

“We seek critical attitudes working with the human limitrophe. Projects that don’t confuse mediation with a return to the middle ages.”

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Art is not a question of autonomy, but its potential is rooted in its links. Aesthetic idealism and modern formalism derived the possibility of autonomy by focussing attention on aspects that are intrinsic to the physicality of art, such as the formal and material characteristics of its means and technologies. Certainly, the power of art is consubstantial to these aspects. But at the same time, we consider the possibility of art is activated when the qualities of the object are associated with considerably more heterogeneous instances. Art is a question inherent with form, but at the same it is unfailingly relational. Its power, as such, cannot be tied to a sovereign configuration, like autonomy, so much as it deals with a relational and performative power – what in English is called “agency”².

Art as an agent of mediation

To demonstrate this question, W.J.T. Mitchell, in *What Do Pictures Want?*, picks a curious exercise, one he attributes to his colleague Tom Cummings and qualifies as pedagogical. When Cummings’ students showed themselves to be sceptical regarding the power their professor attributed to images, even mocking the influence they could end up exercising on humans and other forms of life, to affect, alter and notwithstanding transform them forever, this

1 Peñafiel, Javier (2016). “Limitrofias. Convocatoria/ incitación a agentes creativos destinada a Can Felipa”. Can Felipa Arts Visuals. Barcelona. Online: <http://www.cccanfelipa.cat/uploads/editor/limitrofias-penafiel.pdf>

2 The concept of “agency” refers to an actor’s capacity to act in relation to a specific context. It is a key concept within the theory of performativity. According to Judith Butler, performativity is understood as an agency activated, at the same time as it is regulated, by social conventions. In the original version of this text “agency” is translated as “agència”, even though the term generally doesn’t have this acceptance in either Catalan or Castilian.

historian of pre-Columbian art invited them to take a photograph of their respective mothers, to immediately proceed to cut it up and remove the area of the eyes. It seems the enunciation of the exercise was sufficient to demonstrate to the students that “magical attitudes toward images are just as powerful in the modern world as they were in so-called ages of faith... It is not something that we “get over” when we grow up, become modern, or acquire critical consciousness.”³.

Alfred Gell had previously related the phenomenon of mimesis with volt sorcery. Literally, as if in the Western conscious a substrate of animism is kept repressed. According to the anthropologist “we suffer, as such, as receptors, the forms of agency mediated by the image of ourselves”. This phenomenon is not explained as the effect of transcendental causality, so much as, according to Gell, it is due to the fact that, as social beings, we think of ourselves as “distributed persons” which “are present, not just in our singular bodies, but in everything that surrounds us that seems to bear witness to our existence, our attributes, and our agency”. As such, the subject, once it appears represented, would think, “I am the cause of the form that my representation takes. I am responsible for it.”⁴.

Mimesis is the reason for the efficiency of volt sorcery: through the process of copying, it is possible to gain agency to affect a particular referent. Therefore, one can think of Western art as also having found an ally in mimesis to proceed to transfigure reality – and not the inverse –, as Oscar Wilde rightly instantiates with the atmospheric painting of J.M.W. Turner: “The extraordinary change that has taken place in the climate of London during the last ten years is entirely due to a particular school of art... At present people see fogs not because there are fogs but because poets and painters have taught them the mysterious loveliness of such

3 Mitchell, W.J.T. (2005). *What Do Pictures Want? The lives and loves of images*. p. 9. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago, London.

4 Gell, Alfred (1998). *Art and Agency. An anthropological theory*. pp. 96 – 99. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

effects... [the fogs] They did not exist till Art invented them”⁵. As the words of Wilde show, the rule of voodoo enchantment fully coincides with one of the principles of idealist aesthetics, *art for art's sake*. As the writer concludes, “life imitates art more than art imitates life”.

An animist psychology is also what probably became evident to Cummings’ students, as not one of them proceeds to extract the eyes from their mothers’ representations. Similarly, different platforms across the world currently recommend prudence to progenitors when distributing photographs of their newly born babies on social networks. It’s, no more no less, about forestalling the vulnerability resulting from the mass distribution of the images and the bad uses that can be derived from them⁶. That is of anticipating the danger of life imitating art.

On the other hand, Gell also talked on different occasions about decorative art as “a social technology”, oriented towards strengthening the ties between humans and objects. “The world is filled with decorated objects because decoration is often essential to the psychological functionality of artefacts.” Be it a simple or more entangled decorative patterns, they would have no other *raison d’être* than that of captivating the human mind: “undecorated children’s bed-sheets” Gell says, “would be less

functional in conferring protection and comfort during sleep than decorated ones because children would be less inclined to sleep in them”⁷.

As far as ornamentation goes, some of the more brilliant examples are to be found in relation to the decoration of weapons, and it is by no means insignificant that these are prone to housing ornamentation. Thomas Golsenne sustains that “ornamentation augments the efficiency of a weapon”. He explains this based on Gilles Deleuze’s consideration of ornament as an aesthetic of difference, “as a dynamic process of growth [of a motif] constituted of variable zones of intensity”. Golsenne understands thereby, that ornament is not part of “the external embellishment and accessorising of a body or of a support, so much as it is the expression of an interior force of differentiation”. Ornament constitutes “the very vitality of the thing to which it confers its power”⁸.

These aforementioned cases serve to demonstrate that the power of art lies in the attributes that are intimately tied to its formal resolution— such as a mimetic figuration or ornamental motifs—. Although, at the same time, it is also a requirement of art that these forms manage to activate themselves as social technologies—in the vocabulary of Gell— and that their processes intersect with other forms of agency.

With this consideration, the two big theories, between which the comprehension of art has oscillated since the 20th century, would stop being understood in opposition, to establish instead new links that would make them complementary. That is to say, if we pay attention to artistic practice as a social technology, the principal of formalism—*art is what is aesthetically relevant*— doesn’t enter into conflict with the principal of critical sociology—*art is what art agents establish is art*—. Once we accept that the potential for art lies in the form as much as in the mediations deployed around

5 Wilde, Oscar (2001). “La decadència de la mentida”, in *L’ànima de l’home*. p. 116. Columna. Barcelona. This passage of Wilde’s writing, regarding the phenomena of mimesis and mediation has previously been reviewed in: Fontdevila, Oriol (2016). “El Turner mediador”, in *Concreta*. 04-04-2016. Online: <http://www.editorialconcreta.org/El-Turner-mediador>

6 Generalised thinking in the West around the question of the image is that it confers power on the subject who appears represented. Voodoo enchantment contradicts this logic: in this case, the individual’s representation has no other finality than to make him vulnerable. Peggy Phelan has reflected on the complexity of the relation between power and the image. With reference to Jaques Lacan’s theory of the gaze, Phelan considers there is no reason why representation has to imply an increment of power on the part of the subject represented, so much as quite the contrary, representation can imply the subjection and servitude of the referent to parameters that are defined by the one who gazes. Phelan, Peggy (1993). “Broken symmetries: memory, sight, love”, in *Unmarked. The politics of performance*. Routledge. London, New York.

7 Gell (1998), *Op. Cit.* pp. 73 – 95.

8 Golsenne, Thomas (2016): “Armas y joyas. Sobre la potencia de la ornamentación en el Renacimiento”, in *Concreta*. n. 7. pp. 43 – 53. Valencia.

it, formalism as much as critical sociology would be seen as rearticulated according to a relational and performative paradigm that tries to explain the phenomenon of art through human and non-human agencies, that at all times maintain a capacity to influence each other. Hence we can also propose the art object as an agent of mediation, which contains, by its very nature, an agency with regard to the weaving and unravelling of networks⁹.

Mediation as a conduct for difference

Soren Andreasen and Lars Bang Larsen recently noted that “Mediation is a type of economic and symbolic abstraction characteristic of our time: one that challenges aesthetic experience at all levels of making, thinking and consuming art”¹⁰. Both writers in this way distance themselves from the current acceptance of “cultural mediation” - the tradition of *Vermittlung* and *Kunstvermittlung* in Germany or *médiation culturelle* in France¹¹-, which has tended to identify with the pacification, democratisation and teaching of the practice of art from the framework of cultural policies and public institutions. The interest of Andreasen and Bang Larsen is, on the other hand, that of relating mediation with the very sphere of art production, and in particular the emergence of critical thinking. In this way, they proceed to track some cases of western philosophy where the question of mediation has been thought of as a conduit for difference.

9 This hypothesis is inspired by the contribution of Alfred Gell on the work of art as a trap. Gell, Alfred (1996). “Vogel's Net: Traps as Artworks and Artworks as Traps”, in *Journal of Material Culture*. 1996 1:15. Online: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/students/modules/hi174/groupc/journal_of_material_culture-1996-gell-15-38.pdf

10 Andreasen, Soren; Bang Larsen, Lars (2014). *The Critical Mass of Mediation*. p. 5. Internationalistisk Ideale. Copenhagen.

11 A clarifying contribution about the different genealogies and meanings that come together in the concept of cultural mediation can be found in: Mörsch, Carmen (dir.) (2014): *Time for Cultural Mediation*. Art Education of Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). Online: <http://www.kultur-vermittlung.ch/zeit-fuer-vermittlung/v1/?m=0&m2=1&lang=e>

This is the case in Hegel's philosophy, in which he describes mediation as a tension inherent in the process of becoming: “Nothing appears present immediately”, note Andreasen and Bang Larsen with respect to the German philosopher: “everything becomes through mediation”. In relation to Theodor Adorno, mediation is related to the principal of “non-identity”, which leads to representations appearing permanently inadequate in relation to the objective world. In this way, mediation is understood as the possibility within the artistic process to defy what is given and to propose, in contrast, something differential¹².

Marcel Duchamp is probably the first artist to recognise explicitly the work of the artist as a process of mediation. With his talk *The creative act*, that he read at the Convention of the American Federation of the Arts, in Houston in 1957, Duchamp proposed the “the artist acts as a mediumistic being”. According to Duchamp, the artist is the vehicle required between an act of creation- about which the artist never manages to become totally aware- and the world of the spectator, which also exercises an active role when granting form to the creative act through its reception and interpretation¹³.

The subsequent, first generation of conceptual artists also assimilated artistic work as a process of mediation. Various artists on the threshold of the decade between 1960 and 1970 understood that, ultimately, it is not possible to deploy any creative act if it is not in the form of a critical dialogue with the mediations that are instituted in the field of art and society in general. Consequently, artists move to adopt as part of their artistic work processes that would traditionally have been related with the *Vermittlung*, such as art criticism -the case of Joseph Kosuth is relevant in this sense¹⁴- education -with Joseph Beuys' office of information at

12 Andreasen, Soren; Bang Larsen, Lars (2014), *Op. Cit.* p. 39.

13 Duchamp, Marcel (1957): “The Creative Act”. Online: <https://soundcloud.com/brainpicker/marcel-duchamp-the-creative-act>

14 The interest that Joseph Kosuth deposited in the linguistic dimensions of art is due to his consideration of the text as a “totally significant activity” in relation to

the Documenta 5¹⁵, and Womanhouse by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro as pioneering cases, both from the year 1972¹⁶– or also

the meaning of art. Various artists in the second half of the 1960s, such as Donald Judd, Robert Morris and Robert Rauschenberg assumed textual mediation of their work and rejected the division between their own work and the writing of criticism for magazines. The case of Kosuth is considered preeminent from the moment he sets to writing not just about his own work so much as also under the pseudonym of Arthur R. Rose, discussing his own work as much as that of other post-minimal and conceptual artists. As Peio Aguirre recently recounted “the criticism of the conceptual artists postulated that working directly with language was a way of ridding themselves of the art critic and the institution, in such a way that the work of art and the artistic message could be appreciated for what it was, without intermediaries”. Aguirre, Peio (2014): *La línea de producción de la crítica*. p. 53. Consonni. Bilbao. See also: Alberro, Alexander (2003): “Art as Idea”, in: *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*. The MIT Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts. London, England.

15 “To be a teacher is my greatest work of art”, expressed Joseph Beuys, in 1969, shortly before in one of his performances he began to substitute the shamanist ascendant for formats of a more pedagogical nature. In the year 1972, Beuys carried out at the Documenta 5, *Bureau for Direct Democracy*, in which he involved visitors of the event in different situations debating the need for electoral reform for direct democracy. In 1973, having been expelled from the Düsseldorf Kunstakademie for accepting in his classes students who hadn’t paid the university’s matriculation fee, he founded the Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research, with which in 1977, he would return to the Documenta to embark upon *100 Days of the Free International University*. As Jan Verwoert has interpreted in the context of the boom of conceptual art –and comparing it with the manner Joseph Kosuth had of linking artistic work with art criticism (see note no. 14)–, the educational practice of Beuys “should be treated not as a metadiscourse on his art but as an artistic medium *sui generis*”. Verwoert, Jan (2008): “The Boss. On the Unresolved Question of Authority in Joseph Beuys Œuvre and Public Image”, in *e-flux journal* # 1. http://worker01.e-flux.com/pdf/article_12.pdf See also: Bishop, Claire (2012): “Pedagogic projects: ‘How do you bring a classroom to life as if it were a work of art?’” in: *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. 241–246. Verso. New York, London. Bodemann-Ritter, Clara (1998): *Joseph Beuys. Cada hombre, un artista*. La balsa de la Medusa. Visor. Madrid.

16 On various occasions, Judit Vidiella has highlighted *Womanhouse* as an educational and artistic initiative developed in an eminently collaborative manner, tightly linked to the vital and political needs of the group of women who made up the initiative. The activity in this sense is totally unique for having disassociated itself so much from official education as well as from the artistic authority with which artists like Joseph Beuys developed activities in pedagogical formats

curating –with the establishment of unusual self-run artistic spaces and even the prefiguration of alternative museums on the part of groups of artists, on both sides of the Atlantic¹⁷.

Deleuze, once again, is who has best synthesised this alliance between processes of mediation and creation, at the moment when describing the work of collaboration he established with Félix Guattari for the writing of different works throughout the decade of the 1970s, he stated that both had acted “as the mediator of the other”. According to Deleuze, “mediators are fundamental.

during those same years (see note 15). *Womanhouse* has been considered the first programme of studies in feminist art in history that was realised over two months in an abandoned house in Hollywood. The programme terminated with the realisation of a series of interventions, installations and performances in the different rooms of the house on the part of the 21 students in the programme. As Vidiella highlights, the working methodology procured at all times to be collaborative and negotiated, in this way the practice of performance was conceived within this setting as a tool for self-awareness, key in the process of learning. Vidiella Pagès, Judit (2015): “Performance and mediation: tensions, frictions and contacts between performative practices and performative restrictions”, in Juan Albarrán Diego, Iñaki Estella (eds.): *Llámalo performance: historia, disciplina y recepción*. Brumaria. Madrid. See also: the entry of Vidiella Pagès, Judit: “*Womanhouse*”, in the *Polièdrica* thesaurus: http://www.polièdrica.cat/fitxa/womanhouse/891?lang=es#.WBkKUNwhx_t

17 The relation between the artists of the last decades with institutional criticism has been amply documented. Beyond the fact that this practice has crystallised in a certain magnification of the figure of the curator-artist, on our part we think that practically all institutional criticism can be conceived as a sort of “curatorial turn” on the part of the artists, that would be effected from the moment they propose a critical and open dialogue with aspects that frequently concern curatorial work and cultural politics. The idea of a “curatorial turn” within artistic and educational practices has been upheld in Fontdevila, Oriol (2013): “Capgirar el museu. Interseccions entre el comissariat i l’educació en la perspectiva de la crítica institucional”, in *Mnèmose. Revista catalana de museologia*. n.7. Barcelona. As well as in the final part of Fontdevila, Oriol (2015): “Art and Conflict. A Survey at the Battlefield” (expanded version), in *CuMMA Papers -Studies in Curating, Managing and Mediating Art. Visual Culture and Contemporary Art Master’s Degree Programme in Aalto University*. Helsinki. Online: <https://cummastudies.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/cumma-papers-17.pdf> Regarding the relation of art with institutional critique, see also the texts of Boris Burden, Hito Steyerl, Jens Kastner and Brian Holmes included in Transform (ed.) (2008): *Producción cultural y prácticas instituyentes. Líneas de ruptura en la crítica institucional*. Traficantes de Sueños. Madrid.

Creation's all about mediators. Without them nothing happens. They can be people [...] but things too, even plants or animals [...]. Whether they're real or imaginary, animate or inanimate, you have to form your mediators"¹⁸. Mediation is the space in between that opens up in one's relation to alterity. It deals, therefore, with an ambit full of automatism and conventions, but it is also the very space, where, according to the philosopher, repetition can find itself challenged. It is at this point therefore that the emergence of processes of differentiation can take place, which we finally recognise as being specific to the creative act.

What is in play in the interrelation of the processes of creation and mediation is not, therefore, to establish with precision what corresponds to one ambit or another. The concern is about the quality of the link: to what extent do the associations produced in the artistic work reproduce what remains instituted and to what extent are they capable of activating and sustaining processes of differentiation? When artists involve themselves in the mediation, do the results tend per se to produce difference over what is instituted? Whereas, in contrast, would the agents tied to the work of *Vermittlung* be condemned indefinitely to repetition?

Add mediation to mediation

In their manual *La médiation culturelle*, Serge Chaumier and François Mairesse also propose art as an agent of mediation. "The first system of mediation is art itself", they state and immediately ask themselves: "do we have to add, therefore, mediation to mediation? If art is a mediator, if its mission is to transmit ideal visions, ways of representing life, nature, or our everyday, what need is there to add more mediation?"¹⁹.

¹⁸ Deleuze, Gilles (1990). "Mediators", in *Negotiations*. p. 125. Columbia University Press. New York, Chichester, West Sussex.

¹⁹ Chaumier, Serge; Mairesse, François (2013): *La médiation culturelle*. Armand Colin. Paris.

The malaise of mediation can be traced from the dawn of modernity. The ideology of autonomy, at the same time as it proposed a specific law for art, debugged the contingency of its links. Art would no longer have to be related to other agencies to appear as such, for which its potential as a mediating agent saw itself drastically diminished, one could even say repressed.

Modernity has been interpreted as a process of generalised purification of mediation in different ambits, such as the science and technology²⁰. As far as art is concerned, it is in the year 1929 that Alfred H. Barr inaugurated MOMA with unusual museum solution, the so-called "*white cube*", in which art was presented publicly as definitively purified of mediation. The white cube possibly has to be understood as the maximum expression of aesthetic idealism, in that by subtly dissimulating the network of human and non-human mediations that swarm around the art object, it doesn't just accomplish a decline in the mediating potential of art, so much as it makes the art be presented as a totally *immediate* phenomenon. Ultimately after any type of mediation, the white cube presents art literally as if it was an epiphany of revelation in the eyes of the spectator.

It is not until the second half of the twentieth century that analyses begin to appear that aim to unmask the networks of mediation that constitute the artistic fact. In this sense the works of Pierre Bourdieu and Brian O'Doherty are seminal. Even so, we also observe that the desire for *immediacy* is in ratio to the extent that mediating agents enter the scene once again. The case of Harald Szeemann is probably the one that stands out most in this sense. There is documentation of the para-artistic strategies that he deployed throughout the decade of the 1970s, when

²⁰ Modernity was a particularly fruitful era in relation to the deployment of networks and technologies for the production and circulation of knowledge but at the same time, it tended to remove any trace of the work of mediation in the resulting representations. Bruno Latour explains that this phenomenon is due to the desire to grant this knowledge and these representations a greater stability, irreversibility or even transcendence. Latour, Bruno (2007): *Nunca fuimos modernos*. Siglo XXI. Buenos Aires, Mexico D.F., Madrid.

building, for himself, the first professional identity associated with independent curating. Thus in interviews he also gave his work a prophetic significance, coming to compare it with the work of Saint Simeon Stylites²¹.

The text where Daniel Buren laments the methods Szeemann used in the organisation of the Documenta 5 is infamous. The artist considered that the curator in this case definitively acted as the author of his own work, while, in contrast, the artists found themselves manipulated, as if they were “touches of colour in the tableau”²². A few years later, Szeemann responded declaring that, in effect, he understood exhibitions as his means of expression. And, moreover, that with the Documenta 5, “I proceeded to manufacture my own myth, and in this, therefore, there is something negatively objective in relation to the activity of mediation. I’m not predisposed to refill a frame that I’ve been given, so much as increasingly I’m inclined towards projecting my own personal ideas”²³.

The trend of cultural mediators towards *immediacy* is manifested once again in *Turning*, the text from 2008, in which Irit Rogoff gave a name to the “educational turn”. More than thirty years after Szeemann’s positioning, it is in relation to educational mediation that this author detects the possibility of intensifying uncertainty in relation to the work of art. According to Rogoff, education would be a conduit towards difference: “education is the place where the odd and the unforeseen go hand in hand- the place of shared

curiosities, shared subjectivities, shared sufferings, shared passions congregate around the promise of a subject, of an insight, of a creative possibility”²⁴.

Despite this, Rogoff adds at the end of her text that the turn in art towards education has no other *raison d’être* than “finding new ways to recognise when and why something important is being said”. To this end, Rogoff recurs to the concept of Parrhesia, which Michael Foucault in some of his texts had, in turn, had recuperated from Greco-Roman culture. The Parrhesia is proposed as “a verbal activity in which the speaker expresses his personal relation to truth, and risks his life because he recognises truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself)”²⁵. As the author himself recognises, it is hard to find a more romantic and idealistic agenda for the turn of art towards education, as in effect what is described as a “truth” here is something that suddenly seems to appear in the cracks of mediation, that can only be recognised as such for itself. It is in relation to this last turn that we see there has been an endeavour to renew, the same idealism of the epiphanic revelation that would have fed artistic practice for the last two hundred years.

Immediacy is understood here as a fantasy of mediation. As the seminal contributions of Szeemann show in relation to curatorial work and Rogoff in relation to the work of education, when the mediator becomes visible in the public sphere it is rarely as a mediator. In both cases, it is in the self-expression and authorial consideration that one finds the possibility of granting a certain legitimacy. The work of *Vermittlung* would see itself legitimised, in this way, by de-identifying itself from its own media and relational substrate, to adopt, instead, the peculiarities that modernity had

21 Pinaroli, Fabien (2007): “The Agency of Intellectual Guest Labour”, in Fabien Derieux (dir.): *Harald Szeemann. Individual Methodology*. JRP | Ringier; Le Magasin – Centre National d’Art Contemporain. Zurich, Grenoble.

22 Buren, Daniel (2010): “Exhibition of an Exhibition”, in Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal, Solveig Ostebo (eds.): *The Biennial Reader*. Hatje Cantz Verlag; Bergen Kunsthall. Ostfildern, Bergen. The original publication dates from 1972 when Buren asked for his text to be included in the actual catalogue of *documenta 5*.

23 Szeemann, Harald (1996): “Agence pour le travail intellectuel à la demande au service de la vision d’un Musée des obsessions”, in: *Écrire les expositions*. p. 48. La lettre volée. Brussels.

24 Rogoff, Irit (2008): “Turning”, a: *e-flux Journal*. n. 0. Online: <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/00/68470/turning/>

25 Rogoff, Irit (2008): *Op. Cit.*

attributed to the artistic fact²⁶. The phenomenon is remarkably paradoxical and, in effect, can be understood as an isomorphism in relation to the modern circumnavigation of art. Although on this occasion, the mediator of the *Vermittlung* knows better than anybody that *immediacy* is not really due to a lack of mediation, so much as it is due precisely to a deliberate effect of *hypermediacy*²⁷.

In any case, in the shift towards *immediacy* it is the question proposed by Chaumier and Mariesse, “do we have to add mediation to mediation?” that will unavoidable receive a negative response. The sense of an idealistic mediation is to grant a place for a moment of authenticity so that, in contrast, any other mediation is made to appear like an accessory. Once located a mediation is so real that it practically gives access to the *thing-in-itself* –as it deals with the very work of art, with curating or education expounded as a moment of truth–, a *second* mediation will in turn be identified as insufficient, unnecessary, probably surpassed and even counterfeit.

That said, as previously indicated, the possibility of generating difference is found in the quality of the links and not in their

absence. As such, the response that on our part to the question “do we have to add mediation to mediation?” is undoubtedly affirmative: one has to add mediation to mediation, continually, and really this is the only guarantee we have of keeping things moving. Amidst the multiplicity of articulations and codes, in the *remediation* that a mediation is capable of realising on another mediation²⁸, in the mutual determinations and at the same time, in the movements with which the agents shift from one to the other, as much as in the fortuitous contacts and contaminations produced between them are where one definitively finds the germ of uncertainty.

The image resulting from such an understanding of mediation is considerably rhizomatic. One can’t differentiate clearly here between who is the emitter and who is the receiver, or even between what functions as the medium and what functions as the message. Thus, by extension, it’s also not possible to delimit precisely the point where art arrives or where the mediation arrives²⁹. Unlike the vision of Rogoff, here we no longer find a

26 It is significant to affirm that the so-called “authorial turn” in curating, that Szeemann initiated, was a historic moment that we can interpret as “shift towards mediation” or, what in we’ve called a “curatorial turn” in note 17 on the part of artists related to conceptual art and institutional critique. In this sense, a discussion, such as the one established between Szeemann and Buren tied to the Documenta 5, should perhaps not be understood as the fruit of a diametric opposition between the roles of artist and curator, so much as an unprecedented tension the fruit of the exchange of roles that occurred between the two of them that implied the deployment of new perspectives regarding the traditional divisions between the roles of creation and mediation. The implications of this exchange of roles between artist and curator with regard to the work of creation and mediation within the framework of the conceptual movement can be left for consideration in more depth in a future text.

27 Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin trace the effect of *immediacy* as a media utopia that has been developed since the invention of linear perspective, which they interpret as the first technology that endeavoured to make painting an immersive and transparent medium. These authors describe the fact that *immediacy* has figured as a permanent desire, and as practically the utopia of mediation, is a foundational paradox of Western thinking about media. David Bolter, Jay; Grusin, Richard (2000): *Remediation. Understanding New Media*. MIT Press. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Massachusetts.

28 *Remediation* is a concept coined by the anthropologist Paul Rabinow that Bolter and Grusin develop in relation to the media of communication. Even though they link the concept with the tradition of the so-called “new media”, *remediation* leads towards a much more diaphanous comprehension of the media based on multiplicity, co-dependence and an elision of the evolutionary prism. It is based on three principles: “1) Remediation as the mediation of mediation: Each act of mediation depends on other acts of mediation... Media needs other media in order to function as media at all. 2) Remediation as the inseparability of mediation and reality: All mediations are themselves real. 3) Remediation as reform: The goal of remediation is to refashion or rehabilitate other media.” David Bolter, Jay; Grusin, Richard (2000): *Op. Cit.* pp. 55 – 56.

29 In understanding mediation as a rhizomatic process one clear influence has been the mythology of modes of communication that Alexander Galloway proposes, in particular, the case the related to the Erinyes, also known as the Furies: “The Furies [are] the most rhizomatic of the divine forms. They stand for complex like swarms, assemblages, and networks. The term infuriation captures well the way in which the Furies can upend a situation, thrusting into a flux of activity and agitation... The Furies’ infuriation destroys the primacy of the sender and receiver, reduplicating communicative agents into endless multiplicity”. Galloway, Alexander R. (2014): “Love of the Middle”, in: Alexander R. Galloway, Eugene Thacker, McEnzie Wark: *Excommunication. Three Inquiries in Media and Mediation*. pp. 29 & 30. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago, London.

mediator that places in risk its condition to explain its relation to a transcending truth, so much as what it is highlighted is *the very truth of the mediator*, which is found written on its own surface and materiality. The mediator no longer transmits nor leads, so much as *is*, modelling according to interactions with others. Its ontology is performative. The eclosion of mediation is not, therefore, an apocalyptic vision of a state based in *the precession of simulacra*, so much as it deals with the recognition that truth, like art, is not to be found separate from the links or materiality of networks.

The possibility for art to recuperate agency and intensify the potential for differentiation incurs maintaining it at the mercy of unforeseen mediations. Neither the museum, nor curating, nor education, or even the public, can be conceived anymore as art's loyal translators. The relation of art with agencies, human and non-human, has to tend towards a constant flow of *remediation*; that is, a continuous modelling between agencies. It is in the singularity of the contact between these agencies where difference is produced and as such something we are still capable of recognising as art. But, in any case, it is the singularity of the contact that also sets in motion an entire world that would otherwise remain ossified.