2017

The Incomplete Collection

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CENTRE D'ART LA PANERA & MUSEU D'ART JAUME MORERA

Presentation:

What are the challenges currently faced by contemporary art collections? On the occasion of 10th Leandre Cristòfol Biennial organised by the Centre d'Art La Panera and the centenary of the Museu d'Art Jaume Morera, the conference "The Incomplete Collection" opens a framework for reflection on public collecting processes and formats, which will also be useful to analyse some collection cases that take into account the current challenges of artistic and social practices.

Incompleteness, while being a defining condition of contemporaneity, is particularly challenging when applied to public collecting. On the one hand, aspects defended by today's art, such as the ephemeral nature of the process or experience, act against the very possibility of achieving the status of heritage in its completeness. On the other, collecting, as a social practice, often seems anachronistic in its procedures, almost without giving any response to the criticism of some of the mainstays of liberal democracy, such as the notions of representativeness and ownership. The term "incompleteness" has a special resonance when referring to the Catalan context, in which public contemporary art collections are notably scarce. However, given the impossibility of a contemporary art collection becoming complete, what are the opportunities opening up in the current scenario?

Oriol Fontdevila

Programme:

FRIDAY 24 NOVEMBER

09.30 am Opening of the session:

- **Cèlia del Diego**, Director of the Centre d'Art La Panera.
- **Jusèp Boya**, Director General of Cultural Heritage at the Government of Catalonia.
- **Oriol Fontdevila**, Director of the conference

10.00 am ***Collecting Coefficients of Art***
Stephen Wright, art writer and Co-Director of the PhD-level programme in artistic research at the European School of Visual Art, France; member of the Acquisitions Committee of the FRAC Poitou-Charentes.

11.30 am ***Collecting without Documenting, Documenting without Passing On, and Passing On without Patrimonialization***
Octavi Rofes, anthropologist and professor at EINA, Escola d'Art i Disseny, Barcelona.

01.00 pm ***Collecting as a Practice or the Opening of the Play of Symbolic Capital***
Mariona Moncunill, artist and scholar.

[Break]

04.30 pm ***Collection Narratives***
Sergio Rubira, Assistant Professor of Art History at the UCM and Deputy Director of Collection and Exhibitions at IVAM, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern.

06.00 pm ***How Does Art Become Public?***
Roundtable with directors and heads of public museums and private foundations and collections with a public service vocation:

- **Ferran Barenblit**, Director of MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona
- **Carme Clusellas**, Director of the Museu d'Art de Girona
- **Roser Figueras**, Director of Cal Cego Col·lecció d'Art Contemporani
- **Jesús Navarro**, Director of the Museu d'Art Jaume Morera in Lleida
- **Julio Vaquero**, Artistic Advisor to the Foundation and Head of the Col·lecció Soriguéand Head of the Col·lecció Sorigué

Moderator: **Oriol Fontdevila**.

SATURDAY 25 NOVEMBER

09.30 am Opening of the session:

- **Jesús Navarro**, Director of the Museu d'Art Jaume Morera in Lleida
- Representative of Lleida City Council
- **Oriol Fontdevila**, Director of the conference

10.00 am ***Socio-historical contexts of collecting***

Dorothea von Hantelmann, art theorist, scholar, writer and faculty member at Bard College Berlin.

11.30 am ***Interrupted Narratives: The Curatorial Practice and the Activation of the Collection in the Public / Private Intersection***
Suset Sánchez, curator and art critic, researcher in residence at the Exhibition Department of MNCARS, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.

01.00 pm ***An Archive for the Present***
Annie Fletchter, curator and head of exhibitions at Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.
02.35 pm Closing of the conference.

Abstracts & Bios:

Collecting Coefficients of Art
Stephen Wright
Paris-based art writer and Co-Director of the PhD-level programme in artistic research at the European School of Visual Art, in France; member of the Acquisitions Committee of the FRAC Poitou-Charentes, a public art collection in France.

Coefficients of art is a notion coined by Marcel Duchamp, which may prove helpful for describing practices that have deliberately impaired their artistic visibility; that is, practices that though somehow tethered to art and its histories, or informed by artistic self-understanding, do not necessarily appear as art, often seeking to release their artistic agency in fields often far removed from the world of art. How then can these practices be integrated into public collections that seek to embrace a broad panorama of contemporary creativity? Do such post-autonomous practices even belong in collections at all? This talk will argue that to exclude them would be to ontologise art's aesthetic function as synonymous with art itself, at a moment when so many practices are seeking to escape from just such ontological capture. The experience of some public collections shows that the very notion of the collection can be de-ontologised and its value-conferring system repurposed to make way for usership-generated and usership-oriented practices.

Stephen Wright is a Paris-based writer and Co-Director of the PhD-level artistic research programme "Document & contemporary art" at the European School of Visual Art (ÉESI). In 2017, he has been Guest Professor in the Aesthetics and Politics program at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts, Los Angeles), and since 2008 he has been a member of the Acquisitions Committee of the FRAC Poitou-Charentes, a public art collection in France. Over the past decade, his research has examined the ongoing uso logical turn in art-related practice. He is currently preparing a book on the Politics of Usership and a companion volume, Not, Not Art.

Collecting without Documenting, Documenting without Passing On, and Passing On without Patrimonialization
Octavi Rofes
Anthropologist and professor at EINA, Escola d'Art i Disseny, Barcelona.

In the dystopian novel Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury speculated about forms of resistance to the prohibition imposed on reading by a totalitarian regime. Given the low efficacy of the efforts to hide books, a very poorly organised minority group disperses through forests and roads to ensure that the book or book fragment that every member has learnt by heart is finally passed on. One of the main constituting elements of this organisation is modesty, the awareness, on the one hand, of being, as individuals, merely the "dust jackets" of the books concealed within the mind and, on the other, of the imperfection of a system that will not prevent much of the written culture from being lost. When we pass on these two sources of uncertainty about the transmission of knowledge (the material means and the channel of circulation) to a contemporary art collection, they take on special relevance. Both the tangible irreducibility and the constraints of the transmission infrastructure enable the emergence of the singularity of the work before the specificities of the heritage discourse. The analysis of the effects of these two sources of uncertainty in different works that form part of La Panera collection or are exhibited in this year's Biennial makes it possible to establish a system of relations between the processes of creation, memory and collection applicable to contemporary art achieving the status of heritage.

Octavi Rofes (Barcelona, 1967). Doctor of Anthropology from Universitat de Barcelona and professor at Eina, Centre Universitari de Disseny i Art (UAB) since 1996. He researches the artistic practices of the production of locality and the representations in conflict in the contemporary world through the ethnographic study of public art in different cultural contexts.

Collecting as a Practice or the Opening of the Play of Symbolic Capital
Mariona Moncunill
Artist and scholar.

Contemporary art collections are the result of a series of creative and discursive practices (collecting) that use other creative and discursive practices (the artworks) as raw material in a play of symbolic capital. Artists and curators often reveal or cause distortions in this play, as can also be seen in amateur museums, in which collecting and musealisation appear as creative-discursive practices of a strong personal and social kind and as tools that enable the symbolic capital to be put into play to the benefit of its practitioners.

Now that the pillars of public collecting (such as the need to preserve tangible culture or the idea that institutional collecting is possible) are increasingly more questioned, moving the emphasis from the object (its study, preservation and dissemination) to the critical and creative practice of collecting would mean facilitating the opening of this play while reorienting the public function of our collecting institutions.

Mariona Moncunill Piñas (Tarragona, 1984) lives and works in Barcelona. She holds a degree in Fine Arts and a master's degree in Cultural Management from the UB. She also has a PhD in Information and Knowledge Society from the UOC with research on the practice of amateur museums from a sociological perspective and based on seven case studies in Catalonia and a contrasted case in Medellin. She did part of her studies at the Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten in The Hague. Her

work focuses on discursive analysis and forms of use and modification of symbolic value in specific cases and their conventions.

Collection Narratives
Sergio Rubira
Assistant Professor of Art History at the UCM and Deputy Director of Collection and Exhibitions at IVAM, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern.

When we study the history of a museum, we often focus on how its collections were formed and how it acquired the works, or we look at those who built them, generally the personalities of their directors, on many occasions overlooking something that is fundamental: how these works were displayed, the design that provided a backbone for the intended narrative and that said much about the very standing of art and its history. In the conference some collection designs, both historical and current, will be reviewed and analysed.

Sergio Rubira is Assistant Professor of Art History at the UCM and Deputy Director of Collection and Exhibitions at the Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (IVAM), Valencia. He was Academic Coordinator of the MA in Contemporary Art History and Visual Culture, UAM, UCM and Museo Reina Sofía. He was Editor-in-Chief of the international photography magazine EXIT and art critic of El Cultural, the weekly culture supplement of the newspaper El Mundo. He was Head of the Department of Research, Data, Documentation, Questioning and Causality (D.I.D.D.C.C.) of CA2M (2016). He formed part of the curatorial office RMS La Asociación. Among the exhibitions he has curated we can cite "La idea en un signo" (Centro de Arte de Alcobendas, 2017) and "Colección XIII: Hacia un nuevo museo de arte contemporáneo" (CA2M, Móstoles, 2016), among others.

How Does Art Become Public?
Roundtable with directors and heads of public museums and private foundations and collections with a public service vocation.

Museums in Catalonia are behind the times in terms of contemporary art collecting. Moreover, both the processes that are endogenous to artistic creation and the current discourses on cultural policies demand how art is collected and the formats through which heritage is articulated with the public sphere to be rethought. The aim of this roundtable is to extend the approaches that will emerge during "The Incomplete Collection" conference to the reality of the museums and collections in our context as well as to set them to contrast the point of views of the respective managers.

- **Ferran Barenblit**, Director of MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona
- **Carme Clusellas**, Director of the Museu d'Art de Girona
- **Roser Figueras**, Director of Cal Cego Col·lecció d'Art Contemporani
- **Jesús Navarro**, Director of the Museu d'Art Jaume Morera in Lleida
- **Julio Vaquero**, Artistic Advisor to the Foundation and Head of the Col·lecció Sorigué

Socio-historical contexts of collecting
Dorothea von Hantelmann
Art theorist, scholar, writer and faculty member at Bard College Berlin.

This talk will situate the culture of collecting in the context of modern Western materialism. It will address the emergence of collections in the early modern period along the routes of trade and commerce and in conjunction with a first consumer culture; it will reflect on the significance of collecting within bourgeois culture and on the imperialism and universalism inherent in the ontology of the collected object. Finally, it will address current challenges that institutional collections face in regard to art practices that are not based on material objects.

Dorothea von Hantelmann is Professor of Art and Society at Bard College Berlin. She was previously documenta Professor at the University/Art Academy of Kassel. Her main fields of research are contemporary art and exhibition culture. She is the author of How to Do Things with Art. On the Meaning of Art's Performativity and is currently preparing a publication on the socio-cultural function of exhibitions from the 16th century to the present.

Interrupted Narratives: The Curatorial Practice and the Activation of the Collection in the Public /Private Intersection
Suset Sánchez

Curator and art critic, researcher in residence at the Exhibition Department of MNCARS, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.

Disruptions and tensions between collecting as a private practice in its ontology and the emergence of national museums and galleries in the public domain in the midst of modernity have a long history that concerns the modes of collecting, preserving and exhibiting. The figure of the freelance curator has become an agent forced to negotiate in the interstice and the fissure of power relations taking place in a situation of global capitalism in which museums and public institutions have practically remained outside the art market, without a real capacity to compete with private – individual or corporate – collecting in the acquisition and preservation of heritage. In the scenario of international economic and financial crisis in recent times, the problems derived from the gradual transit of collections between the private and public spheres – whether through bequests, loans, acquisitions or exhibitions – involve interesting re-definitions in the management and administration of the assets, as well as in the public policies faced with the different models and forms of sponsorship.

Suset Sánchez (Havana, 1977). Since 2004 she has been living and working in Madrid. She holds a degree in Art History from the Faculty of Arts and Letters at Havana University (2000) and an MA in History of Contemporary Art and Visual Culture from the Autonomous University of Madrid, Complutense University of Madrid and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (2013). Her professional practice is aimed at curatorship and art criticism, regularly contributing to publications specialised in contemporary culture, art and cinema and several institutions, art centres and museums.

An Archive for the Present
Annie Fletcher
Curator, Head of Exhibitions at Van Abbemuseum, Eindhovenn.

This talk will address how the institutions of contemporary art work counter-intuitively to the creation and maintenance of public and private memory. Starting with specific examples from contemporary museum practice in Europe today, I will look at curatorial modes and practices that actively try to refute this presentism. In addressing how the art institution has been released from the production of progressive or modernist time, a series of possibilities emerges.

Focusing on recent curatorial experiments and projects at the Van Abbemuseum that actively question the operation of maintaining art as cultural heritage (as the kind of hard core 'asset' of the museum), the talk will explore how curating in relation to the idea of engaged reflective and even agonistic publics can provide a productive field of tension between the two extremes where art institutions find themselves in a balance between a de-materialised digital space of cultural transaction and an increasingly fetishised and monetized market for unique art objects. By looking at a series of examples, I would like to suggest a series of operations that might at least open up the space between the two extremes and continue in the light of current and future artistic social and political developments (both intellectually and structurally) to produce a relevant, engaged, civically-owned and -used archive for the present.

Annie Fletcher is currently Chief Curator at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. She also tutors at De Appel, Amsterdam, the Dutch Art Institute Arnhem and the Design Academy Eindhoven. She recently worked on the museums retrospective of Qiu Zhijie and the ten-day caucus project called Becoming More in 2017. Other projects include "El Lizzitsky: the Artist and the State" at IMMA Dublin, and "A Republic of Art" at the Van Abbemuseum in 2015-2016. She was lead contributor from the Van Abbe to the "Museum as Hub" collaboration led by the New Museum in New York from 2006 to 2014 and is part of an on-going collaborative team that developed the "Museum of Arte Util" with Tanja Bruguera in 2013 and continues to develop the Association of Arte Util today.

Oriol Fontdevila
(Manresa, 1978)

Is a curator, writer and scholar. Artistic Director of the Sala d'Art Jove of the Government of Catalonia. He formed part of the curatorial team of the European project Performing the Museum (Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb, Koroska Gallery of Fine Arts and Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina). He has curated projects for the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Fundació Joan Miró and Centre d'Arts Santa Mònica, and his research has received the support of MNCARS and La Virreina Centre de la Imatge. In 2015 he received ex aequo International Prize for Cultural Innovation bestowed by CCCB and in 2012 the Ciutat de Barcelona Prize for the Visual Arts. His first essay, El arte de la mediación, published by Consonni, will be released in early 2018.