2018

The Public as Mediator

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Text published into the catalog of *Raw Material.* This exhibition took place in the Barcelona Art Center Fabra i Coats as a survey on the ecosystem of visual artists in Catalonia. It was curated by David Armengol, David G. Torres, and Martí Peran. Barcelona, November 8, 2017 – April 1, 2018

"You emerge through a stairwell like a trapdoor, which is always choked despite its considerable width. Having escaped that painful gauntlet, you cannot catch your breath before being plunged into an abyss of heat and a whirlpool of dust. Air so pestilential and impregnated with the exhalations of so many unhealthy persons should in the end produce either lighting or plague. Finally you are deafened by a continuous noise like that of the crashing waves in an angry sea. But here nevertheless is a thing to delight the eye of an Englishman: the mixing, men and women together, of all the orders and all the ranks of the state... This is perhaps the only public place in France where he could find that precious liberty visible everywhere in London. This enchanting spectacle pleases me even more than the works displayed in this temple of the arts. Here the Savoyard odd-job man rubs shoulders with the great noble in his cordon bleu; the fishwife trades her perfumes with those of a lady of quality, making the latter resort to holding her nose to combat the strong odour of cheap brandy drifting her way; the rough artisan, guided only by natural feeling, comes out with a just observation, at which an inept wit nearby bursts out laughing only because of the comical accent in which it was expressed; while an artist hiding in the crowd unravels the meaning of it all and turns it to his profit." (1)

Pidansat de Mairobert, social commentator and pioneer of art critique, published these words about the Salon held in Paris in 1777, in the clandestine news-sheet, l*'Espion anglois* (the English Spy). At the time, the Salon by the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture was a compulsory event in the western art world and gained an unprecedented importance in the city where it had almost no competition with regard to visual spectacle, until the late 19th century. Furthermore, the social crowd that was the object of de Mairobert's fascination also became an ideal of the bourgeoisie public sphere, and shortly after served as a reflection of the utopia of "universal fraternity" projected by the French Revolution.

In effect, the Salon, just like the Louvre when it opened in 1793 in the recently inaugurated First French Republic, was notable as an "environment of authentic, direct and *non-mediated* communication, for the entirety of humankind", as José Luis Brea reminded us at the start of the new millennium (2). According to the perspective of aesthetic idealism that also emerged at the time, art was to be a revulsion that would allow humans to assert themselves as a transcendental universality, in that it would lead them beyond the particularity of the experience. For this reason, instead of a *mediated* public, what the thinkers of the time expected to find at the Salon –and at what emerged as the culmination of this project, the museum– was an audience capable of *mediating* for itself a certain ideal of the *res publica*, of what was public, which is none other than the condition of universal humanity. Thomas E. Crow explained this idea by also highlighting the issue of mediation, "The audience is the concrete manifestation of the public but never identical with it. In empirical terms, we are confronted only with the gross totality of the audience and its positively identifiable constituent parts: individuals and group categories defined by sex, age, occupation, wealth, residence, etc. The public, on the other hand, is the entity which *mediates* between the two [the concrete audience and ideal humanity], a representation of the significant totality by and for someone" (3).

The medium as antagonist

It is also significant that, between the actual crowd and the mix of people that de Mairobert refers to, an aspect of immeasurable value can be found for the actual development of the practice of art and its critique. La Font de Saint-Yenne, considered in historiography to be the father of art critique, stated in a text in 1747 that, "It is only in the mouths of those firm and equitable men who compose the Public, who have no links whatever with the artists, that we can find the language of truth" (4). Therefore, this new public of art, regardless of the benign effects that could be unleashed in the name of universal fraternity, was also considered capable of playing an essential role in the progress of artistic practices towards modernity, causing antagonism.

This was underlined by Thierry de Duve in his essay on the work of Clement Greenberg, a theoretical work in which he wrote that "it is no accident that the pictorial avant-garde was born in France", because "France produced an institution in the field of the plastic arts which has no equivalent anywhere else: the Salon" (5). According to de Duve, the opening of the Salon to all social levels led to the class struggle being expressed in this space as the "taste struggle". For this reason, the birth of the avant-garde cannot be explained without the conflictual history of the Salon, because despite the first displays of the avant-garde not appearing until much later, according to de Duve, the "conditions of production and reception dating from the Salon have remained largely valid ever since" (6).

Considering this antagonistic perspective, it is important to point out that the Salon became not so much an ideal of public space according to the values of the Republic, but a public space traversed by negotiation. Thus, according to de Duve, the changes in artistic trends seen at the Salon throughout the 18th and 19th centuries have always been associated with the possibility of celebrating a social pact: "A pictorial convention is indissolubly an aesthetic-technical precept and a social pact; one can no more separate the social from the aesthetic-technical than one can keep the same coin from having two sides" (7). For this reason, the defiance of certain artistic conventions in the Salon would have had the effect of breaking relations with one side of the public, establishing them on the other hand with the social and aesthetic demands of the other side. Therefore, these public spaces would have appeared to be not so much a celebration of universal fraternity, but an antagonistic public sphere where social differences were expressed together with the paths followed by the practice of art.

These were the conditions that allowed the development of the avant-garde at the turn of the 20th century, even though modern art, according to de Duve, would in turn differentiate itself from the art of the Salon to make its rejection explicit to the public in general, whatever be the faction. It could be said that modern art echoes, much more than the art of the Salon, the aesthetic idealism that was professed by Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schiller and the entire Jena Circle, when at the turn of the 19th century it created the society as a undifferentiated body, a projection of the universality that would consistently receive the aesthetic impact. In this way, in de Duve's opinion, the antagonism forged with the audience of the Salon moved closer to the actual medium of art: it was modern and avant-garde art that had to develop, from that moment, an antagonism of *its own*, autonomously and no longer through the alliances it could establish with its public.

Similarly, the possibility of establishing a social pact of any kind also ceased, while the aesthetic shock that Walter Benjamin later described regarding the poetry of Charles Baudelaire (8) would become the only possible model of communication: at a time when art claimed to be a self-sustaining antagonism, the entire audience was to be challenged in the same way, thus displacing every single one of the respective cultural conventions and parameters, regardless of what they were. The premise of avant-garde art is that there is no possible communication with the audience, not even a pact, given that the art itself should be able to be experimented time and again as a disruption.

With regard to this consideration, it is important to point out that the public would also conclusively cease to be a mediator of art. This was expressed by another philosopher of modernity, Theodor Adorno, in the elaboration of his theory on aesthetics when he recovered the term *vermittlung*, which had already been used by Friedrich Hegel more than a hundred years earlier. *Vermittlung* –'mediation' in German– first appeared in 1829 in the dictionary *Allgemeines Handwörterbuch der* philosophischen *Wissenschaften* (General Dictionary of Philosophical Science). Its primary meaning was defined by Wilhelm Krug as the arbitration between two parties in conflict (9). The term had also been essential throughout Hegel's thinking where mediation appears as the middle ground in a dialectic process, which would lead the separate parties to a synthesis. Mediation, therefore, in the words of this philosopher, is the possibility that things "can become something else", and consists of a resource with which humans can find a way to introduce the difference versus the appearance, which the world adopts in its *immediacy*: "Mediation is nothing beyond self-moving selfsameness", wrote Hegel in *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*, "pure negativity or, [...] *simple becoming*" (10).

At a decisive moment in modernity, Adorno recovered the notion of mediation to understand it in this case as a basic quality of modern art. According to the philosopher, this art requires mediation in order to project a radical difference on what is established, although, unlike the experience of the Salon, the art should in this case be expressed as entirely autonomous, in order to categorically accomplish this process. This way, Adorno differs from Hegel's dialectic when he considered that the negativity of mediation shouldn't lead to the fulfilment of a final moment of synthesis, but that the art, through mediation, should permanently express an antagonism.

According to Adorno, art is the "social antithesis of society, not directly deducible from it", thereby "modern art constantly works at the Münchhausean trick of carrying out the identification of the nonidentical" (11). Art is an essential meaning of things in the view of this philosopher and therefore consists in the "negative reaction on the part of the knowledge that penetrates the object" and which "extinguishes the appearance of the object being directly as is" (12). Therefore, if modern art refers to mediation, it is in the sense that it 'mediates itself'; and therefore, if it is social, it is for its absolute "opposition to society" (13).

In other words, but in a similar sense, Greenberg professed the same on the other side of the Atlantic. In his writings, this art critic contends that as of the late 1930s abstract art was an opportunity for turning the pictorial medium into something "intransitive" with regard to the common experience of the media. Therefore, a medium could become a pure antagonist by relinquishing its activity. If the medium of painting managed to rid itself of the possibility of conveying and deriving anything that is alien in its representation, it would immediately stop mediating with alterity and would thus become a "site of negation and estrangement", a pure antagonism (14).

A present day with no pact

Much more recently, Grant H. Kester warned of the continuity that modern theory still has in terms of the reception of art, as well as on the simplification that this implies when considering the relationship of art with the public sphere. According to this theorist of collaborative art, the paradigm of aesthetic shock still prevails as a fantasy for most of current art, even though the actual art practice undertook the task of responding to the issue of "intransitivity" from the beginning of the 20th century, first with the *ready-mades* of Marcel Duchamp and later, with all the diaspora of Greenberg that came about in the United States with the post-minimalism generation, the *happening* and conceptual art. In other words, while most artistic trends that have become dominant in contemporary art nowadays reveal procedures that derive from rejection to its autonomous condition and, conversely, are immersed in the experimentation with heteronyms, the actual art institution is still articulated according to standards whose central aspect is the issue of aesthetic shock. In short, the articulation of an antagonistic relationship with society that involves the impossibility of establishing communication or any type of pact.

This phenomenon becomes clear if we trace the dispute between Kester and Claire Bishop in 2006, when art critic, Claire Bishop published her article "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents" in *Artforum*. She lamented the prospect that ethical judgement had replaced aesthetic judgement when considering collaborative practices that have attained prevalence since the start of the century. Using Maria Lind, Nicolas Bourriaud and Kester himself as examples, Bishop wrote that with these authors, art critique only values the ethical dimension when analysing art, which is "the degree to which they [the artists] supply good or bad models of collaboration", including "respect for the other, recognition of difference, protection of fundamental liberties, and an inflexible mode of political correctness". In contrast, in Bishop's opinion, "it is also crucial to discuss, analyse, and compare such work critically *as art*", something which she understands to imply reverting to the primacy of "aesthetic impact" and pushing the social bond that artists could establish with the different people with whom they form collaborations into the background (15).

Kester, immediately replied in the same publication, arguing that "rather than a continuum of collaborative practices, Bishop seems determined to enforce a fixed and rigid boundary between 'aesthetic' projects ('provocative', 'uncomfortable' and 'multilayered') and activist works ('predictable', 'benevolent' and 'ineffectual')" (16). Bishop in turn responded to this theorist, in this case appealing to Jacques Rancière's principle of the "Distribution of the Sensible", a concept that the critic recognises as in keeping with the notion of aesthetic shock. "According to Rancière", says Bishop, "a political work of art disrupts the relationship among the visible, the sayable, and the thinkable [...]. It transmits meanings in the form of a rupture, rather than simply giving us an 'awareness' of the state of the world" (17). Bishop goes on to quote Rancière in one of the few texts in which the French philosopher talks explicitly about the issue of shock: "Suitable political art would ensure, at one and the same time, the production of a double effect: the readability of a political signification and a sensible or perceptual shock caused, conversely, by the uncanny, by that which resists signification" (18).

Compared to Bishop, Rancière appears to be more condescending with regard to ethical judgement, which could correspond to what the philosopher calls the "readability of a political signification". In any event, the issue of shock only appears to half occupy his aesthetics. Kester's critique on the matter of aesthetic shock does not end here. The author continues to develop the point referring to the fact that the presumption of shock would have involved, not only collaborative art, but all modern art in a projection of the public that is considerably naive, in that it is based on considering it to be perpetually gullible and

therefore a uniform entity that would be permanently willing to suffer the inclemencies of art and its provocations.

In Kester's opinion, it is through the notion of shock that modernity has established a founding division between art and society. According to his analysis, this is explained because two types of audience are created around shock: one that is unconditionally closer to the practice of art, in other words, an "expert audience" who is positioned as a transmitter or at least as a close accomplice of the provocations of art and who doesn't directly suffer its effects; and another faction which would be a "philistine audience", considered alien to the art sector and therefore assumed to always receive the propositions of the artists as something disruptive.

In this sense, from the first appearences of the avant-garde, art has projected the fantasy of having at its disposal an audience in shock, something that would have first and foremost divided the audience in two, with each group –the artists themselves with their allies on one side, and the *philistines* on the other– shaped according to considerably predictable identity patterns. Thus, what actually results from the shock is that, in relation to the art sector, "these provocations [...] perform an affirmative function, reinforcing a particular sense of identity among art world viewers (as liberal-minded risktakers)" (19).

Mediation, once again

Currently, mediation is a concept that is making a comeback with regards to art and cultural policies. This time, not as a *negative mediation* as Theodor Adorno referred to all those years ago, but echoing the same division that Claire Bishop recently suggested between ethical and aesthetic judgement.

In fact, mediation would be consolidated nowadays as a derivation of what was until recently called the "educational turn" with regard to artistic practices (20). In this case, mediation looks to involve both educators and artists as well as curators and other different partners in the development of public programmes at museums and art centres around the world, with the aim of adopting a more experimental relevance in its procedures. The term *mediation* currently identifies various forms of educational practice that explicitly elide the regulated frameworks and, in exchange, practice more informal solutions, which are pursued through more horizontal processes of dialogue for work with audiences.

Sociologist Nathalie Heinich recently referred to the emergence of a "significant number of new intermediaries in museums", whose mission is to manage the multi-faceted services for the public. "Among these new intermediaries", writes Heinich, "of note are the 'mediators', a word that is relatively new, having been introduced in museum vocabulary by the policies for the democratisation of access to art, promoted by the latest generation. Being in direct contact with the public, mediators guide visitors not through 'conferences', but rather through so-called 'educational activities'. Usually, young artists are hired to perform this task, providing them with a source of income and an introduction into the world of institutionalised art" (21).

With regard to Spain and Catalonia, the word *mediation* has taken on an unprecedented relevance in cultural policies that have been articulated with the recent boom of the so-called 'municipalist movement'. In Madrid, there are at least two institutions that wave this flag, MediaLab Prado and Intermediae. In 2012 the MediaLab Prado conferences were held, during which mediation became relevant for the first time in the institutional landscape: *Making Worlds: Mediating Practices in the Network Society*, led by philosopher Amador Fernández-Sabater. Explicitly referring to the 15-M movement (an anti-austerity movement which arose in Spain the year before), mediation was defined as "as a (horizontal) practice to foster and connect, accompany and facilitate, listen and translate, produce sense and coexist", which "has turned into an urgent and demanding challenge" (22). With regard to Barcelona, however, it didn't become relevant until the Barcelona en Comú political party took over managing the ICUB, for a brief period of time, and called for tenders for the management of La Virreina Centre de la Imatge and for the programming of the 2016 season for the Fabra i Coats Art Centre.

In particular, the latter called explicitly upon mediation, with the title of the tender being: "Call for proposals for the selection of a cultural programme that promotes mediation between artistic practices, educational practices and social contexts" (23). The tender arrived following two previous ones, which had the similar objective of providing the programming for the Fabra i Coats Art Centre for the period of one year. The trajectory of Fabra i Coats had thus developed surrounded by an air of temporariness since its beginnings and the tender for the institution's art management, which would serve to facilitate its articulation, not in terms of exhibition programming but in terms of institution, remains pending (24). This is what was announced in 2012, when David G. Torres curated the first exhibition, *Esto no es* una *exposición de arte*, tampoco, however, the decision has been postponed year after year as the tenders for annual management seasons were published, resulting in programmes curated, respectively, by David Armengol and Martí Manen (2013–2014) and Martí Peran (2014–2015).

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With regard to the tender referred to, this was once again framed within a time of change, "the transition towards a new model", as the specifications of the tender stated, revealing the ICUB's need to "begin a new stage for establishing new management models that promote processes of mediation with society". In relation to Fabra i Coats, "a selection process for a cultural programme that during 2016 will become a model of transition towards a greater commitment of public institutions and their surroundings" was published.

In turn, the creators of the proposal that was selected from this process, *Living In-between*, suggested a form of collective management to implement an idea of mediation that was to be considerably holistic and with which to attempt to affect production processes and those of art distribution, involving both education with the public and the development of an institutional pedagogy. In the words of those responsible, Idensitat, LaFundició, Sinapsis and Transductores, "the *Living In-between* project sees mediation as a critical, transformative process for cultural institutions, relations and ecosystems. In this respect, the proposal aims to set up different types of production, circulation and representation that combine artistic practice, mediation and education as an active part of the social system, but with its own mode of cultural production and of collective research that generates knowledge. Diversity in mediation practices should be understood as the different ways in which citizens can become involved in and experience culture, as well as from a critical perspective that highlights the problems, but at the same time, explores the boundaries and potential" (31).

The ICUB has recently announced that the tender for the management of the centre will be published shortly (32). This will occur at the same time as what will be the last exhibition of this current stage, *Raw Material*. This exhibition is defined as a survey of Barcelona's art scene through the presentation of a selection of relevant works by thirty artists considered to be in their "mid-career". Furthermore, this exhibition could also be considered as a type of closure for this stage, an assessment of what has occurred at the Art Centre during this period, with those responsible for the initiatives held until now being invited to curate the project, including Armengol, Peran and G. Torres.

One aspect that is initially worrying is that not one member of the collectives that took part in the latest programme, *Living In-between*, are included on the curator payroll. When Oscar Abril Ascaso, director of Culture and Innovation Sectors at the ICUB, one of the institutions responsible for the initiative, was asked about this point, he stated that when *Raw Material* was being created, the *Living In-between* project was still running. For this reason, they "preferred to avoid duplicates in the collaboration" (33). Despite this, Abril has also stated that "the possibility of continuing the collaboration of the *Living In-between* curating team with the Art Centre, beyond the exhibition programme" was being considered (34) .

Conversely, when the Living In-between team was consulted, Ramon Parramon, director of Idensitat, replied that the ICUB team had in fact invited them to attend two meetings during which the *Raw Material* project was discussed, together with the other agents who have ended up curating it, commenting that "it appeared that creating a joint exhibition would help define the model of the future art centre". Either way, Parramon explains that the actual idea of this exhibition is also controversial for the collectives that promoted *Living In-between*, who considered it "an internal contradiction, because the curatorial commission of *Living In-between* often problematised the exhibition activity. And this exhibition, in the form of a commission, had all the ingredients for ending in a mess, both internally and regarding the artistic sector". Parramon goes on to add that, with regard to the ICUB, "as of the first meeting [...] it became clear that in fact Oscar Abril and Oriol Gual hadn't even thought about involving members of *Living In-between* as curators. Although Oriol did suggest that the *Living In-between* team could participate by proposing activities or relations with the context... but in this case, we indicated that Living's intention was not to streamline exhibitions or activities" (35).

Whether for circumstantial reasons –comission overlaps as mentioned by Abril– or deliberately intentional, the situation generated in this case appears to be clearly symptomatic of how mediation is understood today in the framework of cultural institutions; on one hand, with the development of the *Living In-between* programme the ICUB assumed a need to redefine the relationship of cultural institutions with citizens, yet both mediation and the social context tend to disappear when it involves promoting the work of artists.

In this sense, while de Duve when referring to the Paris Salon of the 18th and 19th centuries stated that "one can no more separate the social from the aesthetic-technical than one can keep the same coin from having two sides", it becomes evident with regard to the institutions that currently manage art that these two sides tend to be divided into two different coins: one for social value and the other for artistic value.

Towards a negative and post-autonomous mediation

Throughout this article, it has become clear that the division between the production of artistic value and that of social value is nothing new but mostly follows the modern epistemology of art. From the beginning of the 20th century, art has been completely identified with its *aesthetic fact*, while the identifiable attributes have been confined to the rubric of its autonomy (from the Greek *auto/*nomous, 'having one's own laws'). In contrast, other attributes can be distinguished that would exclude art as a simple heteronomy, the *social fact* that Clement Greenberg dared to refer to in 1976 as "decorum", as in "the largely un-aesthetic conventions of social propriety, decorum" (36).

Either way, it is still surprising that this currently continues to be the prevailing ideology in art institutions, where the artistic trends exhibited respond by a very large degree to the inheritance of Marcel Duchamp and postminimalism, of which historically there has been a pivot between a critique of the modern institution and the possibility of equipping art with the necessary means to obtain cursory alternatives in society.

This has also been updated with Claire Bishop's text: although art could be expressed to experiment with other relational modes, what is ultimately valued by art critique is a discovery firmly anchored in the aesthetic idealism. Even though Bishop has been extensively criticised for her opinion expressed in 2006 in *Artforum*, it is fairly easy to discover that this position is still shared more explicitly or de facto by most art critics and curators. As a general rule, in current forms of exhibition, it still seems that it has to be possible to distinguish an aesthetic judgement over an ethical one in artistic practices, just as the actual prospect of establishing any type of social pact is denied, in that art's agenda continues to confer prominence on the production of an aesthetic shock.

Either way, it is worth mentioning that the social value of art has in fact become increasingly more important over the last few years, within the framework of cultural policies. Under the so-called "educational turn", we have also seen how museums and cultural institutions try to involve artists and curators in the design of the educational activity and in the development of public programmes. We have even seen how Nathalie Heinich refers to those artists displaced to the education area as new mediators, who are currently gaining importance in institutions on a global level.

In fact, it is undeniable that, with the innovation of mediation, new processes are being introduced that escape the modern exhibition paradigm. However, it is also true that this toing-and-froing of artists between the exhibition department and that of public programmes doesn't necessarily undermine the modern epistemology that lies at the bases of the institution, because despite the figure of new mediator confirming that the production of social value is establishing a strong foothold in museums and is no longer simply decorum, the production of aesthetic value and social value are tending to come about separately. In this sense, aesthetic judgement can still be found at the pinnacle of the exhibition department, as a determining value when establishing a category such as that of the "mid-career" (like any other), while when the artist (or whoever) dives into the area of public programmes, what will emphasised is the social value of art and thus the ethical judgement will prevail when interaction begins with the public.

I cannot deny the importance that Western world has created its own institutions for the management of artistic practice. However, due to the evolution of artistic practices and cultural policies, it is currently difficult to continue sustaining the autonomy of art as an ideal or transcendental condition. At the very most, autonomy could be treated as a *tacit* condition of art, as a discourse that allows it to maintain and reaffirm its own identity, differentiated from other social conventions, despite the fact that when complying with an *ethos* such as the production of difference, it is unlikely that this will come about if the art only considers its own conventions. Conversely, it is at this point that art will need to immerse itself in all these conventions that modernity has dispensed with as heteronomy.

For this reason, with regard to mediation, it could be said that the new mediator, referred to by Heinich, the mediator that is the offspring of the educational turn, appears to be an attempt at a synthesis on a second level, which is activated after the fact. In other words, while the museum continues to presume that art alone can perpetrate the disruption and that this alone can be achieved through aesthetic shock, the mediator appears as an agent who, in the guise of a type of assistant in the reception space, is capable of once more rearticulating the art with more diverse social processes. This is done through the activation of formats and practices that are more sophisticated, seductive and creative than those of the *previous* educator , thus opening the new mediator up to old and new audiences with the aim of ultimately maintaining the loyalty of both to this museum that continuously multiplies its activities.

The idea that I defend here has nothing to do with understanding mediation as a synthesis –and even less as a reformist stopgap–, but as the opportunity to create and sustain a persistent tension between art and society. More than invoking Hegel's dialectic, which would lean toward the synthesis of a new mediation, I lean towards the negativity that Adorno projects regarding the dialectic movement: art involves antagonistic and differentiated creation, even if from a realist and performative perspective this is no longer possible by confining it to an autonomous space, to its selfsameness, but by maintaining a continual tension with its multiplicity (37). From a post-autonomous viewpoint, therefore, it is impossible for art to be mediated as an antagonist in itself –as Adorno implied– and, thus, to perpetrate this supposition, it would have to establish alliances with alterity. In such a way, art needs to address the public as a player who is no longer mediated, but is a highly successful partner with regard to the rollout of an antagonistic mediation.

Jacques Rancière concludes his famous essay on the emancipated spectator suggesting that social emancipation can no longer be expected by merging the public with the artistic process or by establishing a radical distance (two modern utopias that Rancière covers in his essay with mastership). Conversely, the emancipation of the public consists in understanding how a community is able to create its own narratives with regard to art: "An emancipated community is a community of narrators and translators", states the philosopher (38); *ergo*, from our viewpoint, we could add *mediators*. As we have seen, Rancière always considers the tension between autonomy and heteronomy from an idealised viewpoint and as a merely aesthetic issue, without the possibility of understanding the public as a narrator or a translator necessarily leading to alternations of the materiality or of the infrastructure in institutions. Therefore, according to the philosopher, the new condition of the public ends up being entirely compatible with modern institutional standards, as well as with the tidiness of the *white cube* that lies at its centre.

In my point of view, recognising the public as art mediator has serious implications of a structural order. If the public is recognised as such, it no longer only occupies the space of reception, nor does it figure at the end of the chain of mediations through which art practice is articulated. When the valuation of its narrations and translations is involved, the public can no longer be considered a public that is the recipient of mediation, a *mediated* public. Therefore, I understand that the institutional challenge lies in the possibility of articulating the narrative of the public and the particularity of their translation with the spaces where the value of art, its uses and its appropriateness develop and establish: in other words, the spaces of mediation. In a word, the challenge presented by conceiving the public as art mediator consists in reverting it to the spaces where cultural policy is defined.

In this sense, the *Living In-between* programme offered elements that have been left out of *Raw Material*. Or, explained in another way, once the Fabra i Coats Art Centre has been redefined from being a crucial component on the map of creation factories to be a platform for consolidating "mid-career" artists –a true ladder in the logic of market and cultural policy–, the critical ability that citizens can perform in relation to the practice of art will take a secondary role and will be relegated to the role of a community that can only be *mediated*.

Living In-between was the result of a tender that was aimed at re-thinking the involvement of society in cultural institutions. *Raw Material*, on the other hand, is an exhibition that aims to promote the local ecosystem of visual arts. Both tasks are equally commendable, but not for this reason should they be considered incompatible. Quite the opposite, in their tension both

can lead to successful results and thus both may be substantially strenghtened. I hope that the creation laboratory that the Fabra i Coats Art Centre must become in the near future, which this exhibition will lead to, will be able to navigate this dual nature that is inherent of art practice, in all its potential and complexity.

Notes:

1. CROW, Thomas E. *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985, p. 4
2. BREA, José Luis. *La era* postmedia. *Acción* comunicativa*, prácticas (post)artísticas y* dispositivos neomediales. Salamanca: Centro de Arte de Salamanca, 2002, p. 94 Words in italics, chosen by the author
3. CROW, *op. cit.*, p. 5
4. CROW, *op. cit.*, p. 5
5. DUVE, Thierry de. *Clement Greenberg. Between the Lines*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010, p. 62
6. DUVE, *op. cit.*, p. 63
7. DUVE, *op. cit.*, p. 65
8. BENJAMIN, Walter. *Charles Baudelaire: Un lírico en la época del* altocapitalismo . *Obras*. Libro 1. Vol. 2. Madrid: Abada, 2012, p. 215
9. HENSCHEL, Alexander. "The term 'mediation' in the context of art. An attempt at translation". *Život* umjetnosti*, Hft.* [Online] [Zagreb], núm. 88 (2011). p. 23. <https://www.ipu.hr/content/zivot-umjetnosti/ZU_88-2011_022-033_Henschel.pdf>
10. HEGEL, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Diferencia entre* los sistemas *de Fichte y Schelling. Fenomenología del espíritu*. Madrid: Gredos, 2010, p. 124
11. ADORNO, Theodor. *Teoría estética*. Madrid: Akal, 2004, p. 176
12. ADORNO, Theodor. *Dialéctica* negativa. *La* jerga *de la autenticidad*. Madrid: Akal, 2017, p. 18 and 298
13. ADORNO, Theodor. 2004, *op. cit.*, pp. 53 & 54
14. This interpretation of Greenberg corresponds that of T. J. Clark in his written documents. Taken from DUVE, *op. cit.*, p. 53 and 54
15. BISHOP, Claire. The Social Turn; Collaboration and Its Discontents. *Artforum*. New York, February 2006. p. 179-185. <http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/reading/Bishop%20_%20Kester.pdf>. This online version was consulted, which includes the debate that this text later led to between Bishop and Kester
16. Declaration by Kester taken from BISHOP, op. cit., p. 7
17. BISHOP, op. cit., p. 9
18. RANCIERE, Jacques. The Janus-Face of Politicized Art: Jacques Rancière in Interview with Gabriel Rockhill. In *The Politics of Aesthetics*. London: Continuum, 2004, p. 63
19. KESTER, Grant H. *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011, p. 35
20. The "educational turn" was named as such in a seminal text that professor Irit Rogoff published in e-flux journal in 2007. This refers to the rise of initiatives based on conversation and education that contemporary art was experiencing at the turn of the century. Rogoff, Irit. «Turning». *e-flux Journal* [online] New York, no. 0. 2007. <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/00/68470/turning/>
21. HEINICH, Nathalie. *El paradigma del* arte *contemporáneo:* estructuras *de* una *revolución artística*. Madrid: Casimiro Libros, 2017, p. 208
22. Online: http://medialab-prado.es/article/hacer_mundos
23. The requirements of the tender can still be consulted in Catalan at: http://fabraicoats.bcn.cat/ca/node/690
24. The aim of this article is not to discuss the history of the Fabra i Coats Art Centre. Simply, it is important to point out that the instability that this centre has experienced over the years is not necessarily due to external causes. Fabra i Coats was established from its beginnings as a solution to the crisis that began in 2007 in Barcelona's institutional framework, as a result of the sudden change in direction that the Catalan regional government's Department of Culture imposed on the Centre d'Art Santa Mònica. Both the political changes undergone since then and the continual back-and-forth of the responsibility for the project between Barcelona City Council and the Department of Culture, in addition to the economic crisis, are probably some of the reasons behind the fact that the city still lacks an institution that competently assumes the role of art centre
25. The "educational turn" was named as such in a seminal text that professor Irit Rogoff published in e-flux journal in 2007. This refers to the rise of initiatives based on conversation and education that contemporary art was experiencing at the turn of the century. Rogoff, Irit. «Turning». *e-flux Journal* [online] New York, no. 0. 2007. <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/00/68470/turning/>
26. HEINICH, Nathalie. *El paradigma del* arte *contemporáneo:* estructuras *de* una *revolución artística*. Madrid: Casimiro Libros, 2017, p. 208
27. Online: http://medialab-prado.es/article/hacer_mundos
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30. As an example, the article published in *La Vanguardia* can be consulted, which states that: "In the medium term and as it grows in size, [the Fabra i Coats Contemporary Art Centre] will have an art direction that will programme and manage it, as well as establish its condition as unique cultural and artistic space". See "El Centre d'Art Contemporani Fabra i Coats abre como una de las 'prioridades' del Ayuntamiento". *La Vanguardia* [online], (28 September 2012). <http://www.lavanguardia.com/local/barcelona/20120928/54352009379/el-centre-d-art-contemporani-fabra-i-coats-abre-como-una-de-las-prioridades-del-ayuntamiento.html>
31. Fragment of text from the presentation of the Living In-between programme, on: https://www.idensitat.net/en/cohabitar-entre/1278-living-in-beteween
32. Xavier Marcé, advisor to the presidency of the ICUB, recently stated, "we want Fabra i Coats to become the great art centre that the community is demanding. The tender for its management is about to be published and the current budget of 800,000 euros will increase in line with the increasing interest and plans developed under proper management". BOSCO, Roberta. "El futuro de Arts Santa Mònica divide a las administraciones. La Fabra i Coats y La Capella entran en liza en el nuevo mapa". *El País* [online], (7 October 2017).
33. Email from Oscar Abril Ascaso, 27 July 2017
34. Email from Oscar Abril Ascaso, 31 July 2017
35. Email from Ramon Parramon, 9 August 2017
36. Fragment from "Seminar Six", originally published in *Arts Magazine* in June 1976. Taken from Duve, *op. cit.*, p. 118
37. Alexander Henschel recently suggested a correlation between mediation, between the meaning Adorno gives it and the deconstructive and transformative paradigms that Carmen Mörsch suggested for the practice of artistic education and cultural mediation in her text about *documenta 12* (2007), and that some of the suggestions of the so-called "institutional critique" would use to amplify them through work with the public. Henschel's approach has been an important inspiration for the evolution of the ideas developed in this document. HENSCHEL, *op. cit.* See also, MÖRSCH, Carmen. "At a Crossroads of Four Discourses. documenta 12 Gallery Education in between Affirmation, Reproduction, Deconstruction, and Transformation". In MÖRSCH, Carmen (ed.). documenta *12. Education II. Between Critical Practice and Visitor Services. Results of a Research Project.* Zurich: IAE: Diaphanes, 2009, p. 9-31
38. Rancière, Jacques. *The Emancipated Spectator*. London, New York Verso, 2011, p. 22