Participatory Practices in Art and Cultural Heritage

Deadline: Sep 18, 2020

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We would like to kindly invite you to contribute to our edited volume "Participatory Practices in Art and Cultural Heritage: Learning Through and From Collaboration".

This volume analyzes participatory practices in art and cultural heritage in order to investigate what can be learnt through and from collaboration across disciplinary boundaries. Following recent developments in museology, museum policies and practices have tended to prioritize community engagement over a traditional focus on collecting and preserving museal objects (cf. Simon 2010, McSweeney & Kavanagh 2016). In many museal institutions, a shift from a focus on objects to a focus on audiences has taken place. Artistic practices in the visual arts, music, and theatre also increasingly take on participatory forms (see for instance Bishop 2012). And the world of cultural heritage has seen an upsurge in participatory governance models favoring the expertise of local communities rather than that of trained professionals (cf. Waterton & Watson 2013, Schofield 2015). While museal institutions, artists and policy-makers consider participation as a tool to implement diversity politics, a solution to social disjunction, and a form of cultural activism, such participation also spurs a debate on definitions, as well as on issues concerning the distribution of authority, power, expertise, agency and representation. How can we understand and respond to the seductive claims of participation as an instrument for social innovation? And what are we to make of related – and often naïve – assumptions of radical shifts in power relations (Cooke & Kothari 2001)? While new forms of audience and community engagement and corresponding models for 'co-creation' are flourishing, fundamental but paralyzing critique abounds and the formulation of ethical frameworks and practical guidelines as well as theoretical reflection and critical assessment of practices lags behind.

This publication offers a space to critically reflect on participatory practices with the aim to ask and answer the question: How can we learn to better participate? A focus is on the emergence of new norms and forms of collaboration as participation, and on actual lessons learned from participatory practices. If collaboration is the interdependent formulation of problems and entails the common definition of a shared problem space (Rabinow, Marcus, Faubian & Rees 2008), how best can we learn to collaborate across disciplinary borders and what exactly can be learnt from such collaboration?

Please send your proposal for a chapter (300 words) by September 18 to d.vrhoci@maastrichtuniversity.nl .

Editors: Dr. Ruth Benschop, Dr. Christoph Rausch, Prof. Dr. Emilie Sitzia, Dr. Vivian van Saaze

Reference:

CFP: Participatory Practices in Art and Cultural Heritage. In: ArtHist.net, Sep 8, 2020 (accessed Nov 7, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/23442>.