

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

Berlin, Oct 30–Nov 1, 2014

Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer, Leipzig

Conference "Curatorial Things"

Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

The status and significance of objects has changed since the beginning of the 21st century, affected by the course of globalization, the digitization of all areas of life, and the appreciation in value of immaterial work vis-à-vis the production of goods. The way in which things are presented plays a decisive part in, and at the same time is strongly influenced by, this development. Traditional ideas about how things acquire importance as exhibition objects are beginning to break down and be reformulated. Fundamental questions are arising as to the relationship between the various elements of a presentation situation, including not only objects traditionally designated as exhibition pieces, but also display objects, exhibition spaces, discourses, and the various people involved. The question of what can become a "thing" in exhibitions, and when, how, and with what potentialities, stands at the center of this debate.

Three important aspects of the current curatorial discourse overlap and mutually engage one another in this context: Firstly, the "vessel function," by which objects in Western culture came to be repositories of meaning and thus a core constituent of the conception of museums. This notion cannot be declared generally valid for non-Western exhibiting practices and institutions. Nor does it hold validity for the curatorial practices of other disciplines, such as theater, dance, or film. Secondly, the material, static thing that is exhibited as a work of art and a cultural object is accompanied by elements of a curatorial situation that in their materiality, manifestation, and meaning are ephemeral, movable, and incomplete. Thirdly, by taking on an active role in such situations, these things ultimately attain the status of agents. The conference Curatorial Things pursues the implications, consequences, and potentialities that arise out of the interleaving of these aspects and their developments. It proceeds from the understanding that, essentially, curatorial practice means the production of constellations. From differing disciplinary, cultural, and institutional perspectives, it examines the power of influence that is attributed to objects as active participants in such constellations.

THURSDAY, OCT 30

14:00 – 15:00

Welcome & Introduction: Bernd Scherer, Beatrice von Bismarck, Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer

SECTION 1 / DISPLAYING AGENTS

15:00 – 16:00

Victoria Walsh: Tracing the Agency of Curatorial Things

16:00 – 17:00

Mario Schulze: A Short History of the Thing on Display

Break

17:30 – 18:30

Sabeth Buchmann: Economics of Information on Display

18:30 – 19:30

Maria Lind: Exhibitionary Agents – Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden

FRIDAY, OCT 31

## SECTION 2 / PERFORMING THINGS

10:00 – 11:00

Anselm Franke: How to Step out of the Frame? Ontological Difference and Limits of Decolonization in Exhibitions

11:00 – 12:00

Leire Vergara: Touching the Curatorial: On Collective Processes of Making Sense

Break

12:30 – 13:30 André Lepecki:

Thing / Dance / Vagueness: Choreographic Challenges to Curating

Lunch Break

## SECTION 3 / DOING THINGS

15:00 – 16:00

Katharina Weinstock: Re-Arranging the World – Surrealist Object Practices

16:00 – 17:00

Kerstin Schankweiler: Contexts of Mobilized Things. Exhibitions and the "Difference within"

Break

17:30 – 18:30

Clémentine Deliss: Collecting and Curating Life's Unknowns: Past Ethnography and Current Art Practice

SATURDAY, NOV 01

## SECTION 4 / CHANGING STATUS

10:00 – 11:00

Susanne Neubauer: Li Yuan-chia's Cupboard of Slides

11:00 – 12:00

Florian Malzacher: The Straw to Grasp – Things as Remains of Performances and Lives

Break

12:30 – 13:30

Peter Schneemann: Curating Spaces – Evoking Sites, Narratives and Processes

13:30 – 14:30

Jana Scholze: Immaterialization and the Museum Collection

Haus der Kulturen der Welt John-Foster-Dulles-Allee 10 / 10557 Berlin

Concept: Beatrice von Bismarck, Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer

Cultures of the Curatorial, Academy of Visual Arts Leipzig ([www.kdk-leipzig.de](http://www.kdk-leipzig.de)) in cooperation with the Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin ([www.hkw.de](http://www.hkw.de))

Reference:

CONF: Curatorial Things (Berlin, 30 Oct-1 Nov 14). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 15, 2014 (accessed Jul 8, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/8646>>.