excited, engaged, buzzing, honest, sometimes aggressive, generous, spitting...all that stuff. They are brilliant, I am glad they are alive.

What does the art market mean for your work?

EW: I work a lot in film and video, sometimes in performance. The art market doesn't impact a great deal on my work.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

EW: They are for showing art, in its various guises, and with sensitivity to the needs of the work and the audience. That's all. They shouldn't second guess their audiences, they should know what they think is worth seeing and stick with it, then, if some people disagree, they can say why and that can be considered and things be negotiated in response. My experience is that you need to invite people in to have this discussion.

Emily Wardill

What would you like to see them presenting?

EW: They should concentrate on doing strong shows that no-one else can afford to or has the space to put on. It would be interesting to see more large retrospectives of non-white, non-male artists from the past who have been written out of historical canons: a kind of redressing of the balance from the beginning, rather than starting from now. I would also like to see more in the way of artist-made films – which can be difficult to view in all their glory without the support of an institution.

Clemens von Wedemeyer

“Don’t pay the dinner if
the institution you are
running does not pay
the artist!”

Clemens von Wedemeyer

How are you involved in the art world?

CvM: By accident.

Are you related to any art scene?

CvM: The film scene of the art scene, but also the art scene of the film scene. Besides others.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

CvM: A cinema. A museum. A workshop, a discussion, the Internet. A video-distribution. Magazines...

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

CvM: The ones who disappear radically – but while managing to help the artist realize the work. So, in my case, as an example for film-makers involved in the art world, it could be somebody who is a film producer him or herself. On the other hand, building up an exhibition calls for somebody who knows how to communicate technical issues and has an eye for architecture. Don't pay the dinner if the institution you are running does not pay the artist!

What does the art market mean for your work?

CvM: Production money, Inspiration and Frustration.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

CvM: Production of experiments and for surprising the public.

What would you like to see them presenting?

CvM: Everything without political or institutional (self-) restrictions.

Lawrence Wiener

“A means to continue
working.”

Lawrence Wiener

How are you involved in the art world?

LW: I make art.

Are you related to any art scene?

LW: My daughter is an artist.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

LW: Wherever it can be seen.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

LW: Multilingual (who have a comprehension of various structures of logic).

What does the art market mean for your work?

LW: A means to continue working.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

LW: A place for curators and artists who cannot or chose not to work within the museum or market structure.

What would you like to see them presenting?

LW: Anything I have not previously seen.

Jordan Wolfson

“Paying the rent, eating organic food and bending a commerce-based system into perceiving the value of an idea.”

Jordan Wolfson

How are you involved in the art world?

JW: N/A

Are you related to any art scene?

JW: N/A

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

JW: In a story.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

JW: Libertines and/or masochists.

What does the art market mean for your work?

JW: Paying the rent, eating organic food and bending a commerce-based system into perceiving the value of an idea.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

JW: Googling without computers.

What would you like to see them presenting?

JW: Everything...

Tobias Zielony

“To keep a discourse
going or give it a
platform.”

Tobias Zielony

How are you involved in the art world?

TZ: As an artist and as a spectator.

Are you related to any art scene?

TZ: A bit Leipzig and a bit Berlin.

What would be the most productive place to present your work?

TZ: Any place could be productive.

What kind of curators do you like to work with and why?

TZ: The ones who know more about my work than I myself do.

What does the art market mean for your work?

TZ: It helps, but creates a somewhat strange idea of value.

In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for?

TZ: To keep a discourse going or give it a platform.

What would you like to see them presenting?

TZ: Art.

Biographies

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Marc Bauer. Born 1975 in Geneva, CH. Lives and works in Amsterdam and Geneva. Witte de With project: *Depiction, Perversion, Repulsion, Obsession, Subversion*.

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Chris Moukarbel. Born 1978 in New Haven, US. Lives and works in New Haven and New York. Witte de With project: *Don Quijote.*

Ivan Navarro. Born 1972 in Santiago, CL. Lives and works in Brooklyn. Witte de With project: *Don Quijote.*

Tuan Andrew Nguyen. Born 1976 in Ho Chi Minh City, VN. Lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City. Witte de With project: *Depiction, Perversion, Repulsion, Obsession, Subversion.*

Marcel Odenbach. Born 1953 in Cologne, DE. Lives and works in Cologne. Witte de With project: *Depiction, Perversion, Repulsion, Obsession, Subversion.*

Pablo Pijnappel. Born 1979 in Paris, FR. Lives and works in Amsterdam and Berlin. Witte de With project: *Don Quijote.*

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Tobias Zielony. Born 1973 in Wuppertal, DE. Lives and works in Leipzig and New York. Witte de With project: *Street: behind the cliché.*

This publication includes interviews with almost all the artist participating in Witte de With's program between January 2006 and August 2007.

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How are you involved in the art world? Are you related to any art scene? What would be the most productive place to present your work? What kind of curators do you like to work with and why? What does the art market mean for your work? In your opinion, what are centers for contemporary art for? What would you like to see them presenting?

These are seven simple and open questions on different aspects of today's art world that were asked to every artist involved in Witte de With's program in 2006 and 2007. The resulting publication reflects on some of the topics touched upon in the program of the past two years – for example, in group shows such as *Street: behind the cliché* – looking at the best place for art, the role of the art institution and its curators, and the influence of “populist” forces on different forms of art production.

The answers included here serve as time-documents, providing a “tour d’horizon” of artists' opinions, concerns and ambitions today, setting out a blueprint for the future role of the art institution and of its related actors (the artist, curator, critic, gallerist).



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