

# **Of(f) Our Times: The Aftermath of the Ephemeral and other Curatorial Anachronics**

A two-part public seminar organized by Rike Frank and Beatrice von Bismarck with lectures, presentations and discussions critically reflecting on the concept of “exhibition history”, featuring contributions by artists, writers, curators and art historians.

In a series of lectures, presentations, screenings and discussions Of(f) Our Times: The Aftermath of the Ephemeral and other Curatorial Anachronics critically reflects on the concept of “exhibition history”. It starts from an understanding of exhibiting as a practice connected to broader social, economic and political developments while constituting a medium that generates situational and non-situational forms of knowledge. In this light, “exhibition history” has to go beyond techniques of historical analysis and revision. Instead Of(f) Our Times is interested in an understanding that runs counter to the current canonization and academization of the historical writing on and referencing of exhibitions. It aims to approach the debates on ‘re-’, historiography and historicity from a perspective that acknowledges and demonstrates the specific qualities of the exhibition as a medium and its reverberations in and entanglement with other narrative forms (such as writing, film, performance ...) and cultural memories. In dialogue with artists, curators, and writers the conference thus sets out to explore modes and methods of curatorial relating, through which the actualization is rather done “with” exhibitions than “about” exhibitions.

The seminar aims to address questions such as: How do historical exhibitions participate in contemporary cultural discourses? How can ‘exhibition history’ as a methodology open up into the present and future? What are the underlying concepts of history, historiography, and historicity? And how do they relate to concepts of actualization, presence, presentism and future? How (and why) can a historical exhibition get actualized? What role do the material qualities of an exhibition play in relation to the discursive ones? And what are the characteristics (and short-comings) of the research and writings on "exhibition history" so far?

Beatrice von Bismarck and Rike Frank

## **Part I of the Public Seminar**

**Friday, 30 September 2016, Fritt Ord, Uranienborgveien 2, Oslo**

14.00 - 14.30 Introduction

Brief welcome by Vanessa Ohlraun, Dean at Academy of Fine Art, Oslo National Academy of the Arts  
Rike Frank, Curator and Associate Professor of Exhibition Studies, Academy of Fine Art, Oslo National Academy of the Arts

Beatrice von Bismarck, Professor for Art History, Visual Culture and Cultures of the Curatorial, Academy of Arts Leipzig

14.30 – 15.00 Mapping

Nora Joung, Artist and Writer, Oslo

15.00 – 15.45

Cosmin Costinas, Executive Director and Curator, Para Site, Hong Kong

15.45 – 16.30 a chronicle of A Chronicle of Interventions

Inti Guerrero, Art Critic and Curator, Hong Kong, Estrellita B. Brodsky Adjunct Curator of Latin American Art, Tate, London & Curator of EVA International 2018, Limerick

16.45 – 17.30 Screening El helicóptero, 2016 & panel discussion

Dora García, Artist and Professor of Contemporary Art, Oslo National Academy of the Arts

18.00 – 18.45 Documents of Experience: Exhibitions, archives and undisciplining histories

Anthony Gardner, Art Historian, Art critic and Associate Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory, Oxford

18.45 – 19.30 An ethnography as a method, an exhibition as a fiction

Marcelo Rezende, Researcher, Critic and Curator, Salvador da Bahia, former director of the Museum of Modern Art of Bahia (2012-2015) & artistic director of the 3rd Bahia Biennial (2014)



**Cosmin Costinas:**



***Nora Joung: Mapping***

Exhibitions have a smell. Old pinakotheks of the friction between rubber and hardwood, faint, footsore sweat. Artist run spaces sometimes sour, stale smoke and empty cans, often paint. One time I could smell rotting fruit: a watermelon. Museums of modern art smell like concrete when the floors are wet. It is a smell that sticks to roof of the mouth, much like dry cement will should you accidentally inhale it. Up-scale commercial galleries smell of their receptionists. Their receptionists smell like the art scene should smell. CK One in the nineties. Then Commes des Garcons for a while. Now, I'm not sure. Probably something artisanal.

Nora Joung is an artist living in Oslo. She learned to speak in 1990, read and write in 1993, got her first camera in 2000, and hasn't looked back since. She now works with speaking, reading, writing and filming as an exhibiting artist, critic, editor and research assistant.



***Inti Guerrero: a chronicle of A Chronicle of Interventions***

In reaction to the US military interventions taking place through out the Reagan-Thatcher era in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador, the New York based collective Group Material produced an installation entitled Timeline: A Chronicle of US Intervention in Central and Latin America. Originally exhibited

in the then independent art space PS1 Contemporary Art Center, Timeline proposed visual references for each of the 161 years of US intervention in the Americas by displaying on the walls, along a prominent red graphic, a variety of existing artworks by artists including Claes Oldenbourg and Leon Golub, replicas, artefacts and even commodities. The talk will navigate through the archive of this seminal exhibition, and present how it later informed the group show *A Chronicle of Intervention*, curated with Shoair Mavlian at Tate Modern, London and TEOR/ÉTica, Costa Rica in 2014.

Inti Guerrero (b. 1983, Bogotá, Colombia) is currently the Estrellita B. Brodsky Adjunct Curator of Latin American Art at Tate in London, co-curator of *Aún*-the 44th *Salón Nacional de Artistas* in Pereira, Colombia and Curator of the 38th *EVA International – Ireland's Biennial* in Limerick, opening in April 2018. From 2011–2014 he was the Associate Artistic Director and Curator at TEOR/ÉTica, an independent not-for-profit art space founded in 1999 in San José, Costa Rica. Guerrero has curated exhibitions at institutions in Latin America, Europe and Asia. He is mostly based in Hong Kong.



***Dora García: el helicóptero***

(Video, color, 16:9, Basque & Spanish spoken, English subtitles, BE/ES, 2016, 23:10 min.)

Happening by Oscar Masotta, October 1966.

Happening again and filmed by Dora García, 12 September 2015.

In 1966 Argentinian author, critic and psychoanalyst Oscar Masotta organised three happenings (or anti-happenings). These happenings still surprise us today because of their handling of audience, events, signs, narratives and haunting. We feel contemporary to this peculiar handling or perhaps not quite yet. *El helicóptero* is the first chapter of a larger film titled *Segunda Vez* which dwells on the idea of "happening again", not only with respect to re-enactment, but even more so in the context of fantastic literature, visionary fiction and alternative history.

Camera Vincent Pinckaers

Editing Dora Garcia & Inneke Van Waeyenberghe

Actors Itsaso Arana, Rosa Rojo, Blanca López de Sabando, Félix Flores, Gorka Lariz, Jokin Suarez, Josune Azurmendi & Alejandro López

Sound recording Bruno Schweisguth

Sound design & mixing Laszlo Umbreit at Herculeslab

Color grading Fairuz

Co-commissioned by LUX and Independent Cinema Office, using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England

Produced by Auguste Orts

Co-produced by TABAKALERA

With the support of Oslo National Academy of the Arts, KASK / School of Arts Gent, LUCA Sint-Lukas Brussel & Atelier Graphoui

Dora García is an artist living in Barcelona now after almost two decades of residence in Brussels. She is a teacher in Oslo National Academy of the Arts and HEAD Geneva, and co-director of Les Laboratoires D'Aubervilliers Paris. She has exhibited her work since the late 90s and among these exhibitions she specially remembers Münster Sculpture Projects (2007) Venice Biennale (2011, 13, 15) Documenta13 (2012) and Toronto Power Plant (2015)





***Anthony Gardner: Documents of Experience: Exhibitions, archives and undisciplining histories***

Exhibition studies, exhibiting histories, curatorial histories – however we want to call the study of past exhibitions and curatorship, there seems to be a persistent fear that a new discipline is in development, ready to entrench yet another canon and to confirm the hagiography of the curator. But disciplines need firm foundations, something that exhibitions and curatorship rarely offer. For what does it mean to photograph curatorship? How do we document the experience of an exhibition? And how do we derive our knowledge of exhibitions when so many holders of the past – whether they be people, on paper, or in institutions, and especially from periods before the archiving craze struck after the 1970s – have decayed, disappeared or never existed in the first place. What I want to do here is to see these challenges as a positive foundation from which to develop our analyses of exhibitions, rather than a burden to overcome or deny, as many historians hope to do. I want to explore these unstable, frayed and fragile repositories, and the challenges they provoke, as a method that may underpin not a new historical discipline but a more complex and, perhaps, more creative prospect of undisciplining histories.

Anthony Gardner is Associate Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory at the University of Oxford, where he is also the Director of Graduate Studies at the Ruskin School of Art. He writes extensively on postcolonialism, postsocialism and curatorial histories, and is an editor of the MIT Press journal *ARTMargins*. Among his books are *Mapping South: Journeys in South-South Cultural Relations* (Melbourne, 2013), *Politically Unbecoming: Postsocialist Art against Democracy* (MIT Press, 2015) and, also through MIT Press in 2015, the anthology *Neue Slowenische Kunst: From Kapital to Capital* (with Zdenka Badovinac and Eda Čufer). His latest book, published by Wiley-Blackwell in summer 2016 and co-authored with Charles Green, is *Biennials, Triennials and documenta: The exhibitions that created contemporary art*.



***Marcelo Rezende: An ethnography as a method, an exhibition as a fiction***

Ethnography may be defined as a qualitative research process or method whose aim is cultural interpretation. How this process could be understood if applied to the exhibition and its historical system, against the official narrative of art history? And how to define such ethnography? From the French Michel Leiris to the Brazilian Darcy Ribeiro, through the Portuguese Agostinho da Silva, this lecture intends to identify general principles of this field of possibilities.

Marcelo Rezende (Brazil, 1968) is a researcher, critic and curator. He was director of the Museum of Modern Art of Bahia (2012-2015), artistic director of the 3rd Bahia Biennial (2014) and was part of the curatorial group of the 28th São Paulo Biennial (2008), amongst other projects and occupations. Author of the novel "Arno Schmidt" (2005), he is one of the participants of the program "Museal Episode" (Kulturstiftung des Bundes/Goethe Institute) and prepares for the Johann Jacobs Museum (Zurich) the exhibition "Utopia in the Coffee Plantation" (2017).

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# Program and Abstracts of Part II of the Public Seminar

## Friday, January 27, 2017, Kunsthøgskolen i Oslo

10.30 – 11.00 Introduction

Brief welcome by Jørn Mortensen, Rector, Oslo National Academy of the Arts

Rike Frank, Curator and Associate Professor of Exhibition Studies, Kunstakademiet, Oslo

Beatrice von Bismarck, Professor for Art History, Visual Culture and Cultures of the Curatorial, Academy of Arts Leipzig

11.00 – 11.45 The Community of the Exhibition

Sarah Pierce, Artist

11.45 – 12.30 Visiting 'an Exhibit' Anew

Lucy Steeds, Senior Research Fellow for Afterall at Central Saint Martins (CSM)

Lunch

14.00 – 14.45 The Museum Before the Museum

Lara Khaldi, Independent curator living in Jerusalem, Palestine, currently teaching art history and theory at the International Academy of Art, Palestine, Ramallah and at Dar Al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture, Bethlehem; interlocutor for the upcoming Sharjah Biennial 13 project in Ramallah.

14.45 – 15.30 Exhibition History and the Canons of Contemporaneity – or why looking at the darkness of our own time helps us see it better?

Jelena Vesić, Independent curator, writer, editor, and lecturer, co-editor of Red Thread journal and a member of editorial board of Art Margins; currently Goethe Institute fellow at Haus der Kunst Munich, working on the research topic "Postcolonial: 1955-1980".

Coffee

16.00 – 16.30 A Memoir of an Exhibition

Anne Szefer-Karlsen, Curator, writer and editor, and currently Associate Professor for MA Curatorial Practice, University of Bergen

16.30 - 17.00 Keeping time: 'Prosjekt i Gamlebyen' (PiG) and 'Munchmuseet on the Move'

Natalie Hope O'Donnell, Curator, and currently the curator of Munchmuseet on the Move (2016–2019)

17.00 – 17.45 Panel Discussion with all participants



18.00–19.00 Book launch

Launch of the publication *Spaces for Art in Oslo: Prosjekt i Gamlebyen – PiG (1994)*, published by the Munch Museum and designed by Eller med a & Eriksen/Brown. A complimentary copy will be available to those attending the launch.

Concept: Rike Frank, Curator and Associate Professor of Exhibition Studies, Oslo National Academy of the Arts and Beatrice von Bismarck, Professor for Art History, Visual Culture and Cultures of the Curatorial, Academy of Arts Leipzig



### ***Sarah Pierce, The Community of the Exhibition***

If it is through promises, according to Arendt, that we alleviate the unpredictability of future acts, then exhibitions hold us to account in some way — at the very least, to show up. In the exhibition we join a communitarian promise; our arrival is an appearance, to echo Arendt, where I appear to others and others appear to me. When we limit our discussion of exhibition to objects or ideas, institutions or histories we forget that in the moment of exposition we enter an address that runs across times, across artworks, and across exhibitions. An address to be taken up in the future, that perhaps can only be received there, in some other time. The moment of exposition carries us beyond what is ‘present’ in the exhibition and its inevitable disappearance, and holds us in the community of the exhibition.

Since 2003, Sarah Pierce has used the term *The Metropolitan Complex* to describe her project. Despite its institutional resonance, this title does not signify an organization. Instead, it demonstrates Pierce’s broad understanding of cultural work, articulated through a personal methodology involving performance, video, papers, interviews, archives, talks and exhibitions. Pierce holds a PhD from Goldsmiths College and an MFA from Cornell University, and is a past participant of the Whitney Museum ISP in New York. She is based in Dublin, where she is Lecturer and Degree coordinator in Visual Cultures at the National College of Art &

Design in Dublin. She co-leads the COOP Academy “I left my pdf in Arnhem” with Tirdad Zolghadr, at the Dutch Art Institute/ArtEZ in the Netherlands, and was a 2016 resident artist at the Center for Curatorial Studies (CCS Bard College) in New York.



### ***Lucy Steeds, Visiting ‘an Exhibit’ Anew***

A maze of coloured plastic sheets filling the gallery space, ‘an Exhibit’ (by Richard Hamilton and Victor Pasmore, with Lawrence Alloway, 1957) was an artwork as well as an exhibition. Or perhaps rather it is an artwork and was an exhibition. Lucy Steeds, co-editor of an Exhibition Histories book on the topic (Afterall, 2016), will situate ‘an Exhibit’ within a broader context of eclectic artistic and institutional responses to its past event. Asking what is at stake in the different forms of historiography in play, she will anchor her presentation in a new attempt, relying on a calypso recorded by George Browne, to address something of ‘an Exhibit’s significance today. [Additional information in relation to her contribution](#)

Lucy Steeds is Senior Research Fellow for Afterall at Central Saint Martins (CSM), University of the Arts London (UAL). She manages the Exhibition Histories strand of Afterall’s research and publishing, teaches on the MRes Art: Exhibition Studies course at CSM and convenes the training programme for doctoral students in art and design across UAL. Her recent books include: *The Curatorial Conundrum: What to Study? What to Research? What to Practice?* (co-edited with Paul O’Neill and Mick Wilson), The MIT Press, 2016; and *Exhibition* (for the Documents of Contemporary Art series), Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2014. Her curatorial experience is anchored in six years of work at Arnolfini in Bristol (1998–2004), and includes more recent initiatives such as the ‘Magiciens de la Terre’: Reconsidered film programme at Tate Modern. She has a PhD in Cultural History from Goldsmiths College, University of London.

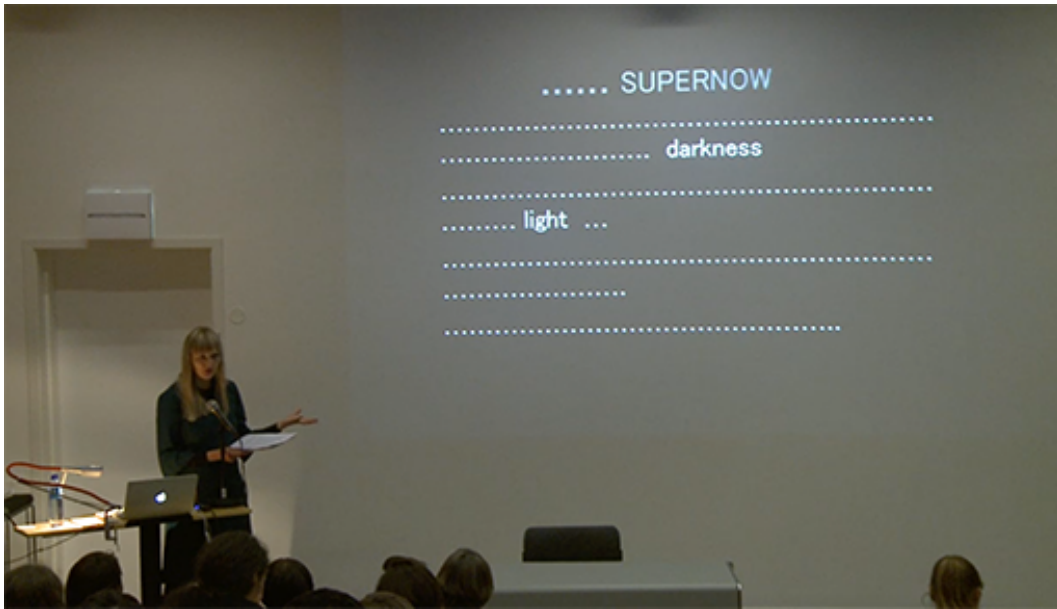


***Lara Khaldi, The Museum Before the Museum***

Khaldi will be discussing the recent proliferation of museums in Palestine and the wider region through examining representations of the museum in past and recent artists' works. Works by Noor Abuarefeh, Khalil Rabah, Khalid Hourani, Walid Raad and others will be discussed as well as a brief look into the founding of actual museums in the region. In Palestine many questions come to mind when founding a museum. It is a complex institution to think through in the context of a military occupation and with such a history. What happens if a museum is built under conditions of an ongoing quest for emancipation? And what if the museum has already been museumized by artists? Perhaps it's content disappears?

Lara Khaldi is an independent curator living in Jerusalem, Palestine. She currently teaches art history and theory at the International Academy of Art, Palestine, Ramallah and at Dar Al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture, Bethlehem and is the interlocutor for the upcoming Sharjah Biennial 13 project in Ramallah.

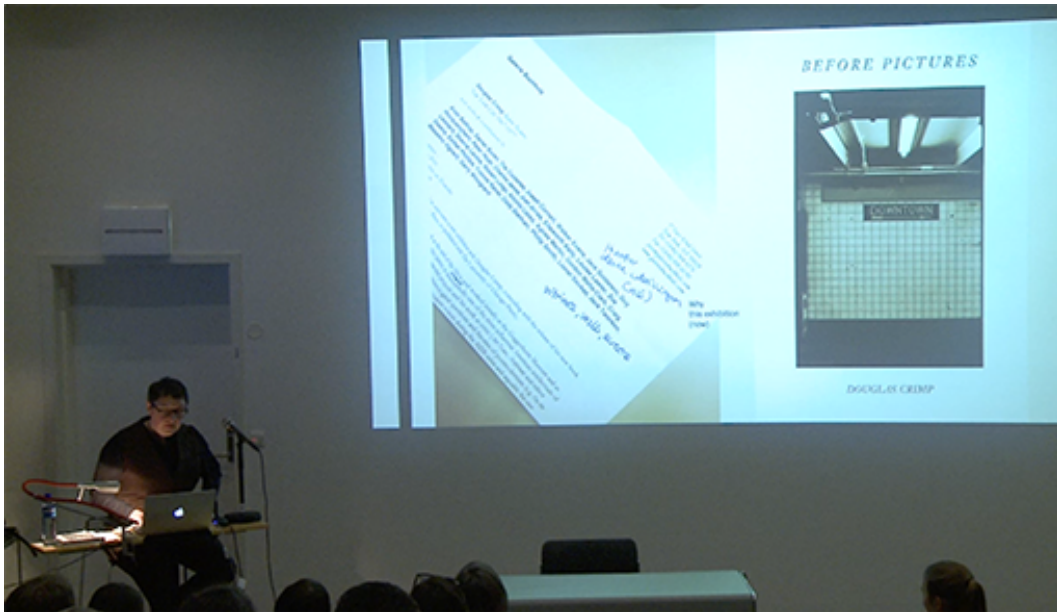




***Jelena Vesić, Exhibition History and the Canons of Contemporaneity – or why looking at the darkness of our own time helps us see it better?***

Is it possible to think the exhibition history beyond the standardized academic forms of knowledge production, that is, beyond the canons of global contemporaneity? Writing about the entanglements of history and contemporaneity, philosopher Giorgio Agamben speaks about the kind of observer who firmly holds her gaze on her own times "so as to perceive not its light, but rather its darkness", the figure we could also recognize as "non-integrated spectator", the one examining precisely that what is obscured and darkened by the light of an epoch. Imagining the community of such non-integrated spectators created through the history of contemporary times Jelena Vesić will speak about the moments of "critical writing" in the exhibition space, looking at the cases of artistic and curatorial interventions – the gestures of counter-exhibitionists, non-representationalists, communitarianists and discussionists – and observing the ways by which these critical gestures break with the linguistics of normality of the conventional exhibition-making.

Jelena Vesić is an independent curator, writer and editor. She was co-editor of *Prelom—Journal of Images and Politics*(2001–2010) and co-founder of the independent organization *Prelom Kolektiv*. Active in the field of publishing, research and exhibition practice that intertwines political theory and contemporary art, she is also co-editor of *Red Thread* journal and a member of editorial board of *Art Margins*. Vesić explores relations between art and ideology in the field of geopolitical art history writing, focusing on experimental art and exhibition practices in former Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe. She holds a PhD in Interdisciplinary studies from the University of Arts, Belgrade and currently is Goethe Institute fellow at Haus der Kunst Munich, working on the research topic "Postcolonial: 1955-1980".

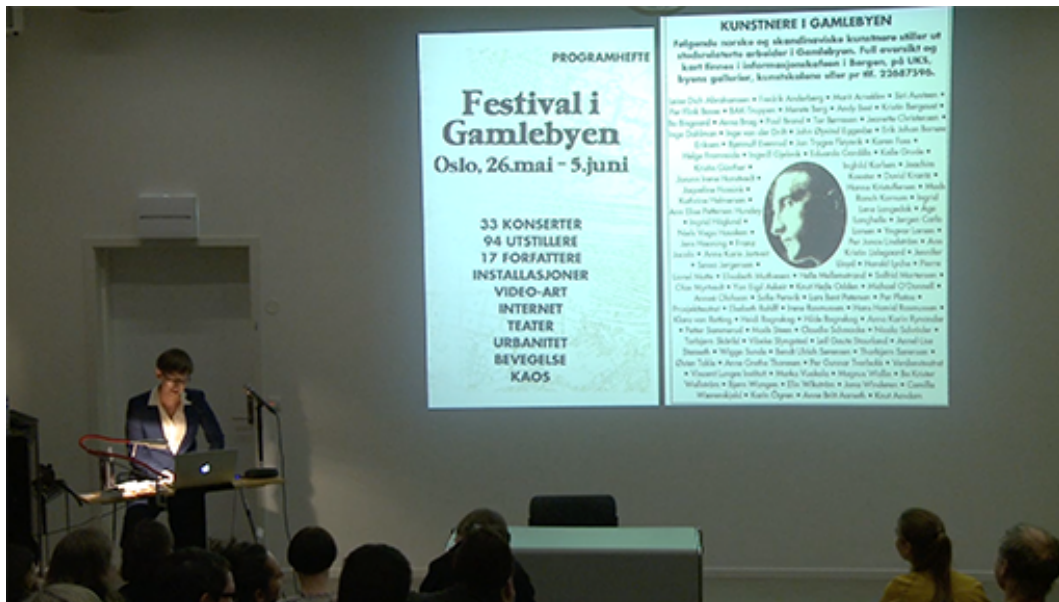


### ***Anne Szefer Karlsen, A Memoir of an Exhibition***

Autumn 2016 Galerie Buchholz staged the exhibition 'Douglas Crimp Before Pictures New York City 1967-1977' coinciding with the release of the book *Before Pictures* by Douglas Crimp. *Pictures* was an exhibition organised by Crimp at Artists Space in New York City in 1977 with the works of Troy Brauntuch, Jack Goldstein, Sherrie Levine, Robert Longo and Philip Smith, which has been referenced several times by Crimp himself and others in exhibitions historicising the 1970s art scene in New York and its relation to a new generation of artists' investigations into representation.

For *Of(f) Our Times - Part 2* I will look at the relation between the book and both the 1977 and 2016 exhibitions, discussing how observation, experience and micro-histories are key elements in conducting research in relation to exhibiting. Moving between spaces, formats and temporalities, this paper will evoke questions about curatorial authorship, as well as asking whether any documents can be the basis of verifiable and organised research – regardless of what time they occur.

Anne Szefer Karlsen is a curator, writer and editor, and is currently Associate Professor for MA Curatorial Practice at Faculty for art, design and music, University of Bergen (2015–21). Szefer Karlsen was Director of Hordaland Art Centre in Bergen, Norway (2008–14); curator for The Norwegian Sculpture Biennale 2015; Lofoten International Art Festival – LIAF 2013 and Associate Curator for Research and Encounters for Biennale Bénin 2012. Szefer Karlsen's writing has appeared in journals such as *Afterall*, *Billedkunst*, *Kunstjournalen B-post*, *kunstkritikk.no*, as well as in anthologies such as *Making Biennials in Contemporary Times* (eds. Galit Eilat et. al., 2015) and *Condition Report* (ed. Koyo Kouoh, 2013). Szefer Karlsen was series editor for *Dublett* (2012–2016), co-editor of *Self-Organised* (with Stine Hebert, 2013) and *Lokalisert/Localised* (with Arne Skaug Olsen and Morten Kvamme, 2009).



***Natalie Hope O'Donnell, Keeping time: 'Prosjekt i Gamlebyen' (PiG) and 'Munchmuseet on the Move'***

Historical exhibitions matter to contemporary curatorial discourses. When devising the curatorial programme Munchmuseet on the Move (2016–2019) it was necessary to situate it both in relation to the contemporary art scene and to the historical exhibitions that had taken place in the locality. The territory of Munchmuseet on the Move is defined by the one-mile journey the Munch Museum will be making from its current site at Tøyen to the new museum being built on the waterfront of Bjørvika. The first event of the four-year programme was a conference on PiG – Prosjekt i Gamlebyen from 1994, a 10-day “festival” of contemporary art and music in various temporary spaces and public locations in that territory. How does PiG relate to the contemporary landscape of art in public space in Oslo? The talk will include the launch of the publication produced after the conference Spaces for Art in Oslo: Prosjekt i Gamlebyen – PiG (1994) Revisited in April 2016. (<http://munchmuseet.no/en/munchmuseet-i-bevegelse>)

Dr Natalie Hope O'Donnell (b. Lørenskog, 1979) is a British-Norwegian curator based in Oslo. She is currently the curator of Munchmuseet on the Move (2016–2019) and chairs the Norwegian Association of Curators. Her PhD dissertation *Space as Curatorial Practice: the exhibition as a spatial construct* (Oslo School of Architecture and Design, 2016) examined three exhibitions at Henie Onstad Kunstsenter in the period 1970–1972. She retains an interest in curating as a spatial process, queer performative art practices, and the exhibition as an historical and cultural text. (<https://aho.academia.edu/NatalieODonnell>)

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