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From Prison Guard to Healer: Curatorial Authorships in the Context of Gendered Economies

Nanne Buurman

Preface

In their first statement after being nominated as artistic directors of *documenta 15* in 2019, ruangrupa announced that, “If *documenta* was launched in 1955 to heal war wounds, why shouldn’t we focus on today’s injuries, especially the ones rooted in colonialism, capitalism, or patriarchal structures,” thereby invoking the idea of the exhibition as a nurse tending to the wounds inflicted by the respective dominant system. While ruangrupa set out with the important task of radically rethinking the institutional workings of *documenta*, and thereby potentially also reviving the institution whose legitimacy as one of the most important exhibitions of contemporary art has increasingly come under scrutiny in the context of a still globalizing art world, today, with COVID-19 very much defining our current situation, I would like to complicate the notion of healing, by calling attention to its ambivalent gendered histories within and beyond *documenta*. In deep sympathy with ruangrupa’s difficult task of working out alternative ways of curating that challenge white patriarchal power and property relations sedimented in traditional “Western” notions of authorship, leadership, and ownership, the following translation of a text written between 2013-2016 in German aims to work against all too comfortable equations of curating/care as purely good things by also shedding light on the dark side of the *cura* and its governmental functions within neoliberal and (neo-)nationalist capitalism.

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Although the curatorial field is increasingly dominated by women, the relationship between gender and curatorial authorship—surprisingly—largely remains a blind spot.¹ This is all the more remarkable if we consider that, complementary to stereotypical associations of artistry with masculinity, structural analogies can be discerned between traditional scripts of femininity and widespread curatorial codes of conduct: beyond the shared etymology of *care work* and curating in the Latin *curare* (to care), the practices of curators and care workers are generally associated with an emphasis on modesty, restraint, and a negation of productivity or creativity of authorship. Moreover, their subject positions have in common an emancipatory trajectory from invisible agents/stagehands behind the scenes of (representational) economies to the role of protagonists that take center stage. My contribution therefore analyzes the gendering of curatorial practices and subject positions against the backdrop of socioeconomic shifts from Fordism to post-Fordism. While the increasing significance of the curatorial vis-à-vis the artistic has already been related to the so-called immaterialization of labor,² my aim is to point out the gender dynamics in this field that have remained largely underexposed so far.³

After an excursus on feminist critiques of gendered (representational) economies, I will look back at the emergence of the figure of the curator as author/ity since the 1970s, using Harald Szeemann as an example to show that this empowerment of the “curator as artist” can be understood as a “masculinization” of curating. In a second step, I will relate curatorial practices and discourses since the 1990s to the intensified biopolitical restructuring of labor and power relations in neoliberal societies, in order to argue that current tendencies of a “refeminization” of curatorial practices and subject positions should not only be understood as a critical intervention in rigid economies of gender, exhibitions, and authorship, but also have to be problematized as potentially complicit with neoliberal governmentality.⁴ Drawing on an example from *DOCUMENTA (13)*, the aim is to relate the ambivalences of curating, already inherent in the Latin word *cura*—whose meaning oscillates between supervising, guarding, and custody, on the one hand, and nursing, healing, and caring, on the other—to sociological diagnoses of a “feminization” of labor and power.⁵

The Biopolitical Turn, or: The “Feminization” of Work and Power

I explicitly do not mean to naturalize gender as an identitarian essence, but to understand it as an economic function socially formed and reformed in historically specific processes of subjectivation that are closely linked to the respective relations of production. Therefore, I am seeking to problematize reasons for the relative persistence of heteronormative attributions and the different ways they are valorized in changing socioeconomic conditions. Theorists of the “feminization” of labor assume that the “feminine” virtues stereotypically attributed to women, such as postponement of gratification, diligence, or a disposition for multitasking and communication, have moved to the fore of social value production with the economic shift from Fordism to post-Fordism. The characteristics of reproductive, affective, care-based, and relational labor, modeled on feminized chores and housework still mostly performed by women without remuneration, also came to play a crucial role in the labor market of service societies and the new economies of symbolic production, where people identified and identifying as female are slowly gaining more power not only in numbers but also in leadership positions. In view of the increasing general normalization of blending life and labor that used to primarily concern housewives and mothers in the bourgeois separation of spheres, various theorists assume a homology between feminine *habitus* and the imperatives of post-Fordist economies, as expressed, for example, in the expectation to emotionally identify with one’s work out of passion.⁶

Against the backdrop of the biopolitical restructuring of the relations of production aimed at the economic exploitation of the entirety of life and no longer only the labor power carried to market, it is important to take into account not just the problematic precarization of labor but also the instrumentalization of femininity as soft power. To what extent do constructions of femininity, or a generalization of traditionally feminine-coded forms of subjectivity and practice, assume certain governmental functions? Michael Hardt and Toni Negri emphasize that they could “accept the term ‘feminization’ [...] only with bitter irony, since it has not resulted in gender equality or destroyed the gender divisions of labor.”⁷ This is why they prefer to speak of a “biopolitization of production.”⁸ In this expression, they link Michel Foucault’s concept of biopower, Karl Marx’s concept of living labor, and Gilles Deleuze’s reflections on societies of control to insights of Marxist feminists, such as Silvia Federici, Mariarosa Dalla Costa, or Selma James, about the productivity of reproductive labor.⁹ Since in postindustrial capitalism the center of gravity of economic value creation shifts from the production of commodities to the re/production of lives and subjectivities, with

power increasingly operating economically based on the model of family and household management,¹⁰ one could argue that both labor and power are feminized in neoliberalism because they refer to the reproduction and management of life in the sense of political economy.¹¹ The biopolitical turn of emphasis from disciplinary to control societies, from the securing of territory to voluntary self-regulation of subjects, implies more diffuse, less authoritarian but by no means less effective forms of exercising authority that nevertheless, of course, coexist with older, more disciplinary and necropolitical paradigms of power.¹²

The Exhibition-as-Medium, or: Institutional and Feminist Critiques of the (Representational) Economy

Such an infrastructural understanding of power as a set of material and immaterial protocols that form subjects and guide their practices in sometimes barely noticeable ways may be linked to the ways power is exercised in exhibitions. Since the 1990s, the notion of the exhibition-as-a-medium has been used to highlight the often implicit authority inherent in curatorial constellations or institutional framings. Because both exhibitions and femininity are discussed as conditions of the possibility for masculinity/artistry to appear as autonomous sources of creativity and value, I propose to read this ascription of mediality in analogy to feminist readings that identified the social function of femininity in patriarchy as mirror, stage, or ornament.¹³ In the gendered economies of representation, “woman” and “exhibition” function as an unobtrusive background, contrasting foil, or support structure that allows “man”/artist to become visible as an authority in the first place. In *The Power of Display*, Mary Anne Stanisze-wski, for example, describes the contribution of installation design to the production of meaning in exhibitions as “the unconscious of art history.”¹⁴ The name of her publication, *The Power of Display*, sounds like an echo of Luce Irigaray’s essay title, “The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine.”¹⁵ In her book, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Irigaray in fact describes the function of the feminine in phallogocentric discourse in a manner that reads like the description of an exhibition.¹⁶

In this sense, the idea of the Victorian “angel in the house” as a perfectly restrained host, remaining in the background to provide the stage for the representation of the master of the house, is comparable to the white cube model—both curatorial and female hospitality were expected to remain in the background. The *backgrounding* of women as *passepartout*, or display, can also be observed in the tradition of the representation of Virgin Mary—particularly in the form of icons of Madonna with Child, in which she usually functions as the stage/frame/parergon of God’s fatherless son. As I have pointed out in my article “Angels in the White Cube,” the myth of Immaculate Conception corresponds here with the ostensible purity, innocence, and neutrality of the white cube as a prototypical exhibition space, whose interpretive power of meaning-making has long been a blind spot.¹⁷

Against this background, institution-critical exposures of invisible curatorial authorship (such as critiques of the apparent neutrality of the white cube) and feminist demands for recognition of the contribution of hitherto unconsidered affective, domestic, and reproductive labor to the social creation of value, may be compared even if these two critical projects have had different thrusts and varying degrees of success since they started in the 1970s.¹⁸ Mierle Laderman Ukele’s *Maintenance Art* performances, during which she publicly cleaned exhibition spaces and thus problematized invisibilized feminized maintenance work, operate precisely at the intersection of these two areas.¹⁹ (figs. 1a & b) While the visibilization of curatorial agency since the 1970s and increasingly since the 1990s has been accompanied by a signifi-



Figs. 1a & b: Mierle Laderman Ukeles, *Hardford Wash: Washing Tracks. Maintenance Inside*, 1973. Copyright: Laderman Ukeles/Ronald Feldman Fine Arts. Source: Miwon Kwon: „In Appreciation of Invisible Work. Mierle Laderman Ukeles and the Maintenance of the ‘White Cube’, in: *Documents*, No. 10, Fall 1997, p. 15-18.

cant valorization of curating as a creative practice that is linked to considerable symbolic capital, this has not been equally the case for feminized domestic labor, care work, or childcare. Rather, in the course of women’s increasing entering of public labor markets, they are either left with a double burden, or care labor is delegated to less privileged women, often migrant workers from the Global “South,” who thus represent the material unconscious of increasingly informatized “Western” societies.²⁰

From Care to Creation, or: The Authorial Ennoblement of the Curator as “Masculinization”

As I have tried to show so far, the etymological meaning of the Latin *curare* (to care) calls up feminized responsibilities of *care-work* (of worrying, caring, nurturing), which are lost in the topos of the curator-as-artist that has gained prominence since the 1970s. In their study, “From Museum Curator to Exhibition *Auteur*: Inventing a Singular Position,” Nathalie Heinich and Michael Pollak found that pre-authorial custodial curating was characterized by “a tendency towards the erasure of the person in the post”.²¹ They find “traces of this form of abnegation” in “the voluntary assumption of those traits deemed appropriate for a curator—reserve, modesty, discretion.”²² Also noting a “sacrifice of wealth and fame,” they explain a relatively low income in relation to the high level of education of the post holders by, among other things, “the high proportion of women curators [...], the legacy of a time when those who held the posts, recruited from the financially and culturally privileged sector of society, could well afford to perform their tasks on a benevolent basis.”²³ Against the background of this description of curatorial work as a feminized labor of love, the authorial ennoblement of curating by exhibition makers such as Harald Szeemann since the 1970s appears as a “masculinization” of curatorial practice that casts the curator as a

charismatic meta-artist or exhibition-maker, whose tasks are no longer understood as ‘merely’ reproductive invisible maintenance of the museum, caring for collections, and conservation of exhibits, but as hyper-visible creative production of exhibitions as “works of art,” modeled on myths of artistic genius.²⁴

Dorothee Richter has analyzed a photograph showing Szeemann surrounded by male and female artists on the last day of *documenta 5* (1972) as a gendered pose that refers to historical patterns of representing divine, royal, male creativity in pictures of *primus inter pares* that link masculine creativity and power.²⁵ (figs. 2a & b) Although the emergence of the topos of the curator as meta-artist in the context of *d5* historically coincides with deconstructions of singular authorship by poststructuralists, feminists, and institutional critique, the objections to the curator as meta-artist have remained remarkably formulaic since. Rather than problematizing modernist and romantic conceptions of authorship informed by the idea of genius and *creatio ex nihilo*, they criticized curators as competitors who threaten to infringe the authority, autonomy, and intentions of artists.²⁶ Against this background, it is not surprising that apologetic declarations of innocence or ostentatious reticence on the part of curators of any gender are still widespread today.


In any case, the emphasis on working behind the scenes and the assurance that the artists are the center of attention are common in descriptions of curatorial codes of conduct, both by curators themselves and by others, although these stereotypical and normative claims are not always consistent with reality.²⁷ In fact, it seems that curators read as female are more often praised in the press (sometimes counterfactually) for their efficient, professional, and reserved management skills, while curators read as male are either celebrated as creative charismatic mavericks or criticized for their heretical presumption of artistry. It is therefore no coincidence that only recently have efforts been made to establish Lucy Sappard as a “pioneer of curating,” thus adding a female figurehead to the hitherto male-dominated historical canon.²⁸ In this auto/biographical project, female-coded affirmations of modesty and male-coded analogies



Fig. 2a: Harald Szeemann on the last day of *documenta 5*, 1972. Photograph by: Balthasar Burkhard. Source: *Museum der Obsessionen. Von/über/zu/mit Harald Szeemann*, Berlin 1981, p. 74.




Fig. 2b: Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev mimicking Szeemann's pose in preparation of *DOCUMENTA (13)*, 2011. Photography by: Oliver Mark. Courtesy of Oliver Mark.

with artistry intersect in remarkable ways. In her retrospective account of how she assumed an authorial role as a curator, Lippard complies with feminized scripts of modesty by remarking almost apologetically that she did not seize curatorial authorship voluntarily, but only accidentally: "Curation became unintentionally creation."²⁹ The dematerialization of art, which she accompanied as a curator and art critic in the 1970s,³⁰ was eventually followed by a "dematerialization of curating" in the 1990s that can be linked to what I suggest to call a "refeminization" of curatorial subjectivity. 

Hard Facts/Soft Skills, or: The Dematerialization of Curating as "Refeminization"

In a continuously globalizing art field with ever new biennials, curating has established itself as a paradigmatic mode of post-Fordist immaterial production, which no longer requires authorial ennoblement by analogy with masculinized artistic role models, but has acquired model character itself.³¹ This is evident not only in the fact that artists increasingly make use of curatorial strategies and forms of practice, but also in the phenomenon of celebrity curators, who—especially if they are men—continue to be portrayed in the mainstream media as charismatic career changers and *self-made men* in accordance with traditional notions of artistry.³² This focus on singular male autodidacts, however, stands in stark contrast to the post-heroic plurality of a mostly female student body in curatorial training programs.³³ In the discourses around the social, reflexive, discursive, and educational turns of curating that we have seen since the 1990s and increasingly since the 2000s, women increasingly make an appearance as curators and theorists of the curatorial. Whereas previously exhibitions were often treated as the work of charismatic exhibition makers, authors such as Beatrice von Bismarck now make a case for focusing on the

activity of curating, or even on the field of the curatorial, not on the person of the curator.³⁴ Moreover, exhibitions are now increasingly negotiated as social spaces of multilateral meaning production, in which the constitutive role of the audience is also taken into account more than before.

Marion von Osten, Ute Meta Bauer, Dorothee Richter, Maria Lind, Beatrice von Bismarck, and Irit Rogoff are just some discursively powerful positions from Germany/Europe whose work coincides with a questioning of centralist notions of curatorial agency. Bauer's and Lind's practices have recently been the subject of monographs³⁵; Richter has been editing the online journal *OnCurating* for several years³⁶; and Rogoff and von Bismarck have published important anthologies on questions of the curatorial.³⁷ Almost all of these women are/were also involved in leading and/or initiating curatorial studies programs. Therefore, it is perhaps not too far-fetched to read the professionalization of curating through institutionalized courses also as a gendered practice of mediation and re/production. While this turn towards a professionalized education for curators has opened up potentials for a meta-reflexive theorization and dematerialization of the curatorial as an intervention into given gendered (representational) economies, divisions of labor and power relations (and thus could be understood as a project that implicitly follows feminist agendas), it is nevertheless also important to consider the ambivalent effects of power inherent in every form of subjectivation as a practice of social re/production.  This discursive shift in focus from *hard facts* to *soft skills*, from exhibitions as "works of art" to exhibitions as "spaces of action," from objects to processes of subjectivation³⁸ that has been taking place since the 1990s not only shows a correlation between "curatorial practices and neoliberal management models" as von Bismarck and others have pointed out,³⁹ but it also coincides with a feminization of the relations of production and power relations in post-Fordism.

The Ambivalence of *Cura*, or: From Curator-as-Prison-Guard to Curator-as-Healer

Since, in neoliberal societies, the potentials of self-empowerment and the pitfalls of precarization go hand in hand, and emancipation vacillates between libertarian liberation and precarious self-exploitation, it is necessary to take a critical look at the ambivalence of *cura* in cognitive capitalism. In his lectures on the history of governmentality, Foucault noted that neoliberal regimes no longer operate like disciplinary power by means of enclosure, but by ensuring freedom of trade and circulation.⁴⁰ He identified pastoral power as a "prelude to governmentality" and describes it as a "power of care" and of healing, for "the pastor is not fundamentally or primarily a judge; he is essentially a doctor, who has to take responsibility for each soul and for the sickness of each soul."⁴¹ The model of the shepherd, responsible for the whole flock and each individual sheep (*omnes et singulatim*), who must tend to the sheep without imprisoning them or restricting their movement, shows the ambivalence of this gentle non-phallic power, which anticipates the *laissez-faire* "ideology of freedom" and self-regulation of markets and people in neoliberalism.⁴²

According to Foucault, pastoral power implies an "individualization by subjection," resulting in a "mode of individualization that not only does not take place by way of affirmation of the self, but one that entails destruction of the self."⁴³ And while, according to Foucault, the pastoral power of priests as shepherds of their parish implied that they were both guards and healers at once, because they are guarding the sheep (*custodire gregem*) and taking care of them (*fovere oves*), I would like to illustrate the shift that has occurred in the way power is ascribed to curators by two letters written by artists that could not be more different in their modes of address.

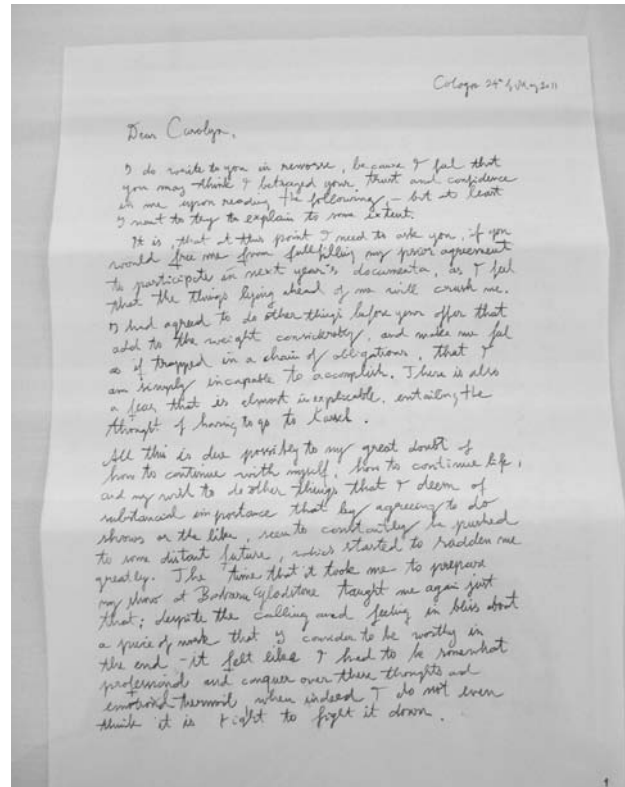


Fig. 3a: Kai Althoff's letter of withdrawal to Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev. Photography by: Nanne Buurman



Fig. 3b: Vitrine in Museum Fridericianum with Althoff's letter of withdrawal, Photograph by: Nanne Buurman

In 1972, Robert Smithson explains his withdrawal from *documenta 5* with a critique of the disciplinary powers of the curator Harald Szeemann, who allegedly infringes the autonomy and freedom of the artist in a "cultural prison." Titled "Cultural Confinement," Smithson's letter of withdrawal was included in *documenta's* catalogue:

Cultural confinement takes place when a curator imposes his own limits on an art exhibition, rather than asking an artist to set his limits. Artists are expected to fit into fraudulent categories. Some artists imagine they've got a hold on this apparatus, which in fact has got a hold of them. As a result, they end up supporting a cultural prison that is out of their control. Artists themselves are not confined, but their output is. Museums, like asylums and jails, have wards and cells—in other words, neutral rooms called 'galleries.' A work of art when placed in a gallery loses its charge, and becomes a portable object or surface disengaged from the outside world. [...] It would be better to disclose the confinement rather than make illusions of freedom.⁴⁴

Here, the idea that artists should set their own limits is expressed as an unfulfilled demand, prohibited by a dominant imposing curator disempowering the artwork.

In 2012, in contrast, Kai Althoff excuses his inability to participate in the exhibition in a long "love letter" to Carolyn Christoph-Bakargiev, which was displayed in a vitrine in the Museum Fridericianum during *DOCUMENTA (13)*. (figs. 3 a & b) Over five written pages, he apologizes for having taken on more obligations than he could possibly manage to attend to and seems to be suffering from his own mismanagement. Rather than blaming or criticizing the curator, the institution, or the system, as Smithson had



Fig. 4a: Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev with her dog Darsi, Photographer unknown, Source: Internet.



Fig. 4b: Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev with her dog Darsi, Photography by: Andri Pol. Source: Hanno Rauterberg's article, "Die Heilerin," *Zeit Magazin*, 6. June 2012, no. 24, 16-18, 17.

done forty years earlier, he takes all responsibility on himself, while flattering and praising Christoph-Bakargiev's wisdom and kindness:

Dear Carolyn,

I do write to you with remorse, because I feel that you may think I betrayed your trust and confidence in me upon reading the following—but at least I must try to explain to some extent. It is, that at this point I need to ask you, if you would free me from fulfilling my prior agreement to participate in next year's *documenta*, as I feel that the things lying ahead of me will crush me. I had agreed to other things before your offer that add to the weight considerably and make me feel as if trapped in a chain of obligations that I am simply incapable to accomplish. [...] I can only hope you will not judge me wrongly, as I was fully taken by your ways and your wisdom I could feel throughout all of our conversation. And for the most part, it is your knowledge and profound thinking which intimidate me also. [...] I am in deep admiration. But I cannot force myself to equal and put up with your brilliance [...] because of a resistance within me that keeps me from devoting myself equally to this commitment, because I simply cannot master. I have agreed to do too much in the upcoming year, when secretly I now almost wish not to have said yes to anything. [...]

With true admiration,
Kai⁴⁵

This painfully self-revealing confession, anachronistically written by hand, is most likely an artistic play and intended as Althoff's work proper rather than a serious withdrawal. This gesture of displaying a letter that sounds as if the artist was close to burnout reflects on the condition of self-exploitation that artists and other cultural producers have to operate in as Foucauldian entrepreneurs of the self, easily leading to depression, as Franco Berardi has problematized in his book *Soul at Work*.⁴⁶ It reveals that, due to the biopoliticization of production, it is no longer merely the work of art that is subject to enclosure/valorization by the institution but the entire person of the artist, including their private distress and sorrows. Moreover, it demonstrates the self-responsibilization of individuals under the *New Spirit of Capitalism*, in which artists (like workers) are no longer supposed to criticize the institutions they work for but are expected to identify with it to the degree of a Stockholm syndrome with the curator.⁴⁷ What is on display here is the governmentality of societies of control, in which curators no longer need to be prison wardens because their relationships to artists are governed by affective ties that are perhaps as effective as the electronic leash, which—according to Deleuze—secures the freedom of movement in societies of control.⁴⁸ (figs. 4a & b) The artist feels “trapped” but not by the institution's powers or curator's dominance but by his own obligations and therefore does not emancipate himself by declaring his independence but submissively asks the curator to set him free.

Conclusion

Against this background, one may wonder to what extent the white cube, which Christov-Bakargiev also called a “space of emancipation” in the context of *DOCUMENTA (13)* (2012),⁴⁹ might be understood as a neoliberal *smooth space* in which the benevolent curatorial smile conveys the impression of freedom from domination through the use of barely noticeable *soft power*? Given the biopolitical deployment of femininity that is gaining ground everywhere, is it perhaps no coincidence that the metaphor of the “curator as prison guard,” coined by Robert Smithson when he accused Szeemann of “cultural confinement,” during *documenta 5* (1972),⁵⁰ has been replaced by talk of the curator as healer,⁵¹ Hanno Rauterberg's epithet for Christov-Bakargiev in his article “Die Heilerin.” Highlighting that CCB is one “of those torn people,” “who like to control everything without fixing anything” and mentioning that some of her colleagues are afraid of her, calling her a “mini-Mubarak of Kassel,” Rauterberg quotes her in his portrait as saying, “But it's not about violence, really. If it's about anything, it's healing.”⁵² Taking into account the ambivalence of *cura*, however, it remains to be seen to what extent a re-feminizing of curatorial agency will help to heal the diseases of biopoliticized capitalism or whether, as a pastoral caregiver, feminized curatorship can only provide relief from the symptoms while sexist, racist, and classist exclusions and inclusions persist behind the friendly face of power.

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Postscript

As significant social and political changes occurred since this article was first published in 2016, I would like to add a postscript from the perspective of early 2021. While it is important to remain mindful of the manifold ways femininity is deployed in the biopolitical regimes of cognitive capitalism, the re-erection of phallic Machiavellian models through figures such as Jair Bolsonaro, Victor Orbán, or US President Donald Trump—whose 2016 election has been explained as a reaction to various kinds of feminization—exposes the ambivalence of different forms of authority and their

historically shifting normative implications. One year ago, COVID-19 opened a new chapter of biopolitics, with health-induced states of exception putting governments into the positions of doctors who authoritatively ask their subjects to remain patient for their own good, thus turning them into patients. At the same time, while appealing for mutual care and individual responsibility of citizens, police are mobilized by the state to enforce rules and regulations that are not always democratically legitimized, thus once more painfully demonstrating that the regimes of power differentiated in gendered terms above are not mutually exclusive but actually work hand in hand. Without knowing yet how these developments will impact processes of subjectivation and relations of power in the curatorial field, once exhibitions reopen, we are certainly witnessing a trend of the concept of healing in the curatorial field, as more and more curators identify with the role of the healer and frame their practices as attempts at healing the ills of (corona-)capitalism.⁵³ Against this backdrop, it is important to remain cautious against depoliticizing detournements of feminist agendas into sedatives causing amnesia about the fact that the bitter pill of (in)voluntarily serving capitalism in its different guises is sugared by the sweet promises of inclusion, representation and power.

Notes

1 This article was originally written in German between 2013-2016. See “Vom Gefängniswärter zur Heilerin. Kuratorische Autorschaften im Kontext vergeschlechtlichter Ökonomien,” *Kritische Berichte* 4, Special Issue *Gend_r*, no. 44 (2016): 114-121. At the time, gender was primarily addressed in terms of exhibition content, identity politics, and affirmative action in the discourses around feminist curating. See, for instance, Katrin Kivimaa, ed., *Working with Feminism: Curating and Exhibitions in Eastern Europe* (Tallinn: Tallinn University Press, 2013); Elke Krasny, ed., *Women's Museum: Curatorial Politics in Feminism, Education, History and Art* (Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 2013); or Angela Dimitrakaki and Lara Perry, eds., *Politics in a Glass Case* (Liverpool: University Press, 2013), 131-56. Meanwhile, gender dynamics in the field of curating have been receiving more attention. See, for instance, the special issue “Curating in Feminist Thought” edited by Elke Krasny, Lara Perry, and Dorothee Richter, *OnCurating* 29 (May 2016).

2 See Beatrice von Bismarck, “Kuratorisches Handeln. Immaterielle Arbeit zwischen Kunst und Managementmodellen,” in Beatrice von Bismarck and Alexander, eds., *Beyond Education. Kunst, Ausbildung, Arbeit und Ökonomie*, Koch (Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2005), 175-190.

3 See also my more recent articles: “Engendering Exhibitions: The Politics of Gender in Negotiating Curatorial Authorship,” *Journal of Curatorial Studies* 6, no. 1 (2017): 115-137; “Home Economics. Curating as a Labour of Love,” *Esse. Arts and Opinions*, 30, Special Issue “Feminisms” (May 2017); and my review “(Un)doing Curatorship, oder Kuratorin werden,” *FKW* 67 (April 2020).

4 For the concept of governmentality, see Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78, ed. Michael Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); and idem., *The Birth of Biopolitics*, lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

5 See Cristina Morini, “The Feminization of Labour in Cognitive Capitalism,” *Feminist Review*, no 87, (2007): 40-59, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 145-163, and Hardt and Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge/London, Harvard UP: 2001).

6 See Nancy Fraser, “Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History,” *New Left Review* 56 (March/April 2009): 97-117.

7 Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 133.

8 Ibid.

9 See Silvia Federici, *Wages Against Housework* (Bristol: Falling Walls Press, 1975); Maria-rosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* (Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1972). For a feminist critique of Hardt and Negri, see Kathy Weeks, "Life Within and Against Work: Affective Labor, Feminist Critique and Post-Fordist Politics," *ephemera* 7, no. 1 (2007): 233-49.

10 Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 93-103.

11 Michel Foucault, *Der Wille zum Wissen. Sexualität und Wahrheit 1* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 163.

12 See Marianne Pieper, Thomas Atzert et al., "Einleitung," in idem., eds., *Empire und die biopolitische Wende. Die Internationale Diskussionsreihe im Anschluss an Hardt und Negri* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 2007), p.12.

13 See Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), 44; Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

14 Staniszewski, *The Power of Display. A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*, (Cambridge/London: MIT Press, 1998), xix- xxix, here xxi.

15 Irigaray, "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine," in idem., *The Sex Which is Not One* (Ithaca/New York: Cornell UP, 1985), 68-85.

16 Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 138.

17 See Nanne Buurman, "Angels in the White Cube. Rhetoriken kuratorischer Unschuld," *FKW/Zeitschrift für Geschlechterforschung und visuelle Kultur*, no 58 (April 2015): 63-74. For an English version, see: "Angels in the White Cube. Rhetorics of Curatorial Innocence," *OnCurating* 27, Special Issue *Curating in Feminist Thought* (May 2016): <https://www.on-curating.org/issue-29-reader/angels-in-the-white-cube-rhetorics-of-curatorial-innocence-at-documenta-13.html#.YDqLtOAxnOQ>. Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Santa Monica and San Francisco: Lapis Press, 1986).

18 The activists of the *Wages for Housework* campaign, founded in 1972, fought for recognition of housework as productive work. See Kitchen Politics (Collective für Queer Feministische Interventionen), eds., *Aufstand aus der Küche. Reproduktionsarbeit im globalen Kapitalismus und die unvollendete feministische Revolution* (Münster: edition assemblage, 2015).

19 See Miwon Kwon, "In Appreciation of Invisible Work. Mierle Laderman Ukeles and the Maintenance of the 'White Cube,'" *Documents*, no. 10 (Fall 1997): 15-18, here 18.

20 See Morini, "The Feminization of Labour," 42.

21 Heinich and Pollak, "From Museum Curator to Exhibition *Auteur*," in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne, eds., *Thinking about Exhibitions* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 231-250, here 234.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 See Søren Grammel, *Ausstellungsautorenschaft. Die Konstruktion der auktorialen Position des Kurators bei Harald Szeemann* (Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2005).

25 Richter, "Künstlerische und Kuratorische Autorschaft," in Corina Caduff and Tam Wälchli, eds., *Autorschaft in den Künsten. Konzepte, Praktiken, Medien*, (Zurich: ZHDK, 2008), 110-127, 112.

26 Cf. Dirk Schwarze, *Die Expansion der documenta-Kritik. Eine Ausstellung im Spiegel der Presse*, ed. by Walter Vitt (Nordlingen: 2006).

27 See Buurman, "Angels in the White Cube. Rhetorics of Curatorial Innocence."

28 In *A Brief History of Curating*, edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Zurich 2009, a book containing interviews with "pioneers of curating," Lippard is one of only two women interviewed. See also Cornelia Butler, ed., *From Conceptualism to Feminism: Lucy Lippard's Number Shows 1969-7* (London: Afterall, 2012).

29 Lippard, "Curating by Numbers", *Tate Papers*, no. 12 (2009). Accessed on September 11, 2016, <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/12/curating-by-numbers>.

30 See Lippard and John Chandler, "The Dematerialization of Art," in: idem., *Changing. Essays in Art Criticism*, (New York: Dutton, 1971) 255-276; idem., *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997).

31 See for instance von Bismarck "Kuratorisches Handeln," and Dorothea von Hantelmann, "Affluence and Choice. The Social Significance of the Curatorial," in Beatrice von Bismarck, Jörn Schaffaff and Thomas Weski, eds., *Cultures of the Curatorial* (Berlin: Sternberg, 2012), 41-51.

32 See, for example, Anja Lösel, "Klaus Biesenbach. Unser Mann in New York," Jan. 16, 2007, <https://www.stern.de/kultur/kunst/klaus-biesenbach-unser-mann-in-new-york-3361532.html>, accessed Sept. 11, 2016.

33 See Suhail Malik, "Survey on Gender Ratios in Curating Programs," *Red Hook Journal* (October 2012), <https://ccs.bard.edu/redhook/survey-on-gender-ratios-in-curating-programs/index.html>, accessed September 11, 2016.

34 See von Bismarck, "Kuratorisches Handeln," 183-185.

35 Marius Babias for the NBK, ed., *Ute Meta Bauer: Kuratorische Praxis. Interviews und Gespräche*, (Cologne: n.b.k/Walther König, 2012); Brian Kuan Wood, ed., *Selected Maria Lind Writings*, (Berlin: Sternberg, 2010).

36 See www.on-curating.org

37 von Bismarck, Schaffaff, Weski, eds., *Cultures of the Curatorial* and Jean-Paul Martinon, ed., *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating* (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

38 Suzana Milevska, "Participatory Art. A Paradigms Shift from Objects to Subjects," <https://www.eurozine.com/participatory-art/>, accessed September 11, 2016.

39 von Bismarck, "Kuratorisches Handeln", my translation from the German.

40 See Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 40-41.

41 Ibid., 184, 127, 247

42 Ibid., 48.

43 Ibid., 180.

44 Robert Smithson, "Cultural Confinement," Manifesto first published in the exhibition catalogue of *documenta 5* (1972) in German, English version published in *Artforum* 11, no. 2 (October 1972).

45 Kai Althoff, Letter of Withdrawal to Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (excerpt), displayed at *dOCUMENTA (13)* (2012).

46 Franco Berardi, *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy* (Los Angeles, Cambridge, London: Semiotexte/MIT Press, 2009).

47 Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello. "The New Spirit of Capitalism," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 18:3 (2006), 161-81.

48 Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control" [1990], *October*, Vol. 59 (Winter, 1992): 3-7.

49 Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev in conversation with Ralf Schlüter, "Das Herz der documenta schlägt in Kabul," *Art Spezial. Documenta 13* (July 2012): 96-98, here 98, my translation from the German.

50 Robert Smithson, "Kulturbeschränkung," in: *documenta 5. Befragung der Realität. Bildwelten heute*, exhibition catalogue, Kassel 1972, Dossier 17:7.

51 Hanno Rauterberg, "Die Heilerin," *Zeit Magazin*, no. 24, 6. June 2012, 16-18.

52 Ibid., 16, my translation from the German.

53 Besides *documenta 15*, the upcoming Ghetto Biennale *Swen Moun (Heal People)*, which also seeks to compensate for insufficient health services by the Haitian state with the *Ghetto Clinic*, is another very explicit example. See also my current and

upcoming work on “Hegemonies of Healing and Their Discontents,” in which I link historical life-reform attempts to cure capitalism with contemporary ones to call attention to the dialectics of care/curation. The idea of curating as healing may in fact also serve curators as a means of self-purification to downplay their complicities with regimes of power, as it did for a number of the documenta founding fathers, for whom documenta’s ostentatiously reparative agenda was an ideal occasion to whitewash not just their own Nazi pasts, but also that of participating German artists and audiences. See Buurman, “The Exhibition as a Washing Machine? Some Notes on Historiography, Contemporaneity, and (Self-)Purification in documenta’s Early Editions,” in *Stasis. Taking a Stance*, Catalogue of the Thessaloniki Biennale 2019 (MoMus, 2020), idem. “Northern Gothic: Werner Haftmann’s German Lessons, or A Ghost (Hi)Story of Abstraction,” *documenta studies* 11 (December 2020), https://documentastudien.de/media/1/documenta_studies__11_nanne_buurman.pdf, and idem. “d is for democracy? documenta and the Politics of Abstraction between Aryanization and Americanization,” *Modos Journal, Revista de história da arte* 5, no. 2 (May-August 2021), <https://periodicos.sbu.unicamp.br/ojs/index.php/mod/article/view/8665413>.

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