

# Museums After Modernism

Strategies of Engagement

Edited by  
Griselda Pollock and Joyce Zemans





## Museums After Modernism

---

## New Interventions in Art History

*Series editor: Dana Arnold, University of Southampton*

*New Interventions in Art History* is a series of textbook mini-companions – published in connection with the Association of Art Historians – that aims to provide innovative approaches to, and new perspectives on, the study of art history. Each volume focuses on a specific area of the discipline of art history – here used in the broadest sense to include painting, sculpture, architecture, graphic arts, and film – and aims to identify the key factors that have shaped the artistic phenomenon under scrutiny. Particular attention is paid to the social and political context and the historiography of the artistic cultures or movements under review. In this way, the essays that comprise each volume cohere around the central theme while providing insights into the broader problematics of a given historical moment.

### Art and Thought

edited by *Dana Arnold and Margaret Iversen* (published)

### Art and its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium

edited by *Andrew McClellan* (published)

### Architectures: Modernism and After

edited by *Andrew Ballantyne* (published)

### After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance

edited by *Gavin Butt* (published)

### Envisioning the Past: Archaeology and the Image

edited by *Sam Smiles and Stephanie Moser* (published)

### Edges of Empire: Orientalism and Visual Culture

edited by *Jocelyn Hackforth-Jones and Mary Roberts* (published)

### Psychoanalysis and the Image

edited by *Griselda Pollock* (published)

### Museums After Modernism: Strategies of Engagement

edited by *Griselda Pollock and Joyce Zemans* (published)

### Material Identities

edited by *Joanna Sofaer* (published)

### Art's Agency and Art History

edited by *Robin Osborne and Jeremy Tanner* (published)

### Exhibition Experiments

edited by *Sharon Macdonald and Paul Basu* (published)

### Pop Culture and Post-war American Taste

edited by *Patricia Morton* (forthcoming)

# Museums After Modernism

Strategies of Engagement

Edited by  
Griselda Pollock and Joyce Zemans



© 2007 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd  
except for editorial material and organization © 2007 by Griselda Pollock and Joyce Zemans

BLACKWELL PUBLISHING  
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA  
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK  
550 Swanston Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia

The right of Griselda Pollock and Joyce Zemans to be identified as the Authors of the Editorial Material in this Work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs, and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs, and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

First published 2007 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd

1 2007

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Museums after modernism : strategies of engagement / edited by Griselda Pollock and Joyce Zemans.  
p.cm. – (New interventions in art history)  
Includes bibliographical references and index.  
ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-3627-3 (hardcover : alk. paper)  
ISBN-10: 1-4051-3627-8 (hardcover : alk. paper)  
ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-3628-0 (pbk. : alk. paper)  
ISBN-10: 1-4051-3628-6 (pbk. : alk. paper) 1. Art museums—Philosophy. I. Pollock, Griselda. II. Zemans, Joyce, 1940– III. Series.

N430.M795 2006  
708.001—dc22

2006016597

A catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

Set in 10.5/13pt Minion  
by SPi Publisher Services, Pondicherry, India  
Printed and bound in Singapore  
by COS Printers Pte Ltd

The publisher's policy is to use permanent paper from mills that operate a sustainable forestry policy, and which has been manufactured from pulp processed using acid-free and elementary chlorine-free practices. Furthermore, the publisher ensures that the text paper and cover board used have met acceptable environmental accreditation standards.

For further information on  
Blackwell Publishing, visit our website:  
[www.blackwellpublishing.com](http://www.blackwellpublishing.com)

*For Moshe, Elan, Galit, and Talia*

*Dedicated to the memory of Judith Mastai,  
July 10, 1945 – February 17, 2001*





# Contents

List of Figures	ix
Notes on Contributors	xii
Series Editor's Preface	xvii
Preface	xix
1 Un-Framing the Modern: Critical Space/Public Possibility <i>Griselda Pollock</i>	1
2 Women's Rembrandt <i>Mieke Bal</i>	40
3 Museums and the Native Voice <i>Gerald McMaster</i>	70
4 Exhibiting Africa after Modernism: Globalization, Pluralism, and the Persistent Paradigms of Art and Artifact <i>Ruth B. Phillips</i>	80
5 <i>Mirroring Evil</i> , Evil Mirrored: Timing, Trauma, and Temporary Exhibitions <i>Reesa Greenberg</i>	104
6 A Place for Uncertainty: Towards a New Kind of Museum <i>Vera Frenkel</i>	119
7 <i>The Ballad of Kastriot Rexhepi</i> : Notes on Gesture, Medium, and Mediation <i>Mary Kelly</i>	131
8 Riksutställningar: Swedish Traveling Exhibitions <i>Ulla Arnell</i>	141

9	Reframing Participation in the Museum: A Syncopated Discussion <i>Janna Graham and Shadya Yasin</i>	157
10	“There Is No Such Thing as a Visitor” <i>Judith Mastai</i>	173
11	“Anxious Dust”: History and Repression in the Archives of Mary Kelly <i>Judith Mastai</i>	178
12	On Discourse as Monument: Institutional Spaces and Feminist Problematics <i>Juli Carson</i>	190
	Bibliography	225
	Index	235

# List of Figures

1.1	Frank Gehry, Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis, 1993.	8
1.2	Leaflet produced by Thames and Hudson.	12
1.3	André Malraux with illustrations for <i>Le Musée imaginaire</i> , 1950.	14
2.1	Rembrandt van Rijn, <i>Adam and Eve</i> , 1638.	40
2.2	Rembrandt van Rijn, <i>A Portrait of a Young Woman</i> , 1632.	40
2.3	Rembrandt van Rijn, <i>Bellona</i> , 1633.	43
2.4	Rembrandt van Rijn, <i>Lucretia</i> , 1666.	44
2.5	Rembrandt van Rijn, <i>Self-Portrait</i> , 1629.	46
2.6	Rembrandt van Rijn, <i>Bathsheba with King David's Letter</i> , 1654.	51
2.7	Rembrandt van Rijn, <i>Lucretia</i> , 1664.	54
2.8	Rembrandt van Rijn, <i>Susanna Surprised by the Elders</i> , <i>ca.</i> 1645.	56
2.9	Rembrandt van Rijn, <i>Susanna Surprised by the Elders</i> , <i>ca.</i> 1636.	57
2.10	Rembrandt van Rijn, <i>The Blinding of Samson</i> , 1636.	60
2.11	Rembrandt van Rijn, <i>Danae</i> , 1636.	61
3.1	James Luna, <i>Artifact Piece</i> , 1987.	71

4.1	African Galleries, Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, Metropolitan Museum of Art.	84
4.2	Mende Sande Society mask.	86
4.3	Installation of Benin brass plaques, Sainsbury African Galleries, British Museum.	89
4.4	Installation of masks with Mende Sande Society mask.	90
4.5	Mende Sande Society mask installation with commentary by Mrs Beatrice Wusi.	93
4.6	Benin installation, <i>African Voices</i> exhibition, US Museum of Natural History.	95
4.7	Mende Sande Society mask, <i>African Voices</i> exhibition, US Museum of Natural History.	96
5.1	Installation view: <i>Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art</i> , Jewish Museum, New York.	105
5.2	Installation view: <i>Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art</i> , Jewish Museum, New York.	114
6.1	Vera Frenkel... <i>from the Transit Bar</i> , installation, Toronto.	121
6.2	Vera Frenkel, “The Apparatus of Marking Absence,” photo-mural for Station 4 of <i>Body Missing</i> , six-station video-photo-web installation, Goethe-Institut, Toronto, 2000.	122
7.1	Mary Kelly, <i>The Ballad of Kastriot Rexhepi</i> (detail Stanza III), 2001.	134
7.2	Untitled photograph from the <i>Los Angeles Times</i> , July 31, 1999 with notes by Mary Kelly.	135
7.3	Mary Kelly, <i>The Ballad of Kastriot Rexhepi</i> , 2001.	138
7.4	Study for <i>The Ballad</i> , artist’s archive.	138
7.5	Mary Kelly, <i>The Ballad of Kastriot Rexhepi</i> , 2001. Opening performance with soprano Sarah Leonard and the Nyman Quartet.	139
8.1	<i>A Century of Sweden’s Museum of National Antiquities</i> .	143

8.2	<i>Beautiful Moments.</i>	144
8.3	<i>...from the Transit Bar.</i>	147
8.4	The exhibition train.	149
8.5	<i>Track down the City.</i> Train interior.	150
8.6	<i>Difficult Matters.</i> Exhibition trailer.	152
8.7	<i>Difficult Matters.</i> Trailer interior.	153
8.8	Summit meeting, Gävle, April 2003.	154
8.9	The expandable trailer. Model.	155
8.10	Interior and plan. Expandable trailer.	155
9.1	From <i>Decked</i> , a ballet on skateboards at the Art Gallery of Ontario and Oakville Place suburban mall, 2000.	164
9.2	From HYPE, an advocacy project celebrating urban youth culture during Toronto's crackdown on graffiti, 2000.	165
9.3	From <i>Private Thoughts/Public Moments</i> : image of <i>Tagore and Mrs E</i> , fictionalized diaries of Mrs E, the subject of a painting by Group of Seven member Fred H. Varley, inserted by Rachel Kalpana James into sketch drawers in the AGO's Canadian Wing.	168
9.4	On the set of <i>Audge's Place</i> , Debajehmujig work with AGO visitors and members of the local Aboriginal community to develop improvised performances over corn soup, 2003.	169
9.5	Artists and youth in the Tauqsijjuit residency interact with AGO visitors in the <i>Ilitarivingaa?</i> Inuit exhibition, and generate media projects for broadcast, 2004.	170
12.1	Faith Wilding, <i>Womb Room</i> , 1972 (recreated 1995).	191
12.2	Advertisement by Paula Cooper Gallery in <i>Artforum</i> 13 (November 1974).	197
12.3	Mierle Laderman Ukeles, <i>Hartford Wash: Washing, Tracks, Maintenance: Outside</i> , 1973.	207

# Notes on Contributors

**Ulla Arnell** is Curator and Project Manager at Riksutställningar (Swedish Traveling Exhibitions), with a focus on contemporary art and art education. She has a BA from Uppsala University in sociology, art history, art theory, Nordic, and comparative ethnology. She contributes to Swedish art education journals and is a member of InSEA (International Society for Education Through Art) and organizer of international art education congresses.

**Mieke Bal** is Dutch Royal Academy of Sciences Research Professor, and Professor of Theory of Literature and founding director of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis, Theory, and Interpretation (ASCA) at the University of Amsterdam. Her most recent publications include *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities* (2002) and *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (1999). Among her many other books are *Narratology: An Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (2nd rev. edn., 1997), *The Mottled Screen: Reading Proust Visually* (1997), *Double Exposures: The Subject of Cultural Analysis* (1996), and *Reading "Rembrandt": Beyond the Word-Image Opposition* (1991). She also edited a programmatic volume, *The Practice of Cultural Analysis: Exposing Interdisciplinary Interpretation* (1999), which gives a good idea of the nature and practice of cultural analysis. The breadth of Bal's research contributions can be seen in *Looking In: The Art of Viewing*, essay and afterword by Mieke Bal, with a commentary by Norman Bryson (2000). Her areas of interest include literary theory, semiotics, visual art, cultural studies, postcolonial theory, feminist theory, French, the Hebrew Bible, the seventeenth century, and contemporary culture.

**Juli Carson** is Assistant Professor of Art History and Curatorial Studies in the Department of Studio Art at the University of California, Irvine, and

director of UCI's University Art Gallery. Her numerous publications include contributions to edited volumes and exhibition catalogues, and she is completing a book manuscript on recent neo-conceptual art practice titled *The Moebius Effect: The Conceptual Unconscious in Contemporary Art*. Carson is also the founding editor of Vel Press, which publishes books on theory, art, and culture.

The work of multidisciplinary artist **Vera Frenkel** addresses the forces at work in human migration, the learning and unlearning of cultural memory, the messianic fantasies of commodity cultures, and the increasing bureaucratization of experience. Her installations and new media projects have been shown at the Biennale di Venezia, *documenta* IX, MoMA, the National Gallery of Canada, the OK Centrum für Gegenwartskunst, Linz, the Georg Kargl Gallery, Vienna, the Setagaya Museum, Tokyo and the Freud Museum, London, and her writings have appeared in publications such as *Art Monthly*, *Canadian Art*, *FUSE Magazine*, *Intermédiair*, *Public*, and *n.paradoxa*. Frenkel's current project on the inner life of a dysfunctional cultural organization, *The Institute?: Or What We Do for Love* (<[www.the-national-institute.org/tour](http://www.the-national-institute.org/tour)>), received the 2004 Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art "Untitled" Art Award. A four-disc DVD/CD-ROM collection of the artist's videotapes, media works, and writings, *Of Memory and Displacement*, was released by Vtape Distribution in 2005. Frenkel is recipient of a number of the most significant prizes awarded to a living artist in Canada, most recently the 2006 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts.

**Janna Graham** has developed collaborative and participatory programming with artists, activists, and community organizers at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto since 1999. She has a BA in Geography and an MA in Cultural Studies from Leeds University. She has contributed to the *Journal of Visual Culture*, *FUSE Magazine*, and *The Journal of Cultural Studies*, and has worked on independent artistic, curatorial, and education projects with Artcirq (Igloolik), 16 Beaver (New York), Mercer Union, Art Metropole, and Alphabet City (Toronto), Walter Phillips Gallery (Banff), Theory in Practice II (Croatia), Project Art Centre (Dublin), Whitechapel Art Gallery (London), Vanabbe Museum (Eindhoven), and Centre CATH (Leeds). She is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Visual Cultures at the University of London.

**Reesa Greenberg** (<[www.reesagreenberg.net](http://www.reesagreenberg.net)>) is an independent scholar and museum consultant whose research focuses on contemporary

exhibition practices and display, in situ and online. Her publications include *The Exhibition as Discursive Event* (1995), *The Rhetoric of Arrangement: Seeing is Believing* (1996), *Thinking About Exhibitions* (co-edited with Bruce Ferguson and Sandy Nairne, 1996), and *Redressing Exhibitions: Partners and the Friedrich Christian Flick Collection* (2005). She is currently preparing two book manuscripts, *Blind Spots: Museums, Collectors, Display and the Holocaust* and *National Narratives and a New Canadian War Museum*.

**Mary Kelly** is Professor of Art and Critical Theory at the University of California, Los Angeles. Recent exhibitions include those at the Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Arte, Mexico City, Generali Foundation, Vienna, and the 2004 Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. She is the author of *Post-Partum Document* (1983, reprinted in English and German, 1998) and *Imaging Desire* (1996). *Mary Kelly*, a monograph on her work, was published in 1997.

**Judith Mastai** began her career as an actor, before moving into research into public education. Her doctoral research on adult education focused on community development. For many years she worked with government agencies in developing programs for public education around issues of alcohol, sexual abuse, and racism. From 1987 to 1994, she served as Head of Public Programs at the Vancouver Art Gallery, where she initiated a range of new initiatives to make “education” integral to programming and planning. Working with a range of conceptual artists, she became a critic and independent curator, organizing exhibitions and conferences, including the third Feminist Arts and Histories Network conference at the University of Reading, before becoming Director of Education at the Art Gallery of Ontario (1997–2000). She was co-founder and editor of the critical art magazine *Collapse: The View From Here*, published by the Vancouver Art Forum Society. At her untimely death, she was the Executive Director of the Canadian Craft Museum in Vancouver and was preparing her major study on the theme which gives this book its title. She had lectured extensively on her range of interests in contemporary artists and the challenge of rethinking the museum.

**Gerald McMaster** is Curator of Canadian Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario. He holds a PhD from the University of Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis. From 1977 to 1981, he was both instructor and Head of the Indian Art Program at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College

(SIFC). Since 1981 he has been Curator of Contemporary Indian Art for the Canadian Museum of Civilization, and until 2000 he was Curator-in-Charge of the Canadian Museum of Civilization's First Peoples Hall, where he produced many leading-edge exhibitions such as *In the Shadow of the Sun* (1989), *Indigena: Indigenous Perspectives on 500 Years* (1992), *Edward Poitras: The Venice Biennale Project* (1996), and, *Reservation X* (1998). He was Deputy Assistant Director for Cultural Resources for the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), where he oversaw the curatorial, repatriation, and archival departments. For NMAI he curated *First American Art* (2004) and *New Tribe New York* (2005–6). His awards and recognitions include the 2001 ICOM Canada Prize for contributions to national and international museology and he was selected to be Canadian Commissioner to the XLVI 1995 Biennale di Venezia.

**Ruth B. Phillips** is Canada Research Chair in Modern Culture and Professor of Art History at Carleton University. Her doctoral research in African art was published in her 1995 book *Representing Woman: Sande Masquerades of the Mende of Sierra Leone* (1995). Her current research interests in Native North American art and cultural exchange have led to several other books, including *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700–1900* (1998), *Native North American Art* for the *Oxford History of Art* (1998, with Janet Catherine Berlo), and *Unpacking Culture: Arts and Goods in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (co-edited with Christopher B. Steiner). From 1997 to 2003 she served as director of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. Her curatorial projects include *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples* (1988), *Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Art* (1999), and, most recently, the indigenous component of the Portrait Gallery of Canada.

**Griselda Pollock** is Professor of Social and Critical Histories of Art and Director of the Centre for Cultural Analysis, Theory, and History at the University of Leeds. She works in/on social history of art, cultural studies, feminist studies in the visual arts, and modern Jewish studies. A series of strategic interventions into art history and cultural theory, starting from *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (with Roszika Parker, 1981), through *Vision and Difference* (1988, reissued 2004), to *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Perspectives* (1996) and *Differentiating the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories* (1999)

have systematically challenged dominant phallocentric and Eurocentric models of art and cultural history while actively providing new methods for international and postcolonial feminist studies in the theory, practice, and analysis of the visual arts that breach the divisions between theory, practice, and history. She is currently working on trauma and cultural memory in a trilogy of books including a study of Charlotte Salomon, *Theatre of Memory* (Yale, 2007), and postmodern engagements with psychoanalysis and aesthetics in a book titled *Towards the Virtual Feminist Museum* (Routledge, 2007). Further information is on the website <[www.leeds.ac.uk/cath/pollock](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/cath/pollock)>.

**Shadya Yasin** was one of the first members of the Art Gallery of Ontario's (Toronto) *Teens Behind the Scenes Program* in 1999. Since then, she has been involved as a youth mentor and a facilitator of partnerships between the AGO and a variety of community programs in Toronto. She coordinates youth and Somali culture programming in Toronto public housing facilities and libraries, is a spoken word artist and a student of African studies, international development, and community arts at York University in Toronto.

**Joyce Zemans**, CM, art historian, curator, and arts administrator, is Director of the MBA Program in Arts and Media Administration in York University's Schulich School of Business (Toronto). She holds the position of University Professor, and served as Director of the Canada Council for the Arts (1988–92). She was Dean of York's Faculty of Fine Arts (1985–8) and Chair of the Department of Visual Arts (1975–81). From 1966 to 1975, she taught at the Ontario College of Art, where she directed the Liberal Art Studies Program. Her research and teaching focus on both art history and cultural policy, with specific reference to the Canadian experience. She has curated exhibitions of and written about twentieth-century Canadian art. Her research has also focused on the work of Canadian women artists. She is the editor of the third volume of the *Ontario Association of Art Galleries Handbook* (2001). In cultural policy, her publications include *Where is Here? Canadian Cultural Policy in a Globalized Environment* (1996) and *Comparing Cultural Policy: A Study of Japan and the United States* (1999). Zemans has received honorary degrees from the University of Waterloo and the Nova Scotia College of Art. She is an Honorary Fellow of the Ontario College of Art and Design and a member of the Order of Canada.

# Series Editor's Preface

*New Interventions in Art History* was established to provide a forum for innovative approaches to, and perspectives on, the study of art history in all its complexities. *Museums After Modernism* brings together essays from some of the most renowned commentators in the field to offer a unique mix of academic, practitioner, and curators' statements that expands the field of critical museum studies.

This volume brings fresh insight to the social and cultural contexts of the museum and offers an in-depth analysis of the new possibilities offered by the interaction of museological theory and practice. Indeed, it advances our understanding of the relationship between critical museological methods and processes, theories of public engagement, and contemporary artistic practice. But *Museums After Modernism* does so in a provocative and illuminating way, grounding itself in the influential work of Judith Mastai, and exploring the fate of art and art institutions after modernism.

The book is not, however, a Festschrift, nor is it a homage. Instead, it comprises discussions ranging from art-making to curation, exhibition and display to access, to histories, public reception, and pedagogy. Together, these issues combine to produce a radically new and productive rethinking of the museum and its function.

*Museums After Modernism* is, then, a lively collection that responds to an increasing interest in critical museum studies by offering new possibilities for the historical, conceptual, and analytical frameworks for study. This book is a welcome addition to the titles in *New Interventions* through its innovative and inventive analysis of a familiar topic. At the same time, it complements the volumes in the series that address the museum and

notions of display, modernity, and criticism, and makes an essential contribution to the understanding of the museum as site of critical potentiality for new ways of seeing, thinking, and doing.

*Dana Arnold*  
London, 2006

# Preface

While I once described my working environment at the Vancouver Art Gallery as a laboratory, I now describe it as a performance in the sense that, every day, in many ways, my colleagues and I are engaged in performing a continually emerging institutional subjectivity. Change is not an interlude, but a condition of our work.

Judith Mastai, “Performing the Museum: Education, Negotiation, Art Galleries and their Publics” (unfinished manuscript)

This book came out of a collaboration between York University in Toronto, the Ontario Association of Art Galleries, and the AHRC Centre for Cultural Analysis, Theory and History at the University of Leeds. A small advisory group of Vera Frenkel, Johanne Lamoureux, Griselda Pollock, John O’Brien, and Joyce Zemans created the first stage: an international symposium in Toronto in 2002. This research laboratory brought together artists, curators, art historians, and cultural analysts to consider a theoretical and practical agenda that had been posed by the work and thought of Judith Mastai, whose untimely death in 2001 many of us not only personally mourned but intellectually and culturally lamented. A major book upon which she had been working through her complex practice of “performing a new institutional subjectivity” and reflecting upon the strategies for engagement remained drafted but incomplete. It was she who, borrowing the phrase “Museums After Modernism” from Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, insistently took up the challenge of questioning the complex and expanded forms of museum practices and museum encounters, while also forging in concrete programs new methodologies at both organizational and performative levels that worked in the firm belief that art is a deeply important form of thought and provocation to thought.<sup>1</sup>

The symposium had its own extended cast and still has a virtual existence with a full audio record that is available on the website: <[www.yorku.ca/mam/](http://www.yorku.ca/mam/)>.<sup>2</sup> An audio webcast enables scholars and artists to access the full record of lectures, discussions, and panels whose significance lay specifically in the concept of transdisciplinary encounters between members of the complex art world who are often professionally divided from each other by role, function, and position. The program for the symposium reflected a series of points of intervention and strategies of engagement with the museum in its challenged and expanded present.

The second stage of the collaboration was to commission and collect a series of essays whose range of voices, interests, and practices would similarly perform an intervention in that space between art history and cultural studies now called Museum Studies, without conforming to the new genre. In this book, there are discussions about art-making, curation, exhibition, display, special projects, access, publics, communities, histories, controversies, public reception, and pedagogy. There are readings of exhibitions and explorations of exhibitions as readings of contemporary culture. What marks the core project for the book is our growing appreciation of the radical, productive, and challenging “teaching” of someone deeply involved in thinking about the museum, its time, its place, and its function now.

While much of Museum Studies in recent years has been propelled by Foucauldian analyses of the institution as discursive formation, of the museum as site of narratives and ideologies, and of debates about museums and their publics, few collections address the core idea of the museum as a place for discursive thinking. It is not a question of “the museum and its public,” but in what sense the museum can be(come) a public place, publicly responsible for stimulating and housing critical thinking in and through art. In the age of increasing privatization, what is the scope for a public or civic institution to provoke and host public debate about issues of major relevance that are being attended to through the prism of art-thought, and art-practice, of cultural intervention? Does the museum that in the modernist era became either repository, educator, or entertainment venue have a future as a unique relic of the public sphere in which the showing, experiencing, and reading of art – meaning the full range of world aesthetico-symbolic practices – plays a role beyond tourism, the blockbuster, and nationalist pedagogy?

Can we recast the museum as critical site of public debate distinct from the museum as privileged manager or professionalized administrator of cultural heritage, authorizing selective stories and formalized pasts?

Drawing on her profound engagement with conceptual art and artists such as Terry Atkinson in and beyond Art & Language, and Mary Kelly, Judith Mastai's questions about the museum went to the heart of contemporary debates about the production, consumption, and distribution of art: how can we prevent art from being lost in the system of curation, as inert matter, the material support of museal discourses and institutional practices? As a serious reader of Arendt and Adorno, Judith Mastai also realized that we cannot operate outside these highly administered institutions and practices; thus any new museology must be considered as a working through of institutions that already exercise their hegemony within the modern system.

This is neither a Festschrift nor a homage. It is the creative extension/realization of a concept of intellectual performance, performing an intervention – as is the spirit of the series in which it appears – in art history (a discipline with many sub-divisions working across university and museum, studio and book, museology and curatorial studies, art practice and art theory), in art's histories (plural, diverse, contested, and dispersed), and in the present history of the modern museum/the museum in modernity as the privileged locus of their intersection. It registers and extends the influential legacy of an important but little known thinker about the art museum, about art, the museum, and the world. The structure of the book reflects a series of aspects of the legacy we wish to document in engaging with the racism of art and anthropology, the museum and traumatic histories, the diversity, inclusiveness, or exclusion of publics, archive, and amnesia.

It also demonstrates specific connections within the larger community of practices and theories that intersected with and informed the practices and theories of one particular catalyst to whose singular intervention we lend our many minds. Gender, difference, otherness, trauma, history, delivery, learning, exile, encounter, transformation, and archive shape the book, whose threads are provisionally woven together in the opening chapter, which argues, above all, for the necessity of a transdisciplinary “other” space beyond the idealizing art history paradigm or the museological critique, or popular images of the museum's class and cultural identity. Disembarrassed of vested interests, the space of transdisciplinary encounter enables each participant to work through their disciplinary specificity as historian, anthropologist, artist, or programmer, to think with the trained rigor of an experienced practice, and yet to recognize that if the borders between such necessary disciplines are too rigidly policed, we will not be able to meet the challenge of our own unstable,

transformed, traumatized present: what Zygmunt Bauman diagnoses not as postmodernity but as “liquid modernity.”<sup>3</sup>

Following Pollock’s opening stage-setting, a chapter by Mieke Bal, a leading cultural analyst of the museum, offers a feminist reading of the exhibition *Rembrandt’s Women* (2001, National Gallery of Scotland and Royal Academy of Arts, London). She inverts the terms of its title to ask how we might produce, in a different viewing, a “Women’s Rembrandt” in contradistinction to the persistent creation of the Old Master-Genius defended by the current Rembrandt project. In the next chapter, First Nation artist and curator Gerald McMaster engages with a similar question of who reads whom in relation to the subject-viewing as well as subject-making position of the First Nations and the representation of their national histories and living cultures in contemporary art and anthropological museum displays into which First Nation artists intervene in their own varied strategic practices. Trained as an art historian and anthropologist, Ruth B. Phillips then examines displays of African art at major museums such as the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, analyzing the political effects of each positioning of the viewer’s encounter with various African cultures.

Reesa Greenberg, a historian and theorist of the art exhibition and of installations in Jewish Historical Museums, next reflects on the creation and controversies associated with a challenging exhibition at the Jewish Museum in New York entitled *Mirroring Evil* (2002) in order to examine the ethics as well as the politics of the museum’s responsibilities toward art, on the one hand, and to deeply invested constituencies of its public on the other. Vera Frenkel, storyteller, art-ethnographer, and video artist, whose works...*from the transit bar* (1992) and *Body Missing* (1994) have dealt in multi-media and web-form with the cultural legacies of fascist criminality and the traumatic mark of the Holocaust, reflects on the impossibility of representation and trauma and the models developed in art and education for engaging with both traumatic legacies and traumatized times. Also exploring trauma and representability, as well as witnessing, Mary Kelly writes about her installation using both intaglio-printed lint and a commissioned musical score, *The Ballad of Kastriot Rexhepi* (2001), which explores the intersections of subjectivity and history inspired by a news report about a traumatic incident in the Balkan wars.

Swedish curator Ulla Arnell analyses the history of an innovative project in Sweden created to take art out from the metropolis and beyond the museum. This included producing “the exhibition train,” which took a

range of specially curated exhibitions around the country making the museum mobile. Janna Graham and Shadya Yasin create a dialogical history of a project to engage younger people from the diverse communities of Toronto with the Art Gallery of Ontario – a program created by Judith Mastai, still operative, and theoretically as well as practically influential. Judith Mastai is represented in this book by two short chapters, one on her negation of the concept of the visitor, and a second that documents her work as a research curator recovering a forgotten archive to recirculate a critical history of feminism and conceptual art from the early 1970s – a project that marks her understanding of both collaboration as a practice and its politics. Juli Carson provides an in-depth theoretically informed analysis of the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, established within the feminist problematic by Marcia Tucker as an intervention whose exhibition histories embodied some of the contradictions of feminist cultural politics in the 1980s that are also recovered and restaged by Carson's work as an art historian.

Griselda Pollock's opening chapter "frames" these case studies and reflections by analyzing Suzanne Oberhardt's notion of "framing" and the museum, and by exploring the many levels of meaning in the phrase museums after modernism: from the debates in revolutionary France about the very foundations of museums and their effects on art to Merleau-Ponty's critique of Malraux's "museum without walls" in the 1950s; from the foundation of the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1929 to the emergence of a Marxist-feminist critique of that museum as discourse and ideological text offered by Duncan and Wallach in 1979; from Adorno's definition of our horizon as now "after Auschwitz" to Zygmunt Bauman's theses on liquid modernity.

"Museums after modernism?" was put on the table by Eileen Hooper-Greenhill as a question in 1992. Thinking about the impact of conceptual art on culture and intensely engaged with the debates about the trauma of the Holocaust, as well as being alert to issues of feminism and postcolonial theory, Judith Mastai took up the challenge in her practice in the art museum which she researched by relentless travel, creating dialogues with other innovators in museum education and programming, interviewing artists, convening transdisciplinary seminars,<sup>4</sup> teaching students, organizing international conferences, curating exhibitions, and directing the public programming of two very large international museums/art galleries. Intensely aware of the continuing relevance and necessity of the question, we now take up her reframing of the question to pass it through

a range of artistic and intellectual visions. The premise is that we are situated in both history – modernity in its ever-changing and self-transforming modes – and in the histories of art which act within and upon history. The museum is paradoxically the product of modernity: of democracy, the creation of the public sphere, universal education, historical consciousness, nostalgia, mourning, imperialism, cultural looting, amnesia, and pedagogy. It is, therefore, a powerful feature of the way we experience art, culture, and ourselves. What has the museum become? What can the museum be now? What forces are directing its ever-increasing symbolic capital at the same time as it becomes less and less a public forum? What are artists telling us about its possibilities? How should those of us involved in the education of artists, art historians, curators, and publics be thinking about our work?

We are indebted to all who worked with us to make the book a reality, including the sterling editorial support of Joanne Heath. It is but a snapshot of larger projects, continuing art practices, and, above all, commitments to strategies of engagement.

*Griselda Pollock and Joyce Zemans*

## Notes

- 1 Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (The Heritage: Care-Preservation-Management Programme; London: Routledge, 1992).
- 2 The conference was co-sponsored by York University, the Centre for Cultural Analysis, Theory and History at Leeds University, and the Ontario Association of Art Galleries. Its principal sponsors were the Canada Council for the Arts, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Museums Assistance Program in the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Laidlaw Foundation, the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, the Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation, and the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council.
- 3 Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).
- 4 Judith Mastai organized a seminar on “Museums after Modernism” at the University of Leeds on December 16–17, 2003, with Terry Atkinson, Sandy Nairne, Sunil Gupta, Jon Bird, Adrian Rifkin, Rita Keegan, Richard Gagola, and Griselda Pollock. A typescript was prepared and may soon be available as an occasional paper. In Mastai’s files is also a very long interview with Toby Jackson, the innovative public programmer at the Tate Liverpool.

# Un-Framing the Modern: Critical Space/Public Possibility

Griselda Pollock

## Framing the Frames

In *Frames within Frames: The Art Museum as Cultural Artifact*, Suzanne Oberhardt argues that, from the inside, the museum effaces itself to become an invisible frame for the art or artifacts it appears merely to house, conserve, and exhibit.<sup>1</sup> To recognize that the institution itself produces meaning, we need to widen our focus to see its active framing of its contents and our experience. Pulling back even further, we can identify larger cultural frames within which the museum itself figures in popular discourses and representations about culture and society. Beyond even these supplementary cultural frames, Oberhardt proposes an open, other, critical space through which we can critically engage with the histories and possibilities of that distinctive product of modernity: the museum.

Creating a four-framed model on an axis running diagonally from profane to sacred, Oberhardt identifies the first, close-in Frame 1 as the adoring art-historical model, in which the museum positions art both on the side of the sacred, set apart from ordinary life, and as a source of moral authority. Its direct counter-frame is New Museology, a political critique of the museum as institution and ideology, situated in the colonial and imperial histories of modernity's constructions of nations, races, and

genders.<sup>2</sup> Emerging in the early 1980s, this new discipline (often called Museum Studies) shifted the focus from the canonizing model of art-historical adoration of *the painting* (Oberhardt's term for all valued objects of the art-historical paradigm) to a postmodernist critique of institutions and representations in which the programming of display and the disciplining of the spectator create a pedagogic text: what Tony Bennett calls "the exhibitionary complex."<sup>3</sup> The third frame "scrutinizes the discourses of the art museum not through texts displayed *by* the art museum but rather through how the museum itself is represented and talked *about* in contemporary society."<sup>4</sup> Here the academic voice and its self- or counter-representations fade into a larger picture in which neither is central. Beyond lies yet another space in which no frame has dominance. Oberhardt concludes:

What we can strive for, though, is the continued deconstruction of prevailing frames for the purpose of creating new ones: each attempt resisting odious and dominant world views and creating fresh meanings, identities, and fairer ways of life. In a shift from a relatively static culture to a global, corporate and electronic culture that constantly invents and reinvents itself, we can come to know the art museum differently.<sup>5</sup>

It is this knowing the art museum differently that goes beyond the opposing forces of Frames 1 (adoring art-historical) and 2 (new museological). Deconstruction accepts that there is neither an outside, utopic other place, nor a simple resolution of Manichean good and bad.<sup>6</sup> But our work on all frames alerts us to our capture by existing modes of knowledge and practice from which dystopia we cannot step outside into a utopian space. We inherit histories which position us; but we can think about them, deconstruct their terms, and displace the boundaries in a constant work that neither idolizes nor decries but reworks the inherent possibilities of the museum as public space.

In this book, some authors are artists, others are curators. Yet others are art historians or cultural analysts. All are committed to the significance of art-making as more than the production of luxury goods, entertainment, moral education, or ideological heritage. Art and our engagements with it are engagements with thought, with challenging questions posed ever more starkly in what Oberhardt calls the shift from static culture to the more fluid, rapidly changing, and electronically, digitally virtualized worlds that increasingly set the terms for global modes of living, dying, thinking, and making.