

How to move in / an institution

by Rachel Mader

The current debates about the institutional condition of the art world are varied in their argumentation as well as their assessments—perhaps they are more accurately characterized as divided and frequently controversial. The reasons for the highly divergent evaluations of the current situation lie within the hybrid constellations that have become part of the everyday reality of all kinds of art institutions. They are hybrid not only in relation to funding bodies and financing models (so called public-private partnerships are an example here) but also more basically with regard to the way different institutions conceive of themselves and their respective role in society (we might ask, for example, whether today's off- or off-off spaces still pursue a counter-cultural agenda). These present and constantly changing phenomena¹ prove difficult to categorize and are correspondingly subject to political discussion.² In various forums, including conventional formats such as texts, conferences, or exhibitions, as well as more innovative models such as international networks or interdisciplinary research platforms, these developments continue to be analyzed and/or criticized, while generating discussion about possible scenarios for the future of institutions and possible forms of agency within them. Regardless of the extent to which ideas diverge on these points, the intensity of the current debate itself demonstrates the urgency that this issue represents for the art system.

There is largely consensus in these texts, however, about the various global and specific developments that these hybrid constellations have produced. Large-scale privatization and deregulation in the course of neoliberal politics radically shook the foundations particularly of the more traditional, state-owned institutions, with effects extending indirectly to those farther from state influence. In the field of art these changes were marked not only by budget cuts but also by more or less urgent calls for the acquisition of third party funds. Simultaneously, labor conditions were flexibilized and the pressure to develop a market-oriented profile increased substantially. Additionally, the art market, which since the 1980s has been flourishing in previously unknown ways, did not develop as a separate, but rather as an invasive, phenomenon. Hardly any aspect of the art system today can organize outside the logic of the market or its effects (such as the demand for blockbuster exhibitions)—a circumstance which paradoxically also generated the success of publications that explicitly deplore these developments, such as Chin-Tao Wu's pointedly titled *Privatizing Culture*.³ In the field of cultural policy a variety of discourses emerged as a result of these developments. While the political left in particular practices a fundamental critique of the economization of creativity⁴, government cultural policies have largely missed the opportunity to initiate a fundamental examination of their activities under contemporary conditions.⁵ Apart from those developments dominated by financial aspects and rooted in global processes, changes within the art system itself have also contributed significantly to the process of hybridization. The ideas of institutional critique as well as a continuously expanding concept of art have undermined and challenged the self-image of

traditional institutions. So-called 'biennialization' has placed artistic production in a situation dominated by tensions between site-specific engagement, the event machine, and location marketing; and the increasing discursivity of the art world was confronted with accusations of lacking popularity and accessibility.

In accordance with the complex coordinates and processes that determine the current situation of confusion, the debate emerges from numerous different disciplines and fields of practice, and operates with very divergent ideas and concepts—about what an institution is, how it functions, what its social responsibility can or must be and most importantly how we, as agents, can handle these complexities and act within them. The conclusions reached by different writers about the relation between the structural framework (the institution) and its agents is as varied as the conceptual vocabulary used to examine specific aspects of this constellation. The following notes attempt in a first step to bring some order to the descriptions and outlines of institutions in the relevant literature.⁶ Building on this they will sketch the relationship of the institution to the social context, while a third part will investigate how the interaction between an institution and its agents is conceptualized in the current debate. In the process, questions or themes will arise that require clarification or at least closer examination for future research on institutions in the field of art. For it is evident even from a rough overview of the literature that this has become an issue of some urgency as a result of recent political developments and their latent destabilization of institutional bonds.

What is/makes an institution?

The diversity of concepts in recent discourse is revealing about the direction of the debate in at least two ways. Not only does it point to the evident lack of a common terminology that might act as a reference point for the discussion, the occasionally innovative vocabulary also testifies to the potential contained in the current concern with institutions. Terms like 'progressive institutions' or 'radical institutions'⁷ imply the possibility of a future-oriented entity that is open to experimental practices, both politically and in terms of content. Publications such as *Mögliche Museen (Possible Museums)*, edited by Barbara Steiner and Charles Esche, present some "models ... of institutional experimentalism" since the 1960s, and thus substantiate theoretical projections with reference to actually existing projects.⁸ And the project European Kunsthalle, with its mission of developing the "concept and potential of the Kunsthalle model," testifies to the continued interest in the possibilities of institutional change in the field of art that is also found in many other institutions.⁹

As an adjective, the word 'institutional' appears in diverse contexts and with correspondingly different orientations and emphases. At an international conference organized in 2010 by a network of "contemporary art institutions" with a noticeably expanded concept of the institution (Comité van Roosendaal), there was discussion of 'institutional behavior' or 'institutional attitude'¹⁰, which implies an understanding of institutions not merely as a structural framework, but that this structure requires actors with dispositions and attitudes. Philosophers Gerald Raunig and Stefan Nowotny advance a definition similarly centered on action when they speak of "instituent practices" as a way to describe a "movement of flight" that can and should resist the power of institutionalizing processes.¹¹ Their thoughts offer a decidedly critical engagement with and continuation of one of the most central concepts of institutional self-examination in the art world of the last few decades, that of institutional critique. The hardly linear but yet connected artistic and critical intentions that have been gathered under this term since the 1960s are at the root of an inclusive and fundamental examination of the institu-

tional conditions of artistic production as well as its forms of presentation and reception.¹²

More recent debates mostly operate with a less specific conception of what an institution in the art world is, or what might be implied in any particular idea of it. Rather, as if it were a matter of course, they rely on a very broad definition, such as that offered in a dictionary of sociology: "Based on general linguistic usage I. refers to an establishment (organization, agency or company) per se, which fulfills a particular function according to particular rules, such as operational procedure and the distribution of functions among cooperating staff, in the framework of a larger organizational system. In a basic sense I. as a sociological term refers to any form of consciously planned or organically developed stable, lasting pattern of human interaction that is enforced in society or supported and actualized within generally legitimated conceptions of order."¹³ Such a broad definition of a concept is typical for an emerging field of research. It is a situation that results either in case studies that center on a specific institution¹⁴ or in numerous attempts to encompass and order the so far only latently constituted field through more general themes or questions. Most of the publications and events that appeared within the last few years belong to this latter category, even though the political debate mentioned above has lead many of these texts and opinions to take on a particular texture. What they share is a critical attitude toward those institutions perceived as traditional, as well as the conservative constellations active within them. Examples include historically oriented fine art museums, a top-down practice of art education, the passive position of the viewer, or the repression of the problematic entanglements of individual institutions with the private sector economy. Despite these commonalities, we can identify two fundamentally different approaches to the way the construct of the institution is conceived, which may be summed up with reference to two concepts from very different texts of structuralist political theory and academic art history respectively. While the one group tends to consider the institution as an 'ideological state apparatus' (Althusser),¹⁵ the other group's ideas are closer to the concept of the institution as *Ausgleichserzeugnis*, the dialectical product of a struggle to balance a variety of different interests and tendencies, as it is described in Martin Warnke's seminal study *The Court Artist* (1986) (the institution in his case being the early modern court)¹⁶. Although only very few of the texts refer to these two discourses explicitly, I would argue that this typology is useful as a way to frame the current debate, since many of its participants share with one or the other of these positions clusters of basic assumptions about what an institution is and how it functions.

The institution as actualization of the dominant ideology

Althusser places cultural institutions in the category of so called "ideological state apparatuses" that, complementing the "repressive state apparatuses," educate citizens to function within dominant ideology and to uncritically reproduce its values within the confines of their position in the social structure. Dominant ideology is thereby understood as an overbearing power to which individuals are subjected in all areas of society. Correspondingly, a critical attitude must always position itself in opposition to and never within the particular, equally hegemonic institution, since the latter is without exemption implicated in implementing and enforcing the dominant ideology, with no allowance for any effective form of self-reflection. Thus the institution swiftly becomes representative of state-political power and superiority, in relation to which the subject must be submissive and obedient or else insist on a position of refusal and rejection. Critical agency within hegemonial structures is considered nearly impossible, since they are only interested in the extension of their own power. In this paradigm, the institution is largely

an inflexible, anonymous construct determined by political processes.¹⁷ Of course none of the current texts contain all the above-mentioned criteria, since most of the authors extend their analysis by including further critiques of the institution by Foucault or Gramsci. Nonetheless the conceptualization of institutions in the examples sketched out below is dominated by elements that Althusser considered characteristic of ideological state apparatuses. Historical analyses of the institution in particular tend to generalize in their exposition of the structures, mechanisms and functions as well as the contextual and ideological conditions of institutions. Exemplary for this approach is Australian sociologist Tony Bennett's seminal study *The Birth of the Museum* (1995), in which he circumscribes the museum landscape with the phrase "exhibitionary complex," differentiated as "vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the message of power (but of a different type) throughout society."¹⁸ Similarly, certain younger authors' arguments present power relations as unambiguous and absolute, particularly where the focus is on the condition of cultural policy: "It is 2015. Art is almost completely instrumentalized—regardless of whether its financing is private or public. Art services either national or European interests, where it is especially useful on the construction or reinforcement of specific identities." So art historian and curator Maria Lind begins her introductory statement to a 2005 publication that projects a future European cultural landscape for the year 2015.¹⁹ In much of her writing she applies this perspective to other parameters of the art system, for example she perceives the range of agency as increasingly narrow, or describes privatization as an unstoppable trajectory, while critical institutions disappear.²⁰ A similar lament is raised by her colleague Nina Möntmann concerning developments in the years following the Millennium: the oppositional attitudes of so called progressive institutions are undermined by funding cuts, the traditional art museum has been replaced by a "corporate institutional logic" that favors a mass public over committed audiences and in which the budget determines the program.²¹ And even the concept of 'instituent practices', so strongly argued for by Raunig and Nowotny, is based on an act of delimitation that in turn presumes the institution as a dominant power, the escape from which is the central criteria for all action.²² In general these analyses conceive of the institution as a stable, monolithic entity that—almost as if it were an independent agent²³—aims to preserve or even extend its inherent power. Accordingly, acts of institutional critique must aim for a fundamental destabilization of the respective structure as well as its enabling conditions. Most of these texts also share a critical cultural-political attitude, which attempts to redress the lack of research in this area with reference to current issues.

A dynamic equilibrium in and through institutions

Oliver Marchart's case study on the phenomenon of politicization in art, using the example of the documenta exhibitions dX, D11 and d12, partially builds on the above reflections, but posits a very different conception of the changing nature of institutional structures. Referring to Gramsci, Marchart describes institutions as dynamic constellations in which there is a constant struggle for predominance (hegemony) "between rival powers."²⁴ Warnke's concept of the institution as *Ausgleichserzeugnis*, the product of a struggle for equilibrium among different actors and social forces, also conceives of the institutional structure as flexible, subject to constant negotiation between the actors involved. Warnke's basic approach, which he describes in his analysis of the artist in the institution of the court as "a science of conditionalities that also makes use of the history of cultural institutions," starts from the premise that in contrast to traditional, commission-based patronage "institutions are mediating entities in which divergent needs, norms and strategies of action arrange themselves; the institution itself is already product of an equilibrium of interests of various subjects."²⁵ While Marchart argues for a "counter-

hegemonial" effect of the "tectonic shifts" he observes within documenta exhibitions, regarding the aspects of politicization, decentering of the west, the rise of art education and the prevalence of theory, a comparable understanding of the institution has emerged in various forms of institutional critique over the last few years.²⁶

Interest groups such as Comité van Roosendaal (which organized the conference *Institutional Attitudes* in 2010)²⁷ or Giant Step (an international project for research on contemporary art institutions)²⁸ center their activities on potential shifts within institutional structures and the conditions that enable such shifts. European Kunsthalle (since 2005) or the activities of Barbara Steiner at Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst in Leipzig (2001–2011) are attempts at using forms of critical appropriation to liberate the institution from its rigid traditional functions and provide it with new impulses. In England numerous organizations were founded in the past few decades whose declared goals include not only to support innovative and experimental artistic practices, but also a critical reflection of the roles and functions of institutional settings in the art world.²⁹ The term 'New Institutionalism', introduced to wider usage in the homonymous 2003 publication by its editor Jonas Ekeberg, captures efforts on a discursive level "to redefine the contemporary art institution."³⁰ While Marchart and Warnke use exemplary institutional constellations as sites to chart changes, their underlying conditions, the agents responsible for them and to a certain extent the resulting effects, the discourse arising particularly in the vicinity of New Institutionalism must also be understood as an appeal not to abandon existing institutions to their fate, respectively the forces of hegemony, but to comprehend and use them as sites of strategic importance.

What is the place of the art institution in contemporary society?

Both the above positions question the place of art institutions within contemporary social structures. And just as there are various different conceptualizations of what an institution is, there is a wide range of ideas about what social demands art institutions are required to meet and, more fundamentally, there is little agreement about what promise they retain. For years, cultural pessimist voices have been diagnosing an increasing adaptation of cultural institutions to the spreading logic of the market, which attacks and marginalizes traditional values and responsibilities. This argument casts the economy as a dominating ideology and consequently it is found mainly among those positions which, following Althusser, operate with the assumption of rigid, all-encompassing power structures. From this follows the thesis that the once central duties of any state subsidized cultural institution—collection, preservation and education— have been eroded under the pressure to increase third party funding and audience numbers, and that even independently organized structures are pressured by demands for efficiency and rentability.³¹ The latitude available to actors within these institutions has changed fundamentally in the course of these developments and in some cases— according to the resigned evaluation of individual protagonists—has been radically limited: " ... almost all players on the art field feel instrumentalized today," deplores Maria Lind, referring to the altered working conditions within institutional settings.³² Without completely rejecting these assessments, but employing a considerably more nuanced argument, authors Beatrice von Bismarck and Nina Möntmann also attempt to describe the current situation. Both insist on the ambivalence of the current state of affairs, in which the 'economization of creativity' has become an almost hegemonic topos, but is resisted by a resounding number of critical voices within artistic institutional critique and the work of progressive cultural institutions.³³ A pragmatic expression of this assessment may be found in the response of English curator Alex Farquharson, currently director of Nottingham Contemporary, to a question by his colleague Maria Lind about the causes of the crisis in the cul-

tural sector. Not only does Farquharson doubt the very existence of this crisis, in the course of the conversation he also repeatedly points to critical and innovative initiatives by progressive institutions whose goal is not so much to change society as a whole, but which have achieved improvements in the programming or working conditions of individual institutions and were able to create tangible alternatives.³⁴

The institution as promise?

These differing evaluations underscore the difficulty of determining the place, function and responsibilities of cultural institutions today. While the intensity of current debate confirms Mary Douglas' thesis that institutions are important social support structures, because they regulate both remembrance and forgetting,³⁵ the question of what significance society attaches to this fact has become the subject of axiomatic debates. The increasing flexibilization of institutional structures as expounded in Richard Sennett's analysis of global contexts in *The Culture of the New Capitalism* (2005) is considered a threat to the individual. In a similar vein, Paolo Virno concludes that in times of global deregulation and the increasing loss of stable relationships, institutions offer a continuity and reliability desperately needed by people and communities.³⁶ In emphasizing the positive, gainful aspects of institutions Virno is well aware of the long history of criticizing them as centers of power that generate exclusions. These considerations in turn are in critical dialogue with currently also widely and controversially debated aspects of political theory that use the concept of hegemony to think the possibilities of critical agency under neoliberal conditions, a question that is quintessential to progressive institutions. Just as the political effects of these institutions' activities are hotly debated, political theory struggles with the question of whether "neoliberalism is hegemonic" and what consequences this assumption has for the individual's scope of agency within social structures.³⁷ Theorists such as Alex Demirovic or Chantal Mouffe, following Gramsci and distancing themselves from Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, insist on the possibility and sometimes the desirability of a critical appropriation of hegemonial institutional structures.³⁸ As mentioned above, Oliver Marchart's analysis of three recent documenta exhibitions exemplarily demonstrates the flexibility of institutions within constellations of hegemony as postulated by Demirovic and Mouffe.

I would argue that these theoretical reflections underpin several positions within the art field that refuse to frame institutions as static or overpowering. In fact, their strengths are interpreted as a force field negotiated in a struggle with other social dynamics, thus ascribing to institutions some limited utopian potential. Farquharson cites the curator of a 'progressive' art institution, Charles Esche, who frames this institution as a "forum of possibilities," a "radically democratic space for free-form discussion on how things could be otherwise"—admittedly a very optimistic description, which may serve Esche as a vision for his curatorial work.³⁹ However, Simon Sheikh also closes his thoughts on the "tasks of progressive art institutions" with a call to conceive of the art institution as a "place of democracy and its everlasting antagonism" that forges a connection between art and society.⁴⁰ And although sociologist Pascal Gielen's statement that new institutions should represent a space for the imagination appears only as a wishful ideal, he does insist on the possible reality of such projections. However, he frames this skeptically in relation to recent social developments touched on in our discussion of Sennett and Virno, which Gielen describes in terms of the "non-engagement" of institutions, or rather their principal agents: curators for example only stay in any one place for a few years, and biennials have institutionalized this with their regular turn-over of curators. That this supports and enhances individual careers rather than underlying structures is a consequence the implications of which have rarely been analyzed so

far.⁴¹ Initiatives such as Comité van Roosendaal or more recently Giant Step can however be read as reactions against these developments.

To serve or to shape? Perspectives of institutional action

The conception of the institution as *Ausgleichserzeugnis* (Warnke), or as a site of necessary and actual struggle for hegemony (Marchart), requires actors who are able to effectively shape and influence, who are not subservient to or at the mercy of a structural entity. In order to find out how institutions and agents interact, we must undertake an internal close examination of these processes, something that has rarely been done with reference to concrete situations. On a theoretical level considerations of the relationship between individual and superstructure have been subject to intense scrutiny in connection with Foucault's concept of governmentality.⁴² However, these ideas have rarely been applied to art institutions, especially not as an analytical instrument to examine the actions of individuals within institutional structures.

Gerald Raunig for example explicitly refers to Foucault's ideas on governmentality in his conceptualization of 'instituent practices'. He enlists Foucault in support of his position since the 'movement of flight' from the dominance of institutionalization that he calls for is echoed in Foucault's demand of "not (wanting) to be governed that way."⁴³ Raunig's text produces a critical overview of institutional critique's repeated and varied incarnations in art practice since the 1970s. His concept of 'instituent practices', as a demand for critical agency across social and disciplinary boundaries, results in harsh judgments on many instances of institutional critique by artists. His exemplary criticism is of Andrea Fraser, based not so much on her work, but on a close reading of her texts, which reflect on her artistic interventions with reference to a wide body of theory. Raunig predictably attacks Fraser based on her fatalistic-sounding statement that there is precisely no fleeing from the institution: "It is because the institution is inside of us, and we can't get outside of ourselves."⁴⁴ The configuration of this argument reveals much about the problematic jostling of positions that determines this debate as a whole and points to a lack of reflection on the interactions and struggles between different actors in their respective institutional dispositions. And so we should acknowledge that artistic institutional critique from its very beginnings was aimed at destabilizing the institution, regardless of its subsequent inclusion in the canonical debates of art history and the resulting factual disempowerment of its critical intentions. And yet it is precisely the practices of institutional critique that turned art institutions into negotiable entities, and its diverse interventions often refused to conceptualize the institution as a powerful and static adversary, instead extracting from it transparency, flexibility or openness, depending on the specific goal of the intervention.⁴⁵ Ironically Andrea Fraser herself, in the very text cited by Raunig, points out that the establishment of institutional critique has become the foil before which all new critical activity must now prove itself. To negate the recognition achieved by institutional critique, continues Fraser, would signify a lack of responsibility toward the context that determines critical agency.⁴⁶

It thus seems urgent to concisely examine agents' engagement with and movement within institutional settings, while closely attending to artistic, curatorial and administrative practices within art institutions. The theoretical reflections discussed above already go some distance to offer important conceptual and analytical reference points. However, they also generalize to the extent that they cannot do justice to the productive emancipatory endeavors of individual actors. Institutions are not merely abstract formations that are either dominant or marginal, but remain rigid opponents to the agents within them. They are more like antago-

nistic force fields in which agency is balanced with other social fields. Some clues to what this might mean in practice are offered by the speakers at the above-mentioned conference *Institutional Attitudes*, which was concerned precisely with this question of agency in institutional contexts. Alex Farquharson, who we discussed above, proposes to make 'hospitality' a basic principle of collaboration, thus equalizing the power balance between organizers and guests. This approach, argues Farquharson, must be possible in various formats that do not conform to the demands of institutions but are instead focused on projects. Simon Sheikh's appeal for a reflective agency on the various levels involved in institutional action follows directly from this: not only should curating follow less canonized rules and the central role of art education be properly acknowledged, he also demands a less hermetic expert language and an architecture that is adaptable to purpose instead of primarily staging itself.⁴⁷ These proposals target levels of agency for which Marchart's analysis introduces the term 'molecular politics': "... hegemony, as Gramsci says, is a molecular process, consisting of successive combinations of ideological molecules into larger formations." Shifts in hegemonial structures are a protracted process; in painstakingly small steps, Marchart suggests, the ground is prepared until there comes a point where art institutions can turn from "hegemony- into counter-hegemony machines."⁴⁸ Future research would do well to acknowledge this approach and work on the level of molecular politics, tracing and evaluating its impact. For a good deal of critical practice operates and conceives of itself within this framework and should be interpreted accordingly.

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Notes

1 I am working here with a broad concept of the institution that contains not only fixed and sanctioned structures, but also the multiple organized attempts to enable innovative artistic activities. See the chapter 'What is/makes an institution?'

2 These ambivalent constellations are the basis of American art historian Martha Buskirk's most recent publication *Creative Enterprise. Contemporary Art between Museum and Marketplace*, Continuum, New York, 2012. In contrast to numerous other texts that—usually by reference to specific situations—attempt to level the complexity of institutions for the sake of clarity and unambiguous evaluation, Buskirk is more concerned with revealing the mechanisms of the contemporary art system. See esp. her introduction, pp. 1-23.

3 Chin-Tao Wu, *Privatizing Culture. Corporate Art Intervention since the 1980s*, Verso, London, 2002. One aspect of these paradox or hybrid constellations is that when subject to critique, the criticism follows the very same logic and an ambivalent position is inescapably inherent to it. Artist Andrea Fraser describes this in a text that questions the assimilation of artistic institutional critique by the institutions themselves. Andrea Fraser, "From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique," in John C. Welchman ed. *Institutional Critique and After*, JRP Ringier, Zurich, 2006, pp. 123 - 135. Originally published in *Artforum*, September 2005.

4 See for example Gerald Raunig and Ulf Wuggenig eds., *Kritik der Kreativität*, Turia + Kant, Vienna, 2007.

5 This statement should be read as a generalization, intended to summarize an overall tendency. For a more detailed account, we must differentiate between European states, which would unearth considerable differences in terms of the self-reflexivity of instruments of subsidy for art and culture. For example, the research project on public arts policy and funding initiated by the British Arts Council, now ongoing for several decades, is to my knowledge unique in Europe. For more information see <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/research-and-data/>. Accessed 24.10.2013.

6 It seems less meaningful to research or discuss definitions. Except for lexical articles none of the texts analyzed here explicitly attempt to define the institution or to approach their subject by way of a universally valid definition.

7 The phrase 'progressive institutions of art' is used by Nina Möntmann in her writing on art institutions as well as art historian and theorist Simon Sheikh in his essay "Public Spheres and the Functions

of Progressive Art Institutions", published online at <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0504/sheikh/en>.

Accessed 30.10.2013. The quotation marks he places around the term 'progressive' (not retained in the title of the English version) testify to his own skepticism about this project, which is nonetheless considered desirable and worth working towards. 'Radical Institutions' is the term preferred by English curator Alex Farquharson, in the context of a talk on the occasion of the conference *Institutional Attitudes* that took place in Brussels in April 2010 and which attracted speakers from very different fields related to the study or practice of culture. Video recordings of all presentations and round table discussions are available online via the website of Comité van Roosendaal or directly on vimeo.com. See www.comitevanroosendaal.eu. Accessed 30.10.2013.

8 Barbara Steiner and Charles Esche eds., *Mögliche Museen*, Jahrbuch für moderne Kunst, Jahresring 54, Walther König, Cologne, 2007. Among the institutions presented in this book are the Dia Art Foundation in New York, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven as well as MACBA in Barcelona and Moderna Galerija in Ljubljana.

9 Further information on the European Kunsthalle is available on their website <http://www.eukunsthalle.com/>. Accessed 24.10.2013. There are also links to various resources such as events and publications concerned with questions of institutional practice.

10 Natasha Ilic at the round table "Beyond Criticality," part of the conference *Institutional Attitudes*, see note 7.

11 For the basic concept of 'instituent practices' see the first three chapters of Gerald Raunig and Stefan Nowotny, *Instituierende Praxen: Fliehen, Instituieren, Transformieren*, Turia + Kant, Vienna, 2008, pp. 11 - 49. In English see Gerald Raunig "Instituent Practices: Fleeing, Instituting, Transforming" and Stefan Nowotny "Anti-Canonization: The Differential Knowledge of Institutional Critique", both in Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray eds., *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique*, MayFlyBooks/eipcp, London, 2009, pp. 3-12 and pp. 21-28 respectively.

12 An excellent and reflexive introduction to the themes and questions of institutional critique is the reader *Institutional Critique and After*, ed. by John C. Welchman (see note 3). In his introduction, Welchman emphasizes that the discussions surrounding institutional critique often happen at a surprising remove from the developments in the institutional landscape. Christian Kravagna has assembled a

collection of "writing on institutional critique by artists," see Christian Kravagna, *Das Museum als Arena*, Walther König, Cologne, 2001.

13 Entry on the institution in Karl-Heinz Hillmann ed., *Wörterbuch der Soziologie*, Alfred Kröner Verlag, Stuttgart, 1994, p. 375. Translators note: own translation. For a comparable definition in English see John Scott and Gordon Marshall eds., *A Dictionary of Sociology* (3rd rev. ed.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012, p. 360.

14 Studies of institutional history examine individual museums, their emergence and development, while more recent publications tend to refer to examples only cursorily and there is little sound work on single institutions. Oliver Marchart's study of the shifts in hegemonial discourse of the last three documenta exhibitions represents an exception. See Oliver Marchart, *Hegemonie im Kunstfeld. Die documenta-Ausstellungen dX, D11, d12 und die Politik der Biennialisierung*, Walter König, Cologne, 2008. For essays by the author covering some of the same issues in English see Oliver Marchart, "Hegemonic shifts and the politics of biennialization," in Marieke van Hal, Solveig Ovstebo and Elena Filipovic eds., *The Biennial Reader*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern/Berlin, 2010; Oliver Marchart, "Curating Theory (Away): The case of the last three documenta shows," *oncurating.org* No. 8, 2011.

15 Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' (1970), in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. by Ben Brewster (1971), new edition with an introduction by Frederic Jameson, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2001.

16 Martin Warnke, *Hofkünstler. Zur Vorgeschichte des modernen Künstlers*, DuMont, Cologne, 1996 (1985), p. 12. Published in English as *The Court Artist. On the Ancestry of the Modern Artist*, trans. David McLintock, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993. Translator's note: in the following all translations from this source are my own. The term *Ausgleichserzeugnis* remains untranslated to retain it as a single concept. Its literal rendering would be something akin to 'product of a balance of interests'.

17 It is surprising that Althusser, while he does refer to Gramsci's analysis of the state and its apparatuses in a footnote, discards the latter's thinking as fragmentary and incomplete. This is surprising particularly because Gramsci's writing later constituted the basis of a theory of hegemony that did not cast the state as a monolithic opponent but as a territory defined by continuous struggle. Gramsci's concept of hegemony is the explicit reference for Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's seminal publication of contemporary political theory, *Hegemony and*

Socialist Strategy: Towards Radical Democratic Politics, Verso, London, 2001 (1985).

18 Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne, Routledge eds., London/New York, 1996, p. 82 (essay first published in 1988).

19 Maria Lind and Raimund Minichbauer eds., *European Cultural Policies 2015. A Pertto with Scenarios on the Future of Public Funding for Contemporary Art in Europe*, eicpc/IASPIS, London /Stockholm /Vienna, 2005, p.4.

20 See Maria Lind and Alex Farquharson, "Integrative Institutionalism: a Reconsideration", in Tone Hansen and Trude Iversen eds., *The New Administration of Aesthetics*, Torpedo Press, Oslo, 2007.

21 Nina Möntmann "Art and its Institutions," in Nina Möntmann ed., *Art and its Institutions. Current Conflicts, Critique and Collaborations*, BlackDog, London, 2005, p. 10.

22 Raunig and Nowotny, 2008, see note 11.

23 Oliver Marchart's analysis of documenta does work on the assumption of an independent life of institutions, but cautions to not set this up as absolute or defining (see Marchart 2008, as in note 14). By using the concept of the 'actor' I am referring to Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, which seems particularly useful in this context, since his insistence on the agency of non-human actors enables us to think of institutions as entities that may be and even should be accorded the potential for agency. See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: an introduction to actor-network theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford / New York, 2005.

24 Marchart, 2008, p. 10, see note 14.

25 Warnke, *Hofkünstler*, p. 12, see note 16. Warnke's analysis is concerned primarily with the reconstruction of historical conditions, and as such his texts do not demonstrate the political texture that is particular to more recent studies, although he does have an interest in the politics of knowledge.

26 Marchart, 2008, p. 10, see note 14.

27 See note 7.

28 For detailed and up to date information see <http://www.giant-step.org/giant-step-project/>. Accessed 30.10.2013.

29 I am engaging with these issues in the context of an ongoing research project (until 2014) entitled *Organizing Innovation: Artistic Practice and Cultural Policy in Postwar Britain*, for further information see <http://www.ifcar.ch/?id=96&lang=e>. Accessed 24.10.2013.

30 Jonas Ekeberg ed., *New Institutionalism*, Office for Contemporary Art Norway, Oslo, 2003, p. 9.

31 This “image- and structural shift” according to Christian Kravagna follows decades of critical reflection on behalf of cultural institutions, which were initiated mainly by artists in the early 20th century and that continued in various forms and contexts; see Kravagna 2001, p. 7, as in note 12.

32 Maria Lind and Alex Farquharson, “Integrative Institutionalism: a Reconsideration,” in Tone Hansen and Trude Iversen eds., *The New Administration of Aesthetics*, Torpedo Press, Oslo, 2007. See also note 19.

33 Möntmann 2006, p. 8-16, see note 21. Beatrice von Bismarck, “In Stellung bringen,” in *Kritik der Kreativität*, Gerald Raunig and Uld Wuggenig eds., Turia + Kant, Vienna, 2007, p. 237-243.

34 Maria Lind in conversation with Alex Farquharson, see note 20.

35 Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, 1986. Douglas employs a very wide definition of the institution and in her examples she also refers to societal conventions that conceive of themselves as institutions. Her thoughts are nonetheless useful for the present context, as many of the basic claims of informally organized institutions are also found in fixed structures.

36 Alexei Penzin’s interview with Paolo Virno is available at: <http://www.mediationsjournal.org/articles/the-soviets-of-the-multitude>. Accessed 11.08.2011.

37 Alex Demirovic, “Is neoliberalism hegemonial?,” in *Widerspruch* No. 62, 2013, pp. 127-138.

38 In conversation with Markus Miessen Chantal Mouffe repeatedly and decidedly distances herself from Hardt and Negri’s “anti-institutional view”: “They think that we could reach a perfect democracy in which there will no longer be any relation of power, there will be no more conflict, and no more antagonism. It goes completely against the point that I want to defend and which is at the basis of most of my work, which is precisely the fact that antagonism is ineradicable. It can be tamed, this is what agonism tried to do, but we will never arrive at the point where it has definitely been overcome.” Chantal Mouffe in conversation with Markus Miessen, <http://roundtable.kein.org/node/545>. Accessed 28.10.2013.

39 Esche cited in Lind and Farquharson, 2007, see note 20.

40 Simon Sheikh, “Public Spheres and the Functions of Progressive Art Institutions,” published online at <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0504/sheikh/en>. Accessed 28.10.2013.

41 Pascal Gielen in his contribution to the conference *Institutional Attitudes*, see note 7.

42 Foucault’s concept of governmentality goes back to the late 1970s and was mainly elaborated in the context of a series of lectures at the Collège de France. They remained fragmentary, however. Nevertheless since the turn of the Millennium so called ‘governmental studies,’ which develop Foucault’s ideas theoretically and empirically, have become increasingly prominent.

43 Foucault paraphrased by Gerald Raunig, in Raunig and Nowotny, 2008, p. 22, see note 11.

44 Fraser cited by Gerald Raunig, in Raunig and Nowotny, 2008, p. 24, see note 11.

45 In his overview text Johannes Meinhardt ascribes an unambiguously political self-conception to the activities of institutional critique. See Johannes Meinhardt, “Institutionskritik,” in *DuMonts Begrifflexikon zur zeitgenössischen Kunst*, Hubertus Butin ed., DuMont, Cologne, 2006, p. 126-130.

46 Fraser, 2006, see note 3.

47 Alex Farquharson and Simon Sheikh in their respective presentations at the conference *Institutional Attitudes*, see note 7. Alex Farquharson’s contribution is reprinted in an edited version in this issue.

48 Marchart, 2008, p. 24/25, see note 14.