

Museum History Journal, Volume 16, Issue 1 (2023)

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Special Issue on British Curatorial Practices.

In her research about the museum ecosystem, Jung (2011) explored the links between art galleries and the wider society they aim to serve. However, this ecosystem theory did not delve into notions of power or authority within the museum institution. Whilst scholars have investigated the nature of museums as a source of power/knowledge, there is no similar in-depth analysis of the impact of this social power on curatorial practices. This special issue aims to shed light on the often overlooked but significant power dynamics taking place within the walls of the museum, with a focus on the British art institutional context.

Through a series of case studies, the contributors investigate and deconstruct the relationship between curators and their institutions in a range of periods, art forms, circumstances and locations within the UK. Together, the articles offer a critical analysis of the strategies put in place by curators within their institutional structures, shaping their interactions with artists, colleagues, critics, connoisseurs, private collectors, commercial art galleries and public funders. The contributions move away from the opposition between an artistic centre and a periphery, to instead consider the constellation of practices making up the British curatorial scene and its intersection with a globalised art world.

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TOC: Museum History Journal, Volume 16, Issue 1 (2023). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 6, 2023 (accessed May 19, 2024), <<https://arthist.net/archive/39458>>.