

Curatorial Things (Berlin, 30 Oct–1 Nov 14)

Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Oct 30–Nov 1, 2014

Deadline: May 20, 2014

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Call for Papers

Curatorial Things

Organizers:

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Cultures of the Curatorial, Academy of Visual Arts Leipzig (www.kdk-leipzig.de)

Curatorial Things

Meaning and status of things have changed significantly since the beginning of the 21st century. This becomes particularly evident with regards to the handling of things in the context of presentation. In the practice of today's globalized exhibition system they are of high mobility just like people, discourses and spaces and are involved in changing signifying contexts. As a result traditional concepts of how things obtain meaning as exhibits begin to dissolve and get re-formulated, which in turn entails far-reaching consequences for the ways of dealing with them as well as for the conditions of these practices.

A critical attitude toward the representative capability of things in the context of presentation can be traced back to the early 20th century and its validity for today should be considered. However, the current transdisciplinary interrelation of discourses and praxis-theory approaches provide a situation which allows for an analysis of the status of things which is specifically related to the curatorial.

Three interrelated aspects testifying to the altered understanding of things have gained substantial weight for the current curatorial discourse:

The first relates to the changed attitude towards the "container function" of exhibits. Through its attribution things in Western culture initially became repositories of meaning and thereby obtained the central constituting role in the conception of the museum. Recent discourses on the function of museums in a global context and their relation to different media and forms of cultural production made a revision of this notion necessary. Just as little as this representative function can be generalized in regards to non-Western exhibition practice and institutions, it cannot be applied to the curatorial practice of other disciplines – such as theater, dance or film.

Secondly, the things one encounters in curatorial situations – as works of art, cultural objects and exhibits – are not anymore static or material necessarily but are accompanied, if not replaced, by elements, which are in their materiality, appearance and meaning ephemeral, flexible and incomplete. In this setting, meaning, function and status of curatorial things are in flux and require

new tools of assessment, interpretation and operation.

Thirdly finally, in recent debates things have acquired the status of agents, thus acting as participants in presentational situations. Beyond visualizations of theoretical concepts this has consequences for the experience in exhibitions as much as for curatorial strategies.

The international conference "Curatorial Things" will investigate the implications, consequences and potentials, which arise from the entanglement of these aspects and their developments. It is based on the understanding of curatorial practice as constructing constellations. Bringing together theoreticians, academic researchers, curators and artists from a variety of professional and disciplinary backgrounds the conference aims at exploring from different cultural and institutional perspectives the changes, effects and power attributed to things as participants in such curatorial constellations.

Please send your abstract (max. 300 words), short CV and contact information to curatorialthings@hgb-leipzig.de by May 20th, 2014.

Reference:

CFP: Curatorial Things (Berlin, 30 Oct-1 Nov 14). In: Arthist.net, Apr 12, 2014 (accessed Jul 3, 2025), <https://arthist.net/archive/7444>.