

THE CLASSIFICATION OF ARTISTIC STRATEGIES OF CURATORIAL PRACTICES OF CONTEMPORARY ART OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH AND THE EARLY 21ST CENTURIES

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Abstract. The focus of this art history research is on the scientific problem of understanding the creative contribution of curators of art exhibitions and projects, which made it possible to identify the main curatorial strategies and represent curatorial practices in the contemporary visual art of the second half of the 20th and early 21st centuries. The analysis of the curatorial strategies of today's leading curators, the most important curatorial exhibitions and projects and a systematisation of curatorial approaches provided an opportunity to enrich the knowledge about the investigated period in the history of art. The choice is justified by the significance of the curatorial projects in the global field of contemporary visual art.

The art history study of major exhibition events of the second half of the 20th and early 21st centuries has made it possible to identify the main curatorial strategies of the contemporary visual art in the stated research period and to propose their classification: 1) the identification of the potential of contemporary art; 2) the intervention of contemporary art; 3) the extension of the boundaries of contemporary art; 4) the institutionalisation of art and curatorial practices; 5) curatorial research.

Curatorial research in the late 20th and early 21st centuries became a leading curatorial strategy. Three broad directions of curatorial research problems can be distinguished: A. the visual experience of the 20th century; B. local curatorial and artistic practices; C. current contexts of the present (philosophical, geopolitical, ecological, social, gender, etc.)

Keywords: Artistic curatorial strategies: Contemporary art; Curator; Artist; Exhibition; Exhibition Project.

Introduction. In the second half of the 20th century, as a result of the activities of independent curators, the principles of exhibition creation are being rethought. The passive display of works of art in traditional museum exhibitions is replaced by the active inclusion of artists' works in the context of a curatorial exhibition, shifting the emphasis or changing the meaning of the author's statement in accordance with the curator's idea or concept. Artists in close co-operation with curators begin to create their works under a specific curatorial idea. A multidisciplinary approach is widely used in curatorial practices: the inclusion of new forms and trends of contemporary art, heritage objects, documentation, etc. in projects. The exhibition space becomes a creative laboratory. As a result of the interpenetration of artistic and curatorial practices, curating becomes an independent artistic phenomenon, and the exhibition becomes an artistic and curatorial medium (Kenigsberg, 2023: 5).

The subject of the research is artistic curatorial strategies in contemporary fine arts of the second half of the 20th - early 21st centuries.

Methods. The sources of the research were materials on the history of art of the 20th and early 21st centuries, including the emergence and development of modern curatorial practices and the formation of curating contemporary art as a profession. The need to study curatorial art exhibitions and projects required the use of *the method of art history analysis*. In order to identify artistic curatorial strategies, *the method of classification* was used. The study of the origins and formation of curating in the 20th century was conducted using *the phenomenological method*, which made it possible to

understand the phenomenon of interest in terms of its emergence and development. *The biographical method* was applied to study personal documentation (letters, autobiographies, etc.) and narrative interviews of curators. Due to the fact that the curator acts in specific social conditions, *the sociological method* was used for the study, as well as *the culturological approach*, which allowed us to comprehend the phenomena of socio-cultural changes in the second half of the 20th century, which influenced the formation and development of curating. Since curatorial work is one of the types of creative human activity, the research applies *the activity approach*, which implies culture as a creative human activity. The stages of the formation and development of curatorial work were analysed using *the comparative approach*. The task of solving the problems of the art and evaluation level of curatorial exhibitions and projects was carried out using *the axiological method*, which understands the study of culture as a set of values. The study of artistic curatorial strategies required the use of the systematic method, which considers culture as a holistic entity formed from a multitude of interrelated elements. To study curatorial ideas, concepts, exhibitions and projects, *the hermeneutic method* was used to enable the understanding, interpretation and interpretation of the diverse knowledge recorded in texts. The use of a range of scientific methods and approaches made it possible to thoroughly analyse the object under research and to carry out the solution of the set aim and objectives.

Hypothesis: The formation and development of curating in contemporary fine arts of the 2nd half of the 20th – early 21st centuries is closely connected with cultural, social, political, economic changes in society. The new challenges of modernity, the growing intellectual needs of modern man have led to a gradual transition from traditional practices of presentation of works of art (not excluding them) to specially created exhibitions of contemporary art on the basis of artistic curatorial strategies, ideas and concepts.

Results: As a result of a pronounced intellectual orientation, mutual enrichment and mutual penetration of curatorial and artistic practices, curating is becoming an artistic phenomenon, acquiring related features such as conceptualisation, visual embodiment of ideas, and communication with a wide viewer and professional audience. Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary exhibition projects, combining the results of creative searches, become a collective work of contemporary art, a unified statement of curators and artists.

Artistic curatorial strategies applied in contemporary fine art projects contribute to the transmission of cultural values, revealing creative potential and local uniqueness, bringing cultural heritage up to date, and forming new meanings that are in tune with their time.

Discussion: Contemporary curatorial practices began to emerge in the second half of the 20th century as a result of the activities of the first independent curators, including Harald Szeemann, Johannes Cladders, Seth Siegelaub, Lucy Lippard, Manfred Schneckenburger and others. Collaborating with curators on a dialogical principle, artists began to specifically create works with a curatorial idea or exhibition concept in mind (“When Attitudes Become Form: Works – Concepts – Processes – Situations – Information” (1969) and “Happening and Fluxus” (1970) by Harald Szeemann, “557,087” (1969) by Lucy Lippard, “January 5-31, 1969” and “July, August, September 1969” by Seth Siegelaub, “Musée d’Art Moderne, Département des Aigles” by Marcel Brothaers (1968) and others). The exhibition space began to be seen as a creative laboratory in which artistic and curatorial strategies were formed.

At the end of the 1980s, the role of the curator was firmly established as the author of the exhibition. The growing need for a new type of curator capable of working with the constantly changing context of contemporary art, the launch of Europe's first educational programme for curators, École du MAGASIN, at the National Centre for Contemporary Art MAGASIN (Grenoble, France) in the late 1980s contributed to the consolidation of the professional status of curatorial work. Since the 1990s, curators have become significant figures in the contemporary art scene; curatorial practices are part of an international network. As a result of the process of interpenetration of artistic and curatorial practices, curating becomes an independent artistic phenomenon, an exhibition or exhibition project becomes an artistic and curatorial medium. Artistic curatorial strategies and practices are increasingly research-based, and curators are forming local and international networks of relationships to create and sustain research opportunities. Currently, innovative curatorial work, research component, and artistic practice are integral categories of the contemporary art project (Kenigsberg, 2023: 41).

The most striking example of the formation and development of artistic curatorial strategies of contemporary art is the international contemporary art exhibition documenta, held in Kassel (Germany) once every five years. In the broad international field of contemporary art documenta is a key curatorial exhibition. Founded by Arnold Bode, the exhibition first opened in 1955 with the title “documenta. Art of the Twentieth Century. International Exhibition”. The first documenta presented art movements and works by artists considered “degenerate” in Nazi Germany. “II. documenta’59. Art after 1945. International Exhibition” (1959), whose artistic director was also Arnold Bode, was based on the thesis of the German art historian Werner Haftmann that abstraction was the international language of art. For documenta III (1964), Arnold Bode first formulated the principle of the “Museum of 100 Days”, which later became mandatory, giving both the documenta exhibition and the parallel programmes a multidisciplinary and innovative character, allowing for multiple choices and activating the aesthetic experiences and involvement of visitors. At documenta 4 (1968), Bazon Brock’s “Visitors School” was launched for the first time, marking a didactic and performative approach to educational mediation in contemporary art exhibitions.

Harald Szeemann, artistic director of documenta 5 (1972), invited other curators to shape the sections of the exhibition for the first time. Documenta 5 was conceived as an educational exhibition and presented the broad intellectual potential of the contemporary art field. Both the artistic curatorial strategy of the “100-Day Event”, the methodology of presenting the sections of the exhibition, the integration of cinema and theatre into the exhibition, and the “Visitors School” contributed to the processes of knowledge acquisition and accumulation.

Manfred Schneckenburger, artistic director of documenta 6 (1977), focused on medialisation, understanding media as means of artistic communication, and declared the three technical means of representation – photography, film and video – as programmatic. The experts Wulf Herzogenrath (video art), Evelyn Weiss and Klaus Honnef (photography) and others were invited to curate sections of the exhibition, and for the first time works were created for the public space of the city. The curatorial approach of Rudi Fuchs, artistic director of documenta 7 (1982), was musealisation – a desire to consolidate the position of contemporary art by exhibiting works as precious pieces in museum halls. The artistic director of documenta 8 (1987), Manfred Schneckenburger, considered it necessary and important to create a space of communication for art and for the audience. Artists were given the opportunity to create works specifically for the exhibition. Manfred Schneckenburger, without seeking to categorise art into genres and trends, conducted curatorial research and as a result presented a cross-border phenomenon of contemporary art based on the synthesis and interaction of artistic media.

The artistic director of documenta IX (1992), Jan Hoet, created a comprehensive and illustrative overview of contemporary art by selecting artists rather than works, each of whom made the decision to exhibit a previously created or specially prepared work. Catherine David, curator of documenta X (1997), stated documenta as a global exhibition of contemporary art. This direction was expanded by the curators of the three subsequent exhibitions: Okwui Enwezor organised five equivalent platforms Documenta 11 in the African cities of Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos and in the German city of Kassel; Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev held DOCUMENTA (13) of the year 2012 in Kassel, Alexandria / Cairo (Egypt), Banff (Canada), Kabul (Afghanistan); Adam Shymchuk organised documenta 14 (2017) in Athens and Kassel. documenta fifteen, curated by the ruangrupa collective, was an experiment in incorporating alternative visions of social issues by representatives of non-European creative communities.

Among the most important approaches and strategic decisions of documenta’s artistic directors – curators are the invitation to cooperate with specialists who curate thematic sections of the exhibition; close collaboration with artists in order to create works specifically for the exhibition, utilising the possibilities of new media, innovative forms of presentation, working with the audience, and expanding the boundaries of contemporary art (Kenigsberg, 2023: 180).

As a result of the research of the international exhibition of contemporary art documenta from 1955 to 2022, the main artistic curatorial strategies of contemporary art were identified and their classification was proposed: 1) identification of the potential of contemporary art; 2) intervention of contemporary art; 3) expansion of the boundaries of contemporary art; 4) institutionalisation of artistic and curatorial practices; 5) curatorial research. It was found that documenta curators often applied several strategies simultaneously (Kenigsberg, 2023: 5).

In the second half of the 20th century, approaches to the presentation of works of art changed significantly, which is closely connected with the emergence of the institution of curating. The production of meanings came to the forefront of curators' activities, gradually becoming the most important component of curatorial strategies. By analysing the visual experience of the 20th century, rethinking and interpreting global history and history of art, a curator or a team of curators fits conceptual phenomena into the contemporary artistic field. Curatorial research becomes the leading curatorial strategy of the early 21st century.

The large-scale exhibitions "Moskau – Berlin / Berlin – Moskau. 1900-1950" (1995-1996) and "Moskau – Berlin / Berlin – Moskau. 1950-2000. Von heute aus" (2003-2004) were developed by specially created international curatorial teams (Berlin – Moskau / Moskau – Berlin 1900-1950, 1995; Moskau – Berlin / Berlin – Moskau, 1950-2000, 2004). The concept of the exhibition "Moscow – Berlin / Berlin – Moscow. 1900-1950" was based on a cultural and historical retrospective, which made it possible to expressively present the equivalent and non-equivalent processes of cultural development of the two capital cities. The research into the visual experience of the 1900-1950s, carried out by the curatorial teams, gave the opportunity to present the artistic, architectural, aesthetic, historical environment through the prism of the world history of art, to compare the development paths of the two cultures, which are closely related to each other.

The exhibition "Moskau – Berlin / Berlin – Moskau. 1950-2000. Von heute aus" was based on conceptual guidelines, namely the main stages of the evolution of artistic development. The Russian and German curatorial groups, selecting works, took into account not only the conformity of the works to the curatorial concept, spatial and technical features of the exhibition space, but also the position of the artists in the system of the countries they represent, the declared or revealed attitude of the author to the art of his country. The expositions presented in Moscow and in Berlin were somewhat different from each other. These differences were caused not so much by different exhibition conditions as by different curatorial positions. Conceptually unified, the exhibitions in Berlin and Moscow were structured as a dialogue between German, Russian and international artists on themes set by the curators. The exhibition, which included fine art, design, architecture, cinema, and photochronicles, was conceived by the curators as a stimulus to a personal experience of the visual experience of a particular period.

The multidisciplinary exhibitions "Moskau – Berlin / Berlin – Moskau. 1900-1950" and "Moskau – Berlin / Berlin – Moskau. 1950-2000. Von heute aus", which presented complex semantic, artistic and documentary structures, were the result of the research of international curatorial teams.

The cartography of contemporary art as part of the direction of the problematics of curatorial research into the visual experience of the 20th century is important for creating a complete picture of the development of contemporary art and the formation of artistic curatorial strategies. In 2010, the ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Germany) decided to present the collection of contemporary art collected since 1949 to the world public. The task of the renowned German curators Matthias Fluegge and Matthias Winzen, who were invited to work with the collection and form the exhibition, was to work with works selected in previous years by curators of different generations. Goetz Adriani, Ursula Zeller, Rene Block, Wulf Herzogenrath, Johannes Cladders, and other independent curators drew on both relevance, the artists' reactions to historical or contemporary events, and professional and personal connections with the artists to develop exhibition concepts.

As a result of three years of work with the contemporary art collection of the ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, and an analysis of curatorial strategies and artistic practices from 1949-2010, the curators Matthias Fluegge and Matthias Winzen identified a number of patterns in the development of German art from the 1950s to 2010: 1) the activity of women artists, 2) the flourishing of photography as an art form, 3) the increasing role of video art, 4) the reciprocal relationship between the works of artists from a divided Germany, and 5) the pluralism of artistic expressions. The result of this research was the exhibition "Weltreise. Kunst aus Deutschland unterwegs" (2013) (Weltreise. Kunst aus Deutschland unterwegs, 2014), whose research curatorial strategy was to analyse both the historical cross-section of fine art development and the history of curatorial representation of the German contemporary art of the 20th and 21st centuries abroad. The result of the curators' work was the creation of a new cartography of German art and the presentation of the vectors of development of German contemporary art as a holistic conceptual phenomenon.

The musealisation of curatorial practices of the contemporary art of the second half of the 20th century, including the rethinking of the creative heritage of outstanding contemporary curators, is one of the components of the problems of curatorial research, namely the research into the visual experience of the 20th century. The study of the archives of the leading contemporary curator Harald Szeemann, the analysis of exhibitions and projects created by him made it possible to identify the stages of curatorial development in the second half of the 20th century. The result of the long-term curatorial research was the recreation of Harald Szeemann's famous 1974 exhibition "Grandfather: A Pioneer Like Us", the presentation of the curator's multidimensional creative practices in the exhibition "Harald Szeemann. Museum of Obsessions", and the publication of "Harald Szeemann. Museum of Obsessions" (Harald Szeemann: Museum der Obsessionen, 2018), which not only accompanied these two exhibitions but also presented an art historical reflection on Harald Szeemann's contribution to curating contemporary art. The curators Glenn Phillips and Philipp Kaiser, in collaboration with Doris Chon and Pietro Rigolo, creating the exhibition "Harald Szeemann. Museum of Obsessions" (2018), did not seek to musealise the memory of Harald Szeemann. By exploring the life and work of the most famous curator of our time, contemporary curators have brought to the fore the diversity of his interests and the complexity of the themes he worked on. The exhibition "Harald Szeemann. Grandfather: A Pioneer Like Us" (2018), curated by Glenn Phillips, illustrated the timeless relevance of Harald Szeemann's curatorial approaches.

The current contexts of the present are an important focus of research curatorial strategies. One of these contexts is the revitalisation of places that for one reason or another are characterised by unstable development. The Japanese art historian and curator Fram Kitagawa has been successfully initiating processes of revitalisation through contemporary art for decades. His first initiative was the "FARET Tachikawa Art" project, a public art reconstruction of Tokyo's Tachikawa neighbourhood (FARET Tachikawa). Five Japanese contemporary art triennales – Echigo-Tsumari Art Field, Setouchi Triennale, Ichihara Art x Mix, Northern Alps Art Festival, Oku-Noto Triennale – clearly demonstrate the success of Fram Kitagawa's curatorial research. To implement his idea of revitalising territories through contemporary art, Fram Kitagawa has chosen problematic areas in Japan: hard-to-reach, remote, suffering from the outflow and ageing of the population, industrial closures and job losses, disturbed ecology and so on. Over time, all five triennales have taken a significant place on the international art scene.

The research strategy implemented by Fram Kitagawa since the 1990s to revitalise hard-to-reach, remote and sparsely populated regions through contemporary art has made it possible to invite well-known artists and young authors to create permanent and temporary works of art, to show the attractiveness of these regions, to attract visitors, to develop training programmes for local volunteers and guides, to organise cooperation between artists and representatives of local communities, and to explain the importance of contemporary art.

The understanding of complex topics by contemporary art curators is clearly visible during the 2019-2022 coronavirus pandemic, which caused serious changes in all spheres of life, including art. The established ways of presenting art events, the usual methods of working with the public, and the mechanisms of interaction between curators and artists became irrelevant. The new reality, in which physical contacts became extremely limited and travelling from country to country was impossible, gave rise to new formats of curatorial work. The research into the current contexts of the present has been enriched by a new vector – the study of the reality of the pandemic.

In 2020, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London hosted the curator Brendan Cormier's "Pandemic Objects" project, a series of online case studies centred on everyday objects, revealing the relationship of the everyday to the Museum's collections (Pandemic Objects). On the Google Arts & Culture digital platform, a collective art project "do it" was launched in 2020, curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist (New! do it). The artists participating in the project, which was conceived by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Christian Boltanski and Bertrand Lavier back in 1993, developed a series of instructions for everyone to create their own work of art, adapting and modifying the process to suit their own abilities. The project became a source of inspiration for participants from many countries around the world.

In Japan, the project "Artists' Breath", initiated by the General Director of the Japanese Triennales of Contemporary Art, curator Fram Kitagawa and the curator Wakana Kono, took place from June 2020 to January 2021 as part of the three triennales – Ichihara Art x Mix, Oku-Noto, Northern Alps Art Festival – rescheduled from 2020 to 2021 due to the pandemic (Artists' Breath). Artists from

around the world spoke in short videos about their daily experiences of living through the pandemic situation. During the project, Fram Kitagawa and the artists – video authors from 17 countries and regions of the world discussed the new reality online, compared local and global quarantine measures, and exchanged opinions on the role of artists during the pandemic.

The exhibition “Diversity United” (2021, Berlin), created by an international team of curators during the pandemic, presented a wide range of curatorial research into modernity (Die europaweite Ausstellung Diversity United am Flughafen Tempelhof).

The exhibition “Vital Signs: Pulse and Breathing Rhythms in Contemporary Art”, shown in 2023 in Haifa (Israel), was a collective exploration of the complex themes of life and death (Haifa Museums). Kobi Ben-Meir, Chief Curator of the Haifa Museum of Art, presented works by international and local artists in the exhibition. The collective research of the curator and the artists showed the wide and varied possibilities of contemporary art to reflect on the themes of life and death that are important to everyone.

The curatorial research that initiated contemporary art projects not only showed the new pandemic and post-pandemic reality and the results of collective reflection on complex topics, but also demonstrated the variability and flexibility of curators’ thinking, their quick response and adaptation to the challenges of the time.

Conclusions: The main artistic curatorial strategies of the second half of the 20th – early 21st centuries are the identification of the potential of contemporary art, the intervention of contemporary art, the expansion of the boundaries of contemporary art, the institutionalisation of artistic and curatorial practices, and, since the late 20th – early 21st centuries, curatorial research. Artistic curatorial strategies of the late 20th – early 21st centuries facilitate the unification of forms and meanings, create new forms of experience and understanding, activate cognitive processes, and form a socially significant cultural product. The main areas of research curatorial strategies of the late 20th – early 21st centuries are the visual experience of the 20th century, local curatorial and artistic practices, and the current contexts of the present (philosophical, geopolitical, environmental, social, gender, etc.) (Kenigsberg, 2023: 179-181).

An important component of research curatorial strategies is the production and transfer of knowledge: communicative, creative, philosophical, conceptual, exposition links are formed in contemporary art projects; research, creative, educational, discussion and other activities are included in curatorial projects. In this way, the current positions of curatorial and artistic practices are presented, and a dialogue and exchange of opinions between curators, artists and the public is formed. Artistic curatorial strategies are constantly varying and new directions are being developed.

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