

ABSTRACT

“Not only creators, but also interpreters”:
Artist/Curators in Contemporary Practice

Jennifer L. Restauri, M.A.

Mentor: Katie Robinson Edwards, Ph.D.

The role of artists in contemporary museums and university galleries has been shifting over the past fifty plus years as art has become a formally recognized discipline in the university setting and as museums have sought to diversify their staffs and provide a greater variety of educational programming. This thesis will look at the evolving duality of artist/curator in order to better define the role these professionals are fulfilling in the contemporary art museum and university gallery. Through the examination of case-studies as well as through primary research with contemporary museums and university galleries, this thesis will present current data defending the evolution and necessity of this dual-role to the post-modernization and survival of these institutions. Through this exploration, this thesis also aims to address the greater question of whether curatorial work can be considered an art form.

“Not only creators, but also interpreters”:
Artist/Curators in Contemporary Practice

by

Jennifer L. Restauri, B.F.A.

A Thesis

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Kenneth C. Hafertepe, Ph.D., Chairperson

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Approved by the Thesis Committee

Kenneth C. Hafertepe, Ph.D., Chairperson

Katie Robinson Edwards, Ph.D.

Heidi J. Hornik-Parsons, Ph.D.

Accepted by the Graduate School
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J. Larry Lyon, Ph.D., Dean

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES		v
LIST OF TABLES		vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS		vii
PREFACE		viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		ix
DEDICATION		xi
CHAPTER		
ONE	Introduction: <i>Setting the Stage for Postmodern Revitalization of Artist/Curators in University Art Museums and Galleries</i>	1
PART I: LITERATURE REVIEW		
TWO	Literature Review	9
	<i>Museum Education: A Current History</i>	9
	<i>The Art Museum and Art Education</i>	14
	<i>Postmodernism in Art and As Applicable to Museum and Art Education</i>	23
PART II: CASE STUDIES		
THREE	Artists Emerge as Curators: 1945 -1970s	30
	<i>Defining the Curatorial Role</i>	32
	<i>The Postwar American Artist</i>	37
	<i>The Artist Emerges as Curator – Andy Warhol (1928-1987)</i>	41
	<i>Norman Daly, Artist and Curator (1911-2003): Creating Both Object and Installation</i>	51
FOUR	Artists as Museum Collaborators and Museum Creators	57
	<i>Fred Wilson (b. 1954) Mines the Museum</i>	59
	<i>Artists Create Their Own Museums: David Wilson (b.1946)</i>	67
FIVE	Contemporary Artist/Curators	77
	<i>Robert Storr (b.1950)</i>	77

	<i>Beauvais Lyons (b.1958)</i>	85
SIX	Contemporary Artist/Curators in the University Art Gallery and Museum: Institutional Data Analysis	99
	<i>Methodology</i>	99
	<i>Analysis</i>	102
SEVEN	Conclusion	
	<i>But Are They Really Curators?</i>	114
APPENDICES		121
	Appendix A: <i>Integrated Case Study Artist Timeline</i>	122
	Appendix B: <i>Selected Bibliography of Female Artist/Curators</i>	125
	Appendix C: Artist Survey	126
	Appendix D: <i>Contemporary Art Museum and University Gallery Survey Questions</i>	127
BIBLIOGRAPHY		130

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Andy Warhol. <i>Shoes, Parasols, and Umbrellas in Cabinet in Storage</i> (from <i>Raid the Icebox I</i> with Andy Warhol, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design).	31
2. <i>Andy Warhol with Dominique de Menil</i> (from <i>Raid the Icebox I</i> with Andy Warhol, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design).	45
3. <i>European Paintings in Storage</i> (from <i>Raid the Icebox I</i> with Andy Warhol, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design).	46
4. Norman Daly. <i>Votive</i> .	54
5. Norman Daly. <i>Helmet Worn by Temple Virgins</i> .	55
6. Fred Wilson. <i>The Other Museum</i> (Exhibited at White Columns).	62
7. Fred Wilson. <i>Mining the Museum</i> . (Exhibited at Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore).	63
8. Fred Wilson. <i>Mining the Museum</i> (Exhibited at Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore).	64
9. Fred Wilson. <i>Mining the Museum</i> (Exhibited at Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore).	64
10. David Wilson. <i>The façade of the Museum of Jurassic Technology</i> .	68
11. David Wilson. <i>The Horn of Mary Davis of Saughall,</i> <i>Museum of Jurassic Technology</i> .	72
12. Beauvais Lyons, <i>Plate I</i> from <i>The Excavation of the Apasht</i> .	87
13. <i>Professor William Willers with the centaur in his studio</i> .	89
14. William Willers. <i>The Centaur Excavations at Volos</i> .	90
15. William Willers. Back view of <i>The Centaur Excavations at Volos</i> .	90
16. Beauvais Lyons, <i>George and Helen Spelvin Folk Art Collection</i> (Installation view at Vanderbilt University).	96

LIST OF TABLES

1. <i>Original Research Design</i>	101
2. <i>AAM Membership and Accreditation</i>	103
3. <i>Total and Department Staff Size</i>	104
4. <i>Curatorial Department Specialty Subject Areas</i>	104
5. <i>Education Department Specialty Subject Areas</i>	105
6. <i>Artist in Residency Programs</i>	109

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAM	American Association of Museums
EDCOM	Standing Professional Committee on Education
DBAE	Discipline Based Art Education
RISD	Rhode Island School of Design
MoMA	Museum of Modern Art

PREFACE

Early in my research, I stumbled across an article written by English poet and art critic, Herbert Read titled “The Artist and The Museum.” Published by the *College Art Journal* in 1954, this article considered the mutually beneficial relationship of the artist and the museum. This thesis draws heavily from Read’s article as it pre-dates the practice of the first cited artist/curator, and its influence is even further noted through my choice of a title—“We need not only creators, but also interpreters”: Artist/Curators in Contemporary Practice.

As Read considered the influence of the artist and his or her contributions to the museum, he firmly stated, “We need, not only artists, but also teachers; not only creators, but also interpreters.”¹ This call for action was issued nearly twenty years prior to the first formal museum education and art education mandates and coincided with the development of the postmodern artist. Read’s declaration was ahead of his time, and the following pages will consider how the artist/curator has fulfilled the roles of artist, teacher, creator, and interpreter over the past forty years, specifically through the duality of the artist/curator.

¹ Herbert Read, “The Museum and the Artist,” *College Art Journal* 13, no. 4 (Summer 1954), 291.

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I am grateful to those institutions participating in my qualitative research study and the staff members who took the time to complete the surveys. The institutional data provided a significant complement to the art historical research I presented, and the importance of their contributions certainly cannot be overlooked. I am particularly

indebted to Dr. Kelly A. Wacker, who helped me discover my passion for research at the University of Montevallo, and has graciously continued to mentor me from afar as I have pursued my master's degree. I would also like to thank Dean Robert Storr and Professor Beauvais Lyons for consenting to interviews and actively inspiring me to be a better student of art history. I conducted their interviews early in the process of my research, and their gracious tolerance and guiding discussions illustrate their personal passion for educating students in the arts. The opportunity to work with these two remarkable professionals will never be forgotten.

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Lastly, to my parents, thank you for your unending love and support—faith truly is the evidence of all things hoped for, and the substance of things not yet seen.

DEDICATION

To all who wander but are not lost.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Setting the Stage for Postmodern Revitalization of Artist/Curators in University Art Museums and Galleries

Longer than there have been museums that have collected man-made objects, there have been artists who made those objects. Artists and museums have always been tied together by this common humanity. This association made it only natural for artists to become affiliated with museums from their inception, as artists are people who marvel at not only what is made by man but what is found naturally. Because of their technical skill sets and aesthetic abilities, artists were natural consultants to early collectors and creators of cabinets of curiosities and *studiolos* which are credited as the predecessors to museums.¹

But as the fields of science and technology progressed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and as private collections transitioned into public collections, artists began to fall out of favor with museums. Certainly they were still valuable as they provided new and interesting objects. Yet, their value was overshadowed in the museum in comparison to their brethren who were developing taxonomical systems in an attempt to order the world with which they were surrounded.² To make use of an old adage, seeing was *not* believing, and artists were thought only to have gifts in sight and representation. As the world around them shifted, artists in the late nineteenth century

¹ Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Altamira press, 2008), 24-26.

² *Ibid.*, 36-41

and early twentieth century reached out not for the fantastical technology and inventions, but instead, sought opportunities to explore human connectedness through authentic moments and honest materials.³

Today, we recognize the changes as characteristics of Modernism, and it begins with a group of painters who envisioned creating artworks that perfectly captured the grotesque reality before them. In Modern American Art, artists such as the Ashcan Painters, fondly known as the eight, ushered in an era of painterly painters and artists who ventured beyond merely producing art objects.⁴ Alfred Stieglitz, one of the most dominant figures of modern American art in the early twentieth-century, is a prime example. He was known not only for his skilled works of photography but also for his avant-garde gallery, 291. Stieglitz is recognized as one of the first advocates of modernism in America, and while he worked in a private gallery which he owned, he represents an early return of the artist to the museum.⁵

The development of modernism was accompanied by World Wars I and II, which also significantly facilitated the artist's return to the museum. Following the return of American soldiers from World War II, a formalization of the discipline of art took place in the university due to an increased enrollment of students with an interest in art. Artists who had been dismissed from the academic realm of the museum began to return to academia through appointments as professors at nationally acclaimed institutions. The creation of art as an academic discipline elevated not only the technical skill of artists but

³Erika Doss, *Twentieth-Century American Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 11-16.

⁴*Ibid.*, 35-38.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 59-61.

also their intellectual capabilities.⁶ It should come as no surprise that shortly after this enrollment boom the question of the value of the artist to the museum began to arise.

Notably the return of the artist to the museum began in a university museum at the Rhode Island School of Design in 1970 with an installation designed by Andy Warhol, by then one of the best-known “Pop” artists.⁷ Subsequent exhibitions have followed through the decades with artists making significant contributions to the curatorial practice of museums and galleries across the nation.⁸ Artist-created museums have even gained recognition by professional museum organizations such as the American Association of Museums.⁹ Yet, in spite of these developments, artists are still greatly outnumbered in the population of museum professionals, and in particular, in the role of curator.

This thesis will establish the grounds in which the artist as curator re-emerged during the late twentieth century and explore how the artist as curator has continued to gain momentum into the twenty-first century. I will examine developments spanning a forty year period (1970 – 2010) in the fields of Museology, Art and Art Education, and Postmodernism to identify the common trends that may have helped propel artists back into the museum. This analysis will be followed by a chronological series of six case

⁶ Deborah Solomon. “How to Succeed in Art,” *New York Times*, June 27, 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/27/magazine/how-to-succeed-in-art.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm> (accessed February 4, 2011); Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999):158, 163-64.

⁷ Ingrid Schaffner, “Deep Storage,” in *Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing and Archiving in Art.*, ed. by Ingrid Schaffner and Matthias Winzen (Munich; New York: Prestel, 1998), 16.

⁸ Norman Daly and the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, *The Civilization of Llhuros* (Ithaca: Office of University Publications, 1971); Lisa Corrin, Leslie King-Hammond and Ira Berlin, eds., *Mining the Museum: An Installation / by Fred Wilson* (Baltimore: The Contemporary; New York: New Press, Distributed by W.W. Norton, 1994); Lawrence Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder*, (Toronto: Pantheon, 1995); Judith Landsman Sliselman, “Robert Storr,” in *The curator as artist/ the artist as curator: exhibition*, 1-3 (Paramus, NJ: Bergen Museum of Arts and Sciences, 1995); Roy R. Behrens, “History in the mocking,” *Print* 51, no. 3 (May 1997), 70-77.

⁹ American Association of Museums, *National Standards and Best Practices for U.S. Museums*, commentary by Elizabeth E. Merritt (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2008), 2.

studies highlighting noteworthy artists who have incorporated museological and curatorial methods into their art-making and installation practices. The artists I will examine are: Andy Warhol (1928-1987), Norman Daly (1911-2003), Fred Wilson (born 1954), David Wilson (born 1946), Robert Storr (born 1950), and Beauvais Lyons (born 1958). Each artist was selected for his unique approach and notoriety with the label “artist as curator,” but the group as a whole shares an innate bond through their continual engagement in the artist as curator duality.¹⁰

The artists are presented in pairs in chapters three, four, and five. These pairs are based on chronology of significance as an artist/curator. Andy Warhol and Norman Daly are the subjects of chapter three. Warhol and Daly were each a catalyst in their respective fields (institutional critique and fictive art) for the resurgence of artist/curators. In chapter four, I discuss Fred Wilson and David Wilson (they share no relationship). Together, they represent the artist’s return to the museum as an institutional contributor with Fred Wilson curating for an established museum and David Wilson creating a museum of his own. I devote chapter five to the artist/curator from the 1990s to contemporary times focusing on the work of Robert Storr and Beauvais Lyons, arguably the two most recognizable figures in the field. I believe the contributions by these six artists to be the most significant to the revitalization of the artist/curator duality.

This thesis is by no means meant to present a comprehensive history of the artist as curator, but is meant to critically analyze the influence of the artist on the museum and

¹⁰ The sample of artists examined in the case study portion of this thesis presents a biased perspective of only male artist/curators. In order to present a more accurate picture of the artist/curator duality, please see the brief bibliography on female artist/curators in Appendix B.

the museum on the artist.¹¹ Previously published works have either minimized the importance of this relationship, simply classifying the works as “institutional critique,” or have blatantly ignored the implications of the previous museum-related backgrounds of the artists/curators examined. This study unifies these two areas thoroughly through an intense dual approach of art history and museum studies.

In addition to the case studies, a small qualitative study is presented on the current perceptions and uses of artist/curators in university art museums and galleries. This study tracks the historical trajectory of the artist as curator during this period and provides a contemporary perspective on this continually developing duality. It also provides a snapshot of the current academic backgrounds of staffs within the curatorial and education departments at the participating institutions, revealing potential institutional biases in the wake of the postwar development of art as a university discipline.

Perhaps the bigger question that this thesis indirectly addresses is whether or not there is an art to curating, directly questioning whether curators are artists. This topic is a source of contention for artists and curators alike. I believe that this debate begins with the label of curator itself. The term is ill-defined, and the expectations of the individual professional are so varied from institution to institution that consistency in responsibilities is hard to establish.¹² Additionally, the development of art centers and art museums without permanent collections have added to the imprecise position of such

¹¹ For a wide-ranging study of the artist and museum influence, please see James Putnam, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2001).

¹² Elizabeth A. Chambers, “Defining the Role of the Curator,” in *Museum Studies Perspectives and Innovations*, eds. Stephen L. Williams and Catharine A. Hawks (Washington, D.C.: Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections, 2006), 47-66.

curators.¹³ In light of this, it seems only logical to question whether curators are artists if artists can be considered curators.

Ironically, in my attempts to break down the Linnaean categorization of curators and artists, I have created a hybrid classification of artist/curators. While this was certainly not my intention, this amalgamated category is indicative of the postmodern developments in the art museum. Postmodernism in art represents the re-examination and re-incorporation of previously held values.¹⁴ It is significant that the revitalization of the artist/curator duality coincides with an increased interest in personal and community connection to the museums and their exhibitions, professionally supported through museological publications such as *Museums for a New Century* (1984) and *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums* (1992), as well as through the development of a formalized art education curriculum known as Discipline Based Art Education.¹⁵ This concurrence suggests that these major movements in the museum profession have largely reflected postmodern ideals and that these publications themselves are in fact postmodern.

The implications of this thesis are already playing out in 2011 through the growing movement of “guerilla curators,” curators organizing temporary shows in a variety of locations. Christina Rees recently wrote about this development for *Glasstire*

¹³Alexander and Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 43-46.

¹⁴ Doss, *Twentieth-Century American Art*, 13.

¹⁵ American Association of Museums Commission on Museums for a New Century, *Museums for a New Century: a Report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century*. (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1984); American Association of Museums, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*, ed. Ellen Cochran Hirzy (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1992); W. Dwaine Greer, “Discipline Based Art Education: Approaching Art as a Subject of Study,” in *Studies in Art Education* 25, no. 4 (Summer 1984), 212- 218; W. Dwaine Greer, “Developments in Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE): From Art Education towards Arts Education,” in *Studies in Art Education* 34, no. 2 (Winter 1993), 91- 101.

in response to her attendance at a symposium for curators held during the 2011 Texas Biennial. In her article, Rees' described a debate on institutional restraint placed on contemporary curators approached during the symposium and the resulting expression of the curators' desire to mount shorter shows with significant impact using less preparation time. In response to this desire, Rees writes,

It's hard to find the time and energy to generate shows from scratch and with little to no money. Even so, curators, just by their title, often have some credibility that emerging artists and struggling artists are striving for, so it might be easier for us to do the asking and fill out the paperwork, so to speak... We hope all these young artists and art historians fresh out of grad school will take the initiative and do what we're all begging them to do **'Don't wait for galleries to pick you up or ask you to curate. Organize your own shows. Do it yourself** [emphasis mine].'¹⁶

Rees' comment suggests that the curatorial field is mobilizing and adjusting to postmodern ideals regarding exhibition and installation of art as illustrated through the artist/curator duality.¹⁷ Interestingly, in an interview that I conducted with Dr. Kelly A. Wacker, Associate Professor of Art at the University of Montevallo, approximately a year prior to the publication of Rees' article, Wacker described a similar phenomenon, "There is this trend that has been happening, and I think it has been happening as the economy has gotten bad. So many gallery spaces have closed that artists are making their own spaces, and this is going to come back to the concept of artist/curator again."¹⁸ Wacker's comments reflect the controversy described by Rees from the alternative perspective as Wacker

¹⁶ Christina Rees, "The Guerilla Curators," Glasstire.com, November 21, 2011, http://glasstire.com/2011/11/21/the-guerilla-urators/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newsletter+11-21-11&utm_content=Newsletter+11-21+11+CID_60daf509f081f51868a629e50897fa4c&utm_source=Email+marketing+software&utm_term=The+Desperate+Need+for+Guerrila+Cura (accessed November 22, 2011).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Kelly Wacker, Interview with author, Montevallo, AL, December 14, 2010.

addresses the artists' need to show artwork; whereas Rees addresses the curators' need to freely design exhibitions that are not fiscally responsible for keeping institutional doors open and donors happy.¹⁹

This difference in perspective has sustained the gap between the role of curator and artist, safely preserving the traditional Linnaean view of each. However, creative aspiration is the common craving and factor of professional success among curators and artists alike. In a 1954 article titled "The Artist and the Museum," Herbert Read further underscores this thought stating, "There is no true appreciation of art that is not based on an imaginative participation in the creative process."²⁰ Artists, it seems, are predisposed to many characteristics of the curatorial practice, and their recent journey into the field only re-establish territory that they once equally claimed.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Rees, "The Guerilla Curators."

²⁰ Herbert Read, "The Artist and the Museum," *College Art Journal* 13, no. 4 (Summer 1954): 292.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

As an initial framework to the exploration of the evolution of the artist/curator, we must first look at the history that brought about the possibility of this dual role. This literature review presents an overview of three topics—Museum Education, Art & Art Museum Education, and Postmodernism—as they have developed since the 1970s. I have considered the possibility that these are three different manifestations of postmodern thought in disciplines that are closely related. Each discipline maintains significant borders though. I use this strategy as an attempt to identify the point of origin for contemporary artist/curators. Is it possible to identify the direct influence of postmodernism on curators? Or is this the result of a cross pollination of postmodernism? These questions have not been previously considered in the published texts, and this approach allows for the topic of artist/curators to be framed in a broader, cultural perspective.

Museum Education: A Current History

Since their inception, museums have been regarded in some form as institutions of learning, and many of these institutions function under the larger educational umbrella of the university or college (or at least share a formal association).¹ In spite of this,

¹ G. Ellis Burcaw, *Introduction to Museum Work*, 3rd ed. (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Altamira Press, 1997), 18-22; Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Altamira press, 2008), 28.

education was never clearly articulated as a mission of the museum and tended to be overshadowed by acquisitions and exhibitions.² In addition to the imbalance that has historically favored acquisitions and exhibitions, museum professionals, particularly, museum educators, found that at most museums curators, collections managers or registrars, and educators were not being treated equally. The tension ultimately would bring about change in the profession and recognition to museum education as its own free-standing profession. This section will present the history of Museum Education since its formal inception in the 1970s and will follow its developments into the present.

In 1973 the first professional committee for education was formed at the annual American Association of Museums (AAM) meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This committee was formed to address the lack of professional recognition museum educators were being given regarding their professional status. In fact, it was formed as an ad-hoc committee following a training session on museum education. The ad-hoc committee worked to create a resolution that would propose new requirements for AAM and presented the resolution during the annual business meeting. This four-part resolution demanded that education be formally recognized on the AAM council by an ad-hoc committee member, the recognition of the committee as appointed by the AAM president, the inclusion of separate programming specifically for museum education in all AAM activities and publications, and the establishment of a staff position to work with the committee on the goals specified in the resolution.

² Burcaw, *Introduction to Museum Work*, 158-161; Alexander and Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 42,46.

Membership passed three of the four requests (an AAM staff position was not added) and resulted in the formation of the President's Education Committee, comprised of both volunteer and professional educators.³ This committee was the AAM's first recognition of museum educators as separate professionals functioning in the museum world. Within ten years, the AAM would commission its first report, *Museums for a New Century*, which would further validate the formation of the standing professional committee on education.⁴

The report *Museums for a New Century* (1984) ventured to define education as a primary purpose of American museums in the future. This was the American Association of Museum's first attempt to define education as a primary function of the museum, and the reasoning drew upon the 1969 publication *America's Museum: The Belmont Report*.⁵ This earlier report had been published in response to the passing of the 1969 Tax Reform Act requiring museums to be for the "public good" to retain their tax-free status. *America's Museum: The Belmont Report* (1969) was an economy-based document, providing an outline for museums to state their case for federal funding because of their educational function.⁶

³ Paul Piazza, "Fighting the Good Fight," *Museum News* 52, no. 7 (April 1974), 33-35.

⁴ American Association of Museums Commission on Museums for a New Century, *Museums for a new century: a report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century*, (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1984).

⁵ Special Committee of American Association of Museums, *America's Museums: The Belmont Report*, ed. Michael W. Robbins (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1969), 1-16.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 37-47.

Museums for a New Century (1984) differed from this first report by aiming to define education as an innate operation of the museum despite its association with government funding. According to *Museums for a New Century*, “If collections are the heart of museums, what we have come to call education – the commitment to presenting objects and ideas in an informative and stimulating way—is the spirit.”⁷ The report called for museums to institutionally embrace their educational function and to do so beyond the walls of their education departments. Specifically, this report called for a greater attention to be paid to the ways in which people learn in museums, how museums could better employ new technologies, the educational function of exhibition, and the audiences interested in learning which the museum served—specifically, schools and adults.⁸

Following the initial issuance of a call for education in 1984, AAM issued its first publication solely devoted to education entitled *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension* in 1992.⁹ This publication emphasized three major points: museums must not only specifically include education as a part of their institutional mission statement but also incorporate education in all of its activities, museums must reflect the communities which they serve, and museums must serve as “dynamic, forceful leadership” regarding education both within and outside of the museum community.¹⁰ The report makes ten recommendations for museums to better meet the initial three

⁷ American Association of Museums Commission on Museums for a New Century, *Museums for a new century: a report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century*, 55.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 57-70.

⁹ American Association of Museums, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*, ed. Ellen Cochran Hirzy (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1992).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

points outlined.¹¹ These recommendations include 1) formal recognition of education within the museum's institutional missions, 2) the incorporation of new curatorial perspectives, and 3) the utilization of varied learning techniques—targeting children and adults, as well as the diversification of museum staffs.

Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension (1992) shares central themes with the *Museum for A New Century* (1984) report and is even stated to have grown from the initial report.¹² Both publications emphasize the role of education in the museum, the techniques incorporated, and the audiences served, and continue to be utilized as sources of direction for both AAM professional and individual members regarding education.¹³

Museum education today continues to be represented by a professional committee, now known as the Standing Professional Committee on Education of the American Association of Museums (EdCom). In 2010, the committee was comprised of 828 members – 721 individual memberships and 107 institutional memberships, making it one of the largest of the standing professional committees. The committee provides

¹¹ For a list of all ten principles, please see American Association of Museums. *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*, ed. Ellen Cochran Hirzy (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1992), 8.

¹² American Association of Museums, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*, 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4; American Association of Museums Commission on Museums for a New Century, *Museums for a new century: a report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century*, 30-33.

various professional development opportunities through webinars and a committee newsletter, as well as presenting sessions at the annual AAM meeting.¹⁴

The general development of museum education presented the formalization of the educator as a museum professional and the required inclusion of educational initiatives within the museum. Each type of museum responded differently to these mandates, and the art museum addressed these issues as well as others specific to the discipline through a variety of means. The following section will define the art museum at the time of these developments and chronicle the development of art museum education.

The Art Museum and Art Education

Ellis Burcaw, museum consultant known for his contributions to the field of museum studies, particularly the creation of the University of Idaho Museum Studies program, defines the art museum as “a museum devoted to one or more of the art fields (dealing with objects).”¹⁵ He further defines the art museum as different from all other museums because of its emphasis on the most gifted artistic productions; whereas the focus of other museums is the typical or most common representative of a specific time or era.¹⁶ This definition and separation of the art museum allows for the understanding that education within the art museum will vary from that presented in other museums.

Edward P. Alexander, a former American Association of Museums president and professor of museum studies at the University of Delaware, and his daughter who revised

¹⁴ “AAM Standing Professional Committee on Education,” AAM Standing Professional Committee on Education, <http://www.edcom.org/> (accessed October 3, 2010).

¹⁵ Burcaw, *Introduction to Museum Work*, 16.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

the original text, ventured further to define the art museum in regards to the developments of independent modern and contemporary art museums. This resulted in the naming convention of “art center,” an identifier commonly used for museums with modern or contemporary collections.¹⁷ Burcaw defined the art center as “an establishment by and for a community where art lessons are taught, the work of local artists is shown, and other art interests of the community are accommodated. The performing arts may be included, but ordinarily there is no permanent collection of objects.”¹⁸ Alexander and Alexander contradict this definition, noting that art centers choose that naming convention because of the flexibility that it provides regarding inclusivity of varied mediums.¹⁹

Whether an art museum or art center, the art institution is entrusted with the care of and education in relation to art objects. Burcaw defines the division of these responsibilities through a development tree beginning with administration, followed by curators, and concluding with service personnel (including positions such as librarians, educators, exhibit technicians, etc.). This division is not intended to establish a hierarchy; yet, it does.²⁰ This hierarchy among curators and staff became the topic of contention and the catalyst among museum educators for the 1973 formation of the President’s Education Committee at the AAM meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

¹⁷ Alexander and Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 43.

¹⁸ Burcaw, *Introduction to Museum Work*, 17.

¹⁹ Alexander and Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 40.

²⁰ Burcaw, *Introduction to Museum Work*, 45-54.

In 1974, *Museum News*, the official AAM publication, published the article, “In Quest of a Professional Status,” by Robert A. Matthai. Matthai illustrates the point that in order for museum educators to become recognized as separate professionals, they must differentiate themselves from their association as “inferior curators.”²¹ Matthai states that museum educators must not be hired solely for their specialized knowledge within the discipline but also for their training within the educational pedagogy of the discipline.²² In the art museum, this meant that museum educators would no longer need to be solely educated in the field of art history. Art museum educators would need to be trained also in art education and studio practices.

The unavailability of a governing body or published references regarding educational practices in the art museum led to the founding of the Council on Museums and Education in the Visual Arts in 1972 with many of the members serving on this council also serving on the AAM president’s Education Committee. The committee would research and publish results on unique education programs within art museums across the nation. The results of this research, *The Art Museum as Educator*, was published in 1978 featuring case studies from museums across the nation, including three individual sections devoted to the general public, school age children and K-12

²¹ Robert A. Matthai, “In Quest of Professional Status,” *Museum News* 52, no. 7 (April 1974), 10.

²² *Ibid.*, 10-13.

education, university and professional audiences. The text remains a staple today as a reference to art museum education.²³

To bring the history of education in the art museum full circle and to answer the unmentioned question of who would fulfill the role of art museum educator, it is helpful to refer back to the AAM's reports *Museums for a New Century* (1984) and *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension* (1992). Goals outlined in both documents would require expertise from professionals in fields of education and educational psychology, but also allowed for the opportunity to diversify staff further through the incorporation of those outside the discipline.²⁴ For art museums, this meant the allowance of perspectives from outside of the traditional art historical lens. For many contemporary art museums, this meant the inclusion of studio trained artists as staff.

English poet and art critic Herbert Read wrote on the topic of the relationship between the artist and the museum in 1954 for the *College Art Journal*. In "The Museum and the Artist" Read attempted to define the three types of relationships shared among the two – the art "museum as a patron" of the artist, the museum as influence on the artist, and the artist's contribution to the museum.²⁵ Read avoided the topic of the museum as an investor in art due to the complications associated with the purchasing of art and the

²³ Council on Museums and Education in the Visual Arts Staff, *The Art Museum as Educator: A Collection of Studies as Guides to Practice and Policy*, eds. Barbara Y. Newsom and Adele Z. Silver (University of California Press: Berkeley, CA: 1978).

²⁴ American Association of Museums Commission on Museums for a New Century, *Museums for a new century: a report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century*, 31-32; American Association of Museums, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*, 18-19, 23-24.

²⁵ Herbert Read, "The Museum and the Artist," *College Art Journal* 13, no. 4 (Summer 1954), 289-294.

economy of the art market. Instead he focused specifically on the influence of the museum on the artist and the artist's contribution to the museum. Read acknowledged the traditional role of the artist vis-à-vis the museums as a self-serving relationship for the artist, who might visit the museum occasionally in order to become familiarized with works of the academic tradition and then to forsake that tradition to follow their own aesthetic judgment.²⁶

Read suggested a second role for the artist regarding the museum – that of educator. This recommendation was made with the idea in mind of artists forgoing the university training for a more traditional model of apprenticeships. Read here acknowledged the value of this traditional form of education, the passing of information from master to apprentice, the slow accumulation of knowledge over a span of time in which details build upon one another. While Read's ideal of reverting back to an apprentice training system did not ultimately not catch on—the idea of artist as educator in the museum would.

It might be helpful here to understand that until the publication of *Museums for a New Century* (1984) and *Excellence and Equity: Education in the Public Dimension* (1992), education in the museum was specifically used to address the topic of education in relation to school-age children. Particularly with the emphasis placed on education through the 1969 Tax Reform Act, museums could much more easily quantify education through services to public education systems than to the casual adult visitor. This led to a greater number of educators working with school-age children and a rise in the number of

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 289-291; Read references sentiments published by modernist Paul Cézanne regarding The *Louvre* as an educational institution for artists but warning of the danger of becoming too caught up in the idea of replicating historical techniques.

studio artists being employed as educators. This artist as educator duality was fueled by the popularity of Viktor Lowenfeld's *Creative and Mental Growth* (1947) in Art Education. His study was the first published on the development of children's artistic abilities through educational psychology, and art education programs both inside and outside of the museum used these findings to justify a prevailing studio-driven curriculum.²⁷

The Lowenfeldian model of education would fall victim to the development of Discipline Based Art Education in the mid-1980s. Developed by W. Dwaine Greer, in cooperation with the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, Discipline-Based Art Education (1984) was a model of art education that incorporated four main points of curriculum: studio art, art history, criticism, and aesthetics. Educators would now be expected to not only emphasize studio activities but to also discuss the historical, critical, and aesthetic implications of works made by the students as well as through assessment of images and museum collections. Discipline-Based Art Education strove to create experiences that would later inform students as adults, making "...available to them avenues of thought, understanding, and expression that reflect the structures of art as a discipline, just as they habitually use similar structures derived from other disciplines."²⁸

Greer's curriculum focused on the creation of an informed adult who could actively participate in the art world by verbalizing informed opinions through personal

²⁷ Viktor Lowenfeld and W. Lambert Brittain, *Creative and Mental Growth*, 8th ed. (New York: Prentice Hall, 1987).

²⁸ W. Dwaine Greer, "Discipline Based Art Education: Approaching Art as a Subject of Study," in *Studies in Art Education* 25, no. 4 (Summer 1984), 212.

experience.²⁹ The development of this curriculum occurred simultaneously with the development of AAM's *Museums for a New Century* (1984), which also called for a great attention to be paid to adults.³⁰ While Greer's curriculum began with children, its effectiveness was determined by the child's success as an adult as an active participant within the art culture (which can be understood to be experienced through museums and galleries).³¹ *Museums for a New Century* (1984) established a protocol for museum education departments to address the needs of adults at the present time – as well as for students.³² Museum education departments can therefore be seen to have come under the influence of Discipline-Based Art Education and possibly have included both adult and child programming under the umbrella of the Discipline-Based Art Education curriculum.

In 1985, one year after the publication of Greer's Discipline-Based Art Education curriculum, Patterson B. Williams published an article entitled "Educational Excellence in Art Museums: An Agenda for Reform" in the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*. The article chronicled the development of museum education and places the development of Discipline-Based Art Education and *Museums for a New Century* (1984) together, suggesting both address similar needs within museum education. Williams addresses the tendency of museum education departments to focus on statistical information when

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 212.

³⁰ American Association of Museums Commission on Museums for a New Century, *Museums for a new century: a report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century*, 34, 69-71.

³¹ Greer, "Discipline Based Art Education: Approaching Art as a Subject of Study," 212-214.

³² American Association of Museums Commission on Museums for a New Century, *Museums for a new century: a report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century*, 50-71.

appealing for federal support and notes, “*Museums for a New Century* suggests a more difficult and challenging alternative—that of winning public support by educating the public to the life-enhancing capacity of our collections.”³³

This notation can be seen as a coalescing of *Museums for a New Century* (1984) and Discipline Based Art Education (1984). Williams continues her call for reform by noting that the implications of Discipline-Based Art Education should address all museum audiences. In a section entitled, “Actions to Be Taken,” Williams makes it the first prerogative for art museums to create a “...Publication of models for excellence.”³⁴ While she recognizes the publication of *The Art Museum as Educator*, Williams calls for a newer, broader reaching document. Williams’ wishes were fulfilled with the publication of *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension* in 1992.

Williams’ response was one of many to Greer’s Discipline Based Art Education, some of which were more harshly critical than others. W. Dwaine Greer responded to these criticisms collectively and addressed new developments in the curriculum in a 1993 publication in the journal *Studies for Art Education*. Initial criticism of Discipline-Based Art Education focused on the power which the Getty Institute was exerting in being involved in the development of a proposal of a new curriculum. Other criticisms “included the claim that implementation activities were the forerunner of a national curriculum and that, by the very nature of the theory, Discipline-Based Art Education

³³ Patterson B. Williams, “Educational Excellence in Art Museums: An Agenda for Reform,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 19, no. 2, Special Issue: Art Museums and Education (Summer 1985), 112.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 113.

was both Eurocentric and male chauvinist.”³⁵ In response to these criticisms, particularly regarding the claim of Eurocentrism and male chauvinism, art educators expanded the breadth of the topics that were to be covered to include cultural art outside of Europe and North America and perspectives from feminist scholars. Regarding the criticism of the development of a national curriculum, Discipline-Based Art Education strived to present a method of teaching and not determine the material covered. In this sense, Discipline-Based Art Education can be seen as the development of an effective pedagogy that could be used in any classroom and not as a national curriculum which enforced closed cultural perceptions of what defined art. In this time period, Discipline-Based Art Education was also embraced in the fields of music and theater education as an effective pedagogy.³⁶

The criticism of Discipline-Based Art Education, specifically regarding the closed cultural perspective, emulates many of the mandates set forth in AAM’s *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension*. Museums were being asked to diversify curatorial perspective and staff and to recognize the community in which they participated, just as Discipline-Based Art Education was striving to include a varied history of art and techniques, as well as respond to the needs of its students in their immediate surroundings.

When compared, these two histories, the history of museum education and art education, present very similar developments. Together, they both recognized the expanding audience of museums and of art, and each issued discipline-wide mandates to

³⁵ W. Dwaine Greer, “Developments in Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE): From Art Education towards Arts Education,” *Studies in Art Education* 34, no. 2 (Winter 1993), 93.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 92-93, 96-97.

address those expanding needs. These developments were also the foundation for contemporary art and the contemporary art museum that we know today.

Postmodernism in Art and As Applicable to Museum and Art Education

Simultaneous to the education developments in the museum and art, a shift in the art world began as a new aesthetic was forming following the age of Modernism, a broader movement initiated with the Industrial Revolution and concluded in the early 1960s. By World War II Modernism in art became formally codified into a theory that emphasized the literal (formal) qualities of the art object. After the 1950s, artists began to satirize what had become the modernist icon, redefining the limits of art just as modernists had done at the turn of the century. The contingency of these artists' practices on modernism contributed to this era's namesake, postmodernism. Initially named to indicate the movement that followed modernism, Postmodernism has been associated with numerous and different meanings that surpass this initial understanding, many of which reference partially what postmodern artwork is striving to create. British Art Educator Tom Hardy who has authored a text on the postmodern implications in art education defines postmodernism as a movement with the following principles: "The Little Narrative, Iconoclasm, Dialogue and Text, and Eclecticism."³⁷

"The Little Narrative" is used to indicate the importance of the singular story in comparison to its larger cultural context. In this sense, postmodernism can be seen not as an abandonment of all that was modernism, which included important movements

³⁷ Tom Hardy, "Introduction: Nailing Jelly: Art Education in a Postmodern World," in *Art Education in a Post Modern World: Collected Essays*, ed. Tom Hardy and John Steers (Bristol: Intellect Books: Bristol, UK, 2006), 8-9.

regarding self-expression within art, but as an extension of modernism, reframed. Rather than focusing on the individual, works of postmodernism exert an aesthetic awareness of the individual in regards to social conditions and environments. Performance artworks that gained dominance in the late 1960s and 1970s often drew heavily upon this principle to give voice to those suffering from social or political injustice.

“Iconoclasm,” while closely related to “The Little Narrative,” differs by using ideological methods of questioning the art historical predecessors to define what art is. Postmodernism can be seen to include feminist and cultural responses to previously accepted western canons that excluded these groups. This principle might best be represented by a work such as Judy Chicago’s *The Dinner Party* (1974-79). Through iconoclasm artists began to regain control regarding the definition of what art exactly is. In addition to this re-establishment of the artist as definer of his or her own artwork, iconoclasm also opened the door for the development of movements such as institutional critique, which will be discussed later in this section.

“Dialogue and Text” refers to the exploration of art “through deconstruction, discourse, and the encouragement of multiple interpretations.”³⁸ In simpler terms, postmodernist art is complicated and requires its audience to examine and debate its meaning. Multiple meanings can be embedded within a single work. Controversial artworks tend to be considered germane to this principle. These artworks most often strive to create an opportunity for communication between groups or to address a topic that seems to be missing in public conversation. In order to create this conversation, artworks that might be considered offensive are presented to spark discussion. The artist

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

working within this specific principle is trying to stimulate discussion in regards to a certain topic.

The final principle is “Eclecticism,” which refers to the postmodernist appropriation of information and images into new and different works. Postmodernist artworks build meaning by making historical associations to create a new, yet meaningful, art object. Many of the artists working within the principle of eclecticism have been charged with the destruction of distinction between high and low art. The use of appropriation and irony has contributed to this accusation as artists have pulled images from contemporary culture (much as their predecessors did during modernism) and placed them in ironic contexts.

For artists, irony is a tool used to examine the relationship between events or actions that are contradictory or even coincidental, and it often elicits an emotional reaction from the audience. Sometimes, it can change the way that one thinks about the world. It has been a particularly controversial approach employed by postmodern artists because it forces audiences to actively engage with artworks they might find confrontational.³⁹ In contrast to irony, postmodern artists use parody to elicit similar emotional reactions from audiences by framing a challenging topic in a humorous or satirical light. Parody is well-suited for the postmodernist principle of eclecticism as it has historical associations throughout the development of art and encourages the appropriation of concepts and images, and is perhaps one of the more enjoyable

³⁹ John Vignaux Smith, "Irony," in *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly, *Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t234/e0297> (accessed February 6, 2012).

developments of the postmodern art world.⁴⁰ Both parody and irony will play crucial roles in the works of the artist/curators examined in the case studies of this thesis.

While postmodernism defines the art that continues to be made today, it also defines the world in which the artist functions.⁴¹ It was a postmodernist environment that saw the development of the American Association of Museums' *Museums for a New Century* (1984) and *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension* (1992). Likewise, it was a postmodernist world that saw the development of W. Dwaine Greer and the Getty Center for Arts Education's Discipline-Based Art Education (1984) curriculum. The development of these documents and concepts are then essentially postmodernist in nature. Hardy's four principles of postmodernism—the little narrative, iconoclasm, dialogue and text, and eclecticism—to these major developments in museum and art education, are indeed postmodern.

“The little narrative” as applied to *Museums for a New Century* (1984) and *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension* (1992) is identified in the mandates which asked museums to relate more personally to their audience and communities. Museums were being asked to present their communities and immediate audience in the context of the world in which they worked: art. Here, the smaller individual story of the community in relation to the larger art world parallels the postmodern call for the emphasis of the individual in the context of their culture.

⁴⁰ Peggy Zeglin Brand, "Parody," in *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly, *Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t234/e0390> (accessed February 6, 2012).

⁴¹ To clarify, not all artists work in a postmodern vein today though living in a postmodern world. Artists can choose to ascribe to whatever method of art-making these choose, and there are still many modernists traditionalists practicing today.

If applied to Discipline-Based Art Education, “the little narrative” is seen in art education’s shift from the studio-based curriculum to the Discipline-Based Art Education curriculum’s encouragement of students to better understand the entire discipline of art through art history, studio art, criticism, and aesthetics. The promotion of awareness of the art world outside combined with the studio practice of children in the arts creates a similar outcome as those of postmodern art.

“Iconoclasm” is isolated in these mandates as the underlying principle which drove the development of the AAM mandates and Discipline-Based Art Education. Through the publication of *Museums for a New Century* (1984) and *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension* (1992), museums attempted to redefine themselves – refusing to be hemmed in by earlier versions of themselves. This system of self-questioning provided the museum with the momentum it needed to be current with the postmodern era.

“Iconoclasm” can be attributed likewise to Discipline-Based Art Education. While the curriculum strove to develop a pedagogy that would establish arts education as a discipline equivalent to traditional disciplines such as mathematics, science, social studies, and literature, its core pedagogy was one of self-assessment and questioning. Through the combined curriculum students are taught not only to make art and to understand historical predecessors, but they are also taught the ability to verbalize and define what art is (which is dependent on the individual).

“Dialogue and Text” is best exemplified in *Museums for a New Century* and *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension* through the promotion of diverse curatorial perspectives. Museums began to embrace alternative interpretations to

the traditional Eurocentric perspective that had dominated the museum since its inception. This acceptance and incorporation is a response to the postmodernist call to present multiple perspectives and the movement of deconstruction of what was generally accepted. In addition, museums and galleries also were to serve as the enabling body of presentation of works that were meant to stir discussion of topics which might have been previously taboo.

Discipline-Based Art Education promotes this principle of postmodernism by presenting criticism and aesthetics as a core part of the curriculum. Students not only encounter works from the traditional canon but are also encouraged to examine and question the canon and apply this method to works from all cultures. This varied greatly from the Lowenfeldian model that had dominated art education pedagogy for over thirty years. Under the Lowenfeldian model, students were encouraged solely to focus on the acquisition of technical art skills through studio practice, reflecting the materiality of modernism that dominated this era.

The final principle of postmodernism to be examined in context of *Museums for a New Century, Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension*, and Discipline-Based Art Education is “eclecticism.” It is the most difficult to illustrate as an objective of postmodernism in the published mandates and curriculum development. Perhaps the spirit is best exemplified in *Museums for a New Century, Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension* by calls to include varied learning techniques. Museums were to not only research the psychology of learning but also to appropriate effective techniques from other fields. These mandates also allowed art

museums to venture outside of their traditional programming and have influenced the inclusion of traditionally associated “low” arts in the main exhibition programming.

Discipline-Based Art Education encouraged “eclecticism” by allowing students to work within contemporary practice of artists. Students were for the first time being encouraged to work simultaneously to the movements of their contemporary time. The distinction between high and low art that had not been previously actively embraced in art education was distinguished but included the continuance of “low” or “popular” art practice. Educators utilizing Discipline-Based Art Education were encouraged to use popular cultural practices to entice students towards the study of “high” cultural art practices.

The interconnectivity of the developments of museum education, art museums and art education, and postmodernism is undeniable. Their development in the same time continuance with major movements in each field developing within no greater span than a decade of one another and most times much closer than this, as well as their shared missions to expand the breadth and depth of education verifies this. Together, these developments set the stage for the evolution of the artist-curator in the contemporary art museum and university gallery. Artist-curators will work towards the common goal of their museum profession and artistic expression, while incorporating the four characteristics of post-modernism as outlined above.

CHAPTER THREE

Artists Emerge as Curators: 1945-1970s

One of the first guest curatorial positions in an American art museum was created in 1941, with the opening exhibition of the National Gallery of Art in Washington.¹

While the use of guest curatorial positions initially began as a way to bring in subject specialists – usually art historians or curators at other institutions – within thirty years, a new type of guest curatorial position would emerge.² In 1970, Andy Warhol was invited to design an exhibition for the Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design.

This exhibition is credited by many as one of the first to incorporate the artist as curator. For the exhibition “Raid the Ice Box I,” Warhol requested seemingly forgotten pieces of the museum’s collection. One example of this method can be illustrated by his choice to display the museum’s collection of shoes in its entirety, including the collection’s storage container (Figure 1). Warhol’s apparent nonchalance regarding the installation of the

¹ Catherine Zusy. “The Stranger Among Us: Managing the Guest Curator Relationship,” *Museum News* (September/October 1998), http://www.aamus.org/pubs/mn/MN_SO98_ManagingGuestCurator.cfm, (accessed February 22, 2011); The gallery’s exhibition “The Great Fire of London, 1940” was a traveling exhibition organized by the British government and received financial support from both the United States and Great Britain; National Gallery of Art. “NGA - The Great Fire of London, 1940 (12/1941),” Past Exhibitions, <http://www.nga.gov/past/data/exh3.shtm> (accessed March 10, 2011).

² Zusy, “The Stranger Among Us: Managing the Guest Curator Relationship,” In her study, Zusy states, “According to many guest curators and museum administrators, institutions hire guest curators to augment regular exhibition programs so that institutions can get someone well known by the field, perspective, expertise, or access to a collection; to contribute to program diversity; or because the institution does not have a curator.” In addition, many administrators also noted that it is simply cheaper to outsource the work.



Figure 1. Andy Warhol. *Shoes, Parasols, and Umbrellas in Cabinet in Storage* (from “Raid the Icebox I” with Andy Warhol, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design). 1970. RISD Digital Image Database.

exhibition complicated the idea of artist as curator. Nonetheless, it serves as one of the first models of this duality in the American art museum.³

Today, the concept of artist as curator is more widely accepted yet remains a baffling topic for artists, curators, and museum professionals. At the heart of the matter is whether there truly is an art to curating; this question remains unresolved.

Developments in postmodern art such as institutional critique and fictive art have also

³Ingrid Schaffner, “Deep Storage,” in *Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing and Archiving in Art*, eds. Ingrid Schaffner and Matthias Winzen (Munich; New York: Prestel, 1998), 16.

allowed for the concept of artist as curator to grow more confusing.⁴ This chapter clarifies the role of the curator and presents the historical context in which the artist/curator emerged.⁵

Defining the Curatorial Role

Before delving into the topic of artist as curator, we must first be certain of what art museums define as the role of a curator. For many, the definition of a curator is precisely the root of the problem. In the past forty plus years, the curatorial profession has experienced an identity crisis unlike no other as museums have shifted their exhibition design from the sole control of the curatorial department to a collaborative cross-departmental process, or even in some cases, directed by the department of education.⁶ This movement has been predominantly fueled by changes implemented through the American Association of Museums' publication of mandates such as *Museums for a New Century* (1984) and *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimensions of Museums* (1992), as well as the inclusion of these mandates in the

⁴By institutional critique, I refer to a technique in art that developed as a way for artists to comment on the practice of exhibiting institutions. Fictive art is a term referencing a technique in art in which objects are created in such a manner to suggest historical existence.

⁵ An artist/curator is an artist and/or curator functioning in both the role of creator of objects and creator of installations/exhibitions.

⁶ Nancy Villa Bryk, "Reports of our Death Have Been Greatly Exaggerated: Reconsidering the Curator," *MuseumNews* (March/April 2001), http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/MN_MA01_Reconsider_Curator.cfm (accessed February 22, 2011).

Association's accreditation process, a recognition noting the museum's alignment with accepted best practices.⁷

Who then is a curator, and what are his or her responsibilities? The term "curator" stems from the Latin "cura," meaning "care." Ellis Burcaw, a renowned professor of Museology and author of *Introduction to Museum Work*, defines the curator as "... a person who is in charge of a museum collection, or by extension, a museum department or specialty."⁸ Building upon Burcaw's definition, a curator is the individual entrusted for the care, growth, conservation, study, and exhibition of a group of objects or ideas valued by the museum. The theory that curators not only curate objects but *ideas* as well is implicit in the museum's use of titles, such as "Curator of Education." While there are certainly objects collected by the education department for use in programs, most importantly, curators of education hold the departmental responsibility for the teaching facet of the museum's mission; therefore, they are responsible conceptually for expanding and continuing the pedagogical mission of the museum.

With no firm or agreed upon definition of the term curator, certain applications of the title have been a source of contention among museum professionals for decades, from museum educators being accused of being "inferior curators" to recent proclamations of

⁷ American Association of Museums Commission on Museums for a New Century, *Museums for a new century: a report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1984); American Association of Museums, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*, ed. Ellen Cochran Hirzy (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1992); American Association of Museums, "Characteristics of an Accreditable Museum," Accreditation Standards, <http://www.aamus.org/museumresources/accred/upload/Characteristics%20of%20an%20Accreditable%20Museum%201-1-05.pdf> (accessed March 10, 2011).

⁸ G. Ellis Burcaw, *Introduction to Museum Work* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 1997), 45.

celebrity musicians' curating concerts.⁹ "Like all words, 'curate' possesses an etymology that reflects changes in history and civilization," notes University of Richmond's Museum Deputy Director and Curator of Exhibitions, Elizabeth Schlatter.¹⁰ Perhaps some of the perceivable contention originates in the lack of definition of a professional track towards the curatorial occupation.¹¹ As cited earlier, curators undertake vast responsibilities when accepting the position of curator of an institutional collection, but how does the curator accumulate the necessary knowledge to perform these responsibilities? If there is no accepted standard, how do individual institutions determine the competency of potential curatorial candidates?

⁹ Robert A. Matthai, "In Quest of Professional Status," *Museum News* 52, no. 7 (April 1974): 10-13; N. Elizabeth Schlatter, "A New Spin: Are DJs, rappers, and bloggers 'curators'?" *MuseumNews* (January/February 2010) <http://www.aamus.org/pubs/mn/newspin.cfm> (accessed February 22, 2011); For a quantitative analysis of the contemporary understanding of the responsibilities assigned to curators, please see Elizabeth A. Chambers, "Defining the Role of the Curator," in *Museum Studies Perspectives and Innovation*, eds, Stephen L. Williams and Catharine A. Hawks (Washington, D.C.: Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections, 2006).

¹⁰ N. Elizabeth Schlatter, "A New Spin: Are DJs, rappers, and bloggers 'curators'?"

¹¹ Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Altamira press, 2008), 316; Alexander and Alexander note the early tradition of museum professionals seeking degrees in "traditional academic subjects," but they also identify the first program intended to "train art curators" (though informal) as developed by Philadelphia Museum of Art Assistant Curator and Egyptologist Sarah Yorke Stevenson. The program was open from 1908 until Stevenson's death in 1921. Stevenson's programs were followed in 1923 by programs at Harvard University and at the Newark museum; Marjorie Scharzer, *Riches, Rivals, and Radicals: 100 Years of Museums in America* (Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 2006), 180; Some of the students who attended the Newark Museum's course on museum education went on to found both "...the curatorial and registration departments at the Museum of Modern Art."

In a 2001 publication, Susan D. Haubenstein and David Joselit set out to define the role of curator and its various manifestations in a portion of their text *Careers in Art*. They identify a hierarchy of five positions (listed from lowest to highest) within the curatorial ladder: Curatorial Assistant, Assistant Curator, Associate Curator, Curator, and Chief Curator. The commonality among these positions tends to be that curators possess a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Art History and gain increasing knowledge of the professional practices and administration as one climbs the career ladder. However, this definition blatantly excludes those without a formal background in art history. So, is it possible that this path, while perhaps the most directly guided one, does not accurately reflect the background of all curators within art museums?¹²

Further complicating the identification of curators is the innate duality of the track of study for a curator. A curator of art functions in two separate facets of the academic world—two facets that are often at odds: the university and the museum. This has created an inherent difficulty for art museums, placing them in the midst of a deep-seated schism among curators, art historians within the museum, and university professors, the traditional educator within the discipline. As far back as 1912, a professional rift divided these two groups and provided difficulty for progression of the discipline.¹³ In reference to the development of tension among museum educators and curators, this disciplinary schism provides somewhat of a foundational understanding of the polarities of feelings among the two groups.

¹² Susan H Haubenstein and David Joselit, *Career Opportunities in Art* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2001), 38-47.

¹³ Barbara Y. Newsom, "The Curator and the Professor," *Change* 9, no. 11 (November 1977), 40-45.

This rift remains active today in the discipline of Art History; it was even the topic of discussion at the 1999 conference entitled, “The Two Art Histories: The Museum and the University,” at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, in Williamstown, Massachusetts (chartered in 1955, Williams College has one of the United States’ most renowned art and art history programs). A publication of the same title was printed in 2002 to further disseminate the findings and papers presented at the conference. The selected presentations dealt with the concept of the two perspectives, the exhibition as a publication outlet, and the blockbuster exhibition, all of which are sources of disagreement for the field.¹⁴

Barbara Newsom, co-editor of *The Art Museum as Educator*, identifies a potential solution to the conundrum of art history professor and curator of art through university and museum collaboration.¹⁵ Citing the use of *object* versus the use of *image* as the fundamental source of contention between the two, Newsom suggests that a partnership between the museum and university that shared both faculty, staff, and students could help alleviate the innate tension.¹⁶ This proposal opens us to the opportunity of exploring the relationship between the museum and the university, a relationship that would be deeply affected by the growth of visual arts programs from the 1940s to the present, and would have implications on the training of visual arts professionals in the future.

¹⁴ Charles W. Haxthausen, ed., *The Two Art Histories: The Museum and the University* (Williamstown, Massachusetts: Yale University Press, 2002).

¹⁵ Council on Museums and Education in the Visual Arts, *The Art Museum as Educator: A Collection of Studies as Guides to Practice and Policy*, eds. Barbara Y. Newsom and Adele Z. Silver (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 86-88.

¹⁶ Newsom, “The Curator and the Professor,” 42.

The Postwar American Artist

Historically, the artist has been known to be someone who must have mastered multiple disciplines because he or she must not only present the content well-rendered but also must have a broad base knowledge in order to portray said content accurately. No statement could better define the mid-twentieth century return of veterans from World War II and their entrance into the academic realm. Capitalizing on the recently-created G.I. Bill, veterans enrolled in college at a previously unseen rate, and college and university programs across the nation experienced extreme growth. This increase in enrollment changed the face of American art.

Until the 1940s, American art had been taught in private schools or self-taught through the influence of renowned institutions of art. Following their European predecessors of modernism, American artists moved toward abstraction, working in “schools,” noted by style and/or area.¹⁷ After the war however, artists began to seek out programs at renowned universities, and universities sought out faculty to fill the demand for these new programs. Thus there was a surge of students receiving degrees in fine arts, artists entering the realm of professor, and a new professionalizing movement began in the discipline.¹⁸

¹⁷Erika Doss, *Twentieth-Century American Art (Oxford History of Art)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2002), 35; Doss starts the discussion of the development of Modern American Art with a look at the eight Aschan painters who set the trajectory of art for the next century in America.

¹⁸ Deborah Solomon, “How to Succeed in Art,” *New York Times*, June 27, 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/27/magazine/how-to-succeed-in-art.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm> (accessed February 4, 2011); Solomon voiced strong concerns in the late 1990s about the growing popularity of visual arts masters programs. She believed that the programs had become too dependent on hiring artists as professors based on name-recognition and that many of the artists the programs were producing

Whereas a certain, now-dated conception of Modernism provided alienated artists with a sense of place within their own separate history, the university now places artists – places them within a specialised [sic] field, one that encompasses not just the classroom but the entire network of magazines, galleries and museums...¹⁹

Artists were no longer Bohemian outcasts, clinging only to one another through the art scene and cursing the academy, but instead, were now active participants in the academic community that surrounded art.²⁰ Theory and criticism catapulted art into a new era. In a similar manner, it did the same for the career potentials of those artists.²¹

This era saw the development of movements such as pop art, minimalism, conceptual art, and most pertinent to the subject of this thesis, institutional critique.²² Before exploring these developments, I will consider the radical shifting of the definition of “art” as initiated by Marcel Duchamp’s use of found objects early in the twentieth century. When *Fountain* by R. Mutt (1917) was rejected by the Society of Independent’s Artists’ jury, Duchamp’s Dadaistic activity questioned art, juried art exhibitions,

were much too concerned with the economic outcome of their work and university association rather than their training.

¹⁹Lane Relyea. “Art by Degrees,” *Frieze.com* (November 11, 2009), http://www.frieze.com/issue/print_article/article_by_degrees/ (accessed February 13, 2011); Relyea published this article in reaction to and in support of Deborah Solomon’s “How to Succeed in Art,” as well as including a review of Howard Singerman’s *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (University of California Press, 1999). Relyea’s criticisms of the M.F.A. programs focused specifically on the program loyalty being ingrained in the graduates rather than the overall artistic skill.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Ray Linn, “From Modern to Postmodern Art and Architecture,” in *A Teacher’s Introduction to Postmodernism* (National Council of Teachers of English: Urbana, IL, 1996), 105-106.

²² Erika Doss, *Twentieth-Century American Art*, 139-181, 242-246.

museums—and taste.²³ The rise of fascism in Europe and World War II shifted the art world more emphatically to New York City. Following the rise of Abstract Expressionism with its emphasis on existential gestures and painterliness, Modernism gained dominant momentum. The art work's flatness was indicative of the artist's self-consciousness regarding the medium of paint itself and was celebrated famously by art critic Clement Greenberg.²⁴

Pop Art references a development in art that represents an embracing of mass cultural media as fine art and thrived during the decade of the 1960s with particular artists flourishing, such as Andy Warhol, James Rosenquist, and Roy Lichtenstein.²⁵ Minimalism shared its interest with Pop Art regarding the conceptual to the practical but further increased its cerebral interests. Conceptual art built off the practicality of minimalism and esoterically questioned the value of the thought behind the art. Conceptual artists such as Joseph Kosuth and Vito Acconci challenged art audiences with these works.²⁶ Kosuth and Acconci both provide point of entry through Conceptual Art into the final relevant movement referenced, institutional critique.²⁷ Developing in the

²³ *Ibid.*, 68-70; Wanda Corn, *The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity, 1915-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

²⁴ Doss, *Twentieth-Century American Art.*, 163-68; Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in *The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 4: Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957-1969*, Edited by John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

²⁵ Doss, *Twentieth-Century American Art*, 154-59.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 169-176.

²⁷ Institutional Critique is not as easily recognized as a style in the ways that Pop Art or Abstract Expressionism are, and the argument can even be made that Pop Art itself is a type of institutional critique and served as a catalyst for the genre as it is now known.

1970s, institutional critique used various media to address issues relevant to the art museum as institution.²⁸

Each of these movements focused more deeply on incorporating criticism and theory into the actual works of art themselves. In recent years, institutional critique, an art technique that used museological methods to comment on the state of museums and galleries, has become a subject featured in published texts such as Andrew McClellan's *The Art Museum: From Boulée to Bilbao* (University of California Press, 2008), which was one of the first texts devoted solely to the conceptual growth and change of the art museum.²⁹ In addition to published texts, institutional critique has been the choice topic for graduate master's theses, such as Heidi Bennion Willis' *Critical Crisis: Institutional Critique of the Art Museum in America (1958-2008)* (Brigham Young University, 2008) and Hollis Mutch's *Institutional Critique: Artists Focus on Museological Issues* (Baylor University, 2008). As the twenty-first century dates of these publications indicate, the museum profession has only recently begun to wrestle with the impact of institutional critique. The attempts made thus far have failed to identify the movement as a possible by-product of the evolution of museum practice and in context of the changing levels of conceptual and institutional awareness among professional artists.³⁰

²⁸ Angela L. Miller, Janet C. Berlo, Bryan Wolf and Jennifer L. Roberts, *American Encounters* (Upper Saddle River, NJ.: Prentice Hall, 2007), 613-615.

²⁹ See my definition of institutional critique on page 2 of this chapter; Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boulée to Bilbao* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008).

³⁰ Heidi Bennion Willis, "Critical Crisis: Institutional Critique of the Art Museum in America (1958-2008)," Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2008; Hollis Mutch, "Institutional Critique: Artists Focus on Museological Issues," Master's thesis, Baylor University, 2008.

The Artist Emerges as Curator – Andy Warhol (1928-1987)

Two shifts—one in the training of professional artists in the mid-twentieth century and the second in the kinds of art being made—provide insight into the role of the artist as curator. The shift that occurred in the training of professional artists in the mid-twentieth century, as well as the types of art that were being made, can perhaps be seen as a window of opportunity to explore the role of artist as curator. Significantly, the aforementioned Andy Warhol-curated the aforementioned 1970 “Raid the Ice Box I” exhibition at the Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)—the first cited instance of an artist serving as curator—occurred on university grounds, in a university sponsored museum.³¹

Before examining this pinnacle exhibition, I will first look at the development of Andy Warhol as the artist we know today. Although he came to fame with his seemingly straightforward presentations of American consumer goods in the 1960s, Warhol had previously established himself as successful commercial illustrator.³² His career as an illustrator formally began after his graduation from the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1949.³³ After graduation, Warhol moved to New York City and within months had been hired as a free-lance illustrator for *Glamour* magazine.³⁴ He would continue to work as an illustrator and secure accounts with numerous

³¹ Schaffner, “Deep Storage,” 16.

³² Calvin Tomkins, “Raggedy Andy,” in *Andy Warhol*, ed. John Coplans (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1970), 8-9.

³³ Kynaston McShine, ed., *Andy Warhol: A Retrospective* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989), 402-403.

³⁴ Tina S. Fredericks, “Remembering Andy / An Introduction,” in *Pre-Pop Warhol*, by Jesse Kornbluth (New York: Random House, 1988), 9- 12.

companies such as I. Miller, Bergdorf-Goodman, Tiffany's, Tiber Press, and Columbia Records. Warhol's earliest encounters with fellow pop artists Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns occurred while he worked as a background illustrator for window displays at the Bonwit Teller department store.³⁵ This experience can be cited as one of the first times Warhol expressed his sense of curatorial aesthetics.

In 1962, The Stable Gallery exhibited works by Warhol including his now notorious Campbell's soup cans. This gallery showing is recognized as his first major exhibition, and it was the catalyst for Warhol's fine art career. Shortly after the Stable exhibition, Warhol established his "Factory," and his success continued to grow.³⁶ On June 3, 1968, Warhol's career was placed on a sudden halt when he was shot by Valerie Solanis.³⁷ He spent the following year recovering from the near-fatal incident.³⁸

These events contributed significantly to the development of Warhol as an artist, and I believe they are important to his decision to curate "Raid the Icebox I" at the Rhode Island School of Design. Warhol had gained ample experience designing installations to lure consumers into department stores during the 1950s, and his work of the 1960s at his "Factory" prepared him to contextualize and derive meaning from the relationship shared between objects. Perhaps most significantly influential is his near-fatal shooting in 1968. This attack forced Warhol out of the public eye, a rarity for him at the time, and it is

³⁵ Calvin Tomkins, "Raggedy Andy," 9-10.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 13; Warhol's "Factory" raises the question of the role of the commercial curator—a question outside of the scope of this thesis, but worthy of further research.

³⁷ Kynaston McShine, *Andy Warhol: A Retrospective*, 412.

³⁸ Douglas C. McGill, "Andy Warhol, Pop Artist, Dies," *New York Times*, February 23, 1987.

interesting that Warhol began a much more private pursuit of work with utter control of his surroundings in the year following this incident.

In 1969, Warhol was approached by the RISD museum after being recommended as a potential guest curator by art patrons Jean and Dominique de Menil (Figure 1). The Menils had been courted by then-director Daniel Robbins in hopes of providing funding for a storage expansion in the museum to make available more organized and reliable storage. Yet, instead of funding the expansion, the de Menils proposed a special exhibition that would utilize contemporary artists in the role of curators to generate publicity for the museum and some of its lesser known collections. It is of note that Andy Warhol was both the first and last artist the museum approached to undertake such an endeavor.³⁹

As RISD professor Debora Bright recounts, “Warhol was ambivalent about the project from the start, but his business manager Fred Hughes, who relished his new role as Warhol’s agent, was eager to exploit his close connections to the de Menils to feather his own and Andy’s nests.”⁴⁰ The exhibition took form through a series of visits in which Warhol toured the RISD museum’s collections storage and met with staff to design the installation. From these tours Warhol selected over four hundred objects to include in the exhibition, many of which were exhibited for the first time in the museum’s history. This number of objects is more than twice the size of an average large exhibition. Though Warhol seemed initially hesitant to participate in the exhibition, the opportunity to design such an exhibition for a

³⁹ Deborah Bright, “Shopping the Leftovers: Warhol’s collecting strategies in *Raid the Icebox I*,” *Art History* 24, No. 2 (April 2001), 278-280.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 282.

nationally recognized institution should be seen in the framework of his contextual disposition to blur the lines between low and high art.⁴¹ The prospect of re-installing a museum collection provided Warhol with even more ammunition to redefine these boundaries.⁴²

Warhol's tenure as curator at the museum has been noted in multiple sources as a point of stress for staff members and the museum itself.⁴³ Deborah Bright describes the juxtaposition of the professional staff and Warhol, stating: "Museum curators are, by definition, object experts, connoisseurs and professionals, but their conventional categories of classification were thrown into turmoil by Warhol's method of selection, that seemed random, indiscriminate and maliciously indifferent to value." For instance, while touring the painting collection, Warhol consistently refused paintings for exhibition which represented the highest caliber works of the collection, and instead selected a number of paintings for display as they were found, stacked against a wall with sandbags around them (Figure 2).

⁴¹ Warhol's interest in redefining the hierarchy of art objects is best illustrated through this his works from the Factory, his personal studio, which allowed for high art to embrace the commodities of consumer culture.

⁴² Michael Lobel, "Warhol's Closet," *Art Journal* 55, no. 4 (Winter 1996), 44-45.

⁴³ *Ibid.*; Bright, "Shopping the Leftovers: Warhol's collecting strategies in Raid the Icebox I;" Andy Warhol and Stephen E. Ostrow, *Raid the Icebox I With Andy Warhol: An Exhibition selected from the storage vaults of the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design* (Providence, Rhode Island: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 1969).



Figure 2. *Andy Warhol with Dominique de Menil* (from *Raid the Icebox I* with Andy Warhol, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design). 1969. RISD Digital Image Database.

The works would be installed in the gallery just as they had been found in storage.⁴⁴ Warhol's refusal to select specific works and instead request the exhibition of collections in their entirety or of collections deemed second-rate astonished and offended the curatorial staff.⁴⁵ This universal approach to curating at RISD does not reflect a one-

⁴⁴ Bright, "Shopping the Leftovers: Warhol's collecting strategies in *Raid the Icebox I*," 280.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 284-286.



Figure 3. *European Paintings in Storage* (from *Raid the Icebox I* with Andy Warhol, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design). 1970. RISD Digital Image Database.

time occurrence or inexperience on behalf of Warhol. It instead reflects a now well-known quasi-methodology utilized by Warhol for his own personal collection.⁴⁶

In addition, responsibility for Warhol's requests for the exhibition were assigned to then Chief Curator Stephen Ostrow, who was specifically charged with providing catalogue information for each of the four hundred objects Warhol selected for the exhibition. In an email correspondence with Bright's research assistant, Ostrow admitted in 1998 that he was unenthusiastic to be charged with this task. Instead of conducting primary research, he simply requested the information available from the

⁴⁶ Loebel, "Warhol's Closet," 42-46; Andy Warhol was a notorious packrat. The re-organization of his personal collection without a thorough documentation of his methods after his death for auction remains a source of contention among scholars interested in collecting habits.

registrar's office to be prepared for print without additional research.⁴⁷ Ostrow's and other museum staff's disinterest in collaboration opens discussion of the reception of the exhibition—both by the museum audience and academia.

The overall interpretation of this exhibition must also recognize the foresight into future trends that Director Daniel Robbins had in creating an exhibition that was aimed not only at cultivated but also a currently underserved constituency. Robbins recognized a discrepancy between the museum and its constituency, particularly the museum's failing ability to be utilized as a tool by the RISD student body. In conceiving the exhibition, "...Robbins hoped that "Raid the Icebox I" would help to bridge the cultural gap between the museum and school."⁴⁸ Robbins' vision of the exhibition serving as a vehicle for reunion between these bodies was not well-received by the student body, who for the most part avoided the exhibition.⁴⁹ The student body would not be the only group to respond negatively to the exhibition.

In a 1970 *Art Journal* review, Patricia Elsen took the "Raid the Icebox I" exhibition to task for its Duchampian aesthetic, questioning whether "...the exhibition raises more questions than it deserves."⁵⁰ Elsen felt Warhol's juxtaposition of objects drew heavily on the comparative methods of the art history discipline and failed to create an authentic and engaging dialogue between the objects. It is of interest that this

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 286; Ostrow also went on to describe how the experience with Warhol later inspired him to return to the collection and try his hand at utilizing the collection reserves in new ways.

⁴⁸ Bright, "Shopping the Leftovers: Warhol's collecting strategies in Raid the Icebox I," 282.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Patricia Elsen, "Catalogue Reviews," *Art Journal* 29, no. 4 (Summer 1970), 472.

exhibition, which opened at Rice University in Houston and traveled to RISD and the Isaac Delgado Museum – now known as the New Orleans Museum of Art, was poorly received upon its opening, but in recent years has been embraced as a landmark exhibition and career highlights for the museum professional staff that was involved with it, such as Daniel Robbins.⁵¹

The frictions that arose during “Raid the Icebox I” allow for a greater understanding of the changing professional expectations for museum staff that were presented through the university induced duality of the artist/curator. Museum professionals were now working with artists who not only produced art but also organized exhibitions, thought critically and wrote about, and cared for art. The questions that followed this groundbreaking practice are: Can artists serve as curators outside of the university gallery and museum? Are all installations by artist/curators a form of institutional critique? And finally, what “Raid the Icebox I” seemed to question most – is curating an art? Answers to these questions can be found through further exploration of theoretical development and artist/curator practices of the 1970s.

The history of artists mobilizing as advocates for themselves can be traced back to the Independents’ Exhibition in 1874 Paris, the so-called First Impressionists’ exhibition. That notorious exhibition was in many ways a response to the strictures of the Academy and its annual Salons. Momentum in the United States increased in the 1950s, hand in

⁵¹ Michael Kimmelman, “Daniel Robbins, 62; Was Art Historian And a Modernist.” *The New York Times*, January 18, 1995; In his 1995 obituary, Daniel Robbins received high accolades for his involvement and promotion of contemporary art, particularly during his tenure at Rhode Island School of Design and for his involvement with “Raid the Icebox I.”

hand with the rise of Clement Greenberg's modernist theory published in 1960.⁵² As minimalism and conceptual art flourished, "artists recognized the power that curators wielded with and on their art and attempted to wrest that power back from the institution."⁵³ Warhol's 1970 curatorial installation was followed by other newsworthy events such as the 1971 protests against the Whitney Museum of American Art's exhibition, *Survey of Black Art*, which was highly controversial because of its failure to present an accurate history of the subject, as well as a strike at the Museum of Modern Art by the Professional and Staff Association (PASTA) which was supported by artists such as Willem de Kooning and Sol LeWitt, to name only two.⁵⁴

The 1970s represented a difficult time for the museum profession as museums debated their purpose and the importance of education. In her graduate thesis "Critical Crisis: Institutional Critique of Art Museums in America (1958-2008)", Heidi Bennion Willis identifies the dilemma in which museums were faced with, "The debate reflected a

⁵² For a more comprehensive look at Greenberg's modernist theory, please see John O'Brian, ed., *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 4 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

⁵³ Willis, "Critical Crisis: Institutional Critique of the Art Museum in America (1958-2008)," 20.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 41; It is important to note that the Whitney Museum of American Art exhibition *Survey of Black Art* was publicly protested in 1971 by artists, art historians, and critics alike because of its failure to provide an accurate history of Black Art in America and not because of its conception. The constituency that protested the exhibition felt strongly that the Whitney approached this exhibition with little preparation and consciously overlooked numerous black artists whom deserved to be included in such an exhibition. The 1971 PASTA strike at the Museum of Modern Art is notable historically because it represents the first actions taken by a union organized for museum professionals and shows the developing camaraderie and shared identity between artists and museum professionals.

kind of crisis of identity—a self-evaluation and renewed or adjusted commitment.”⁵⁵ It is interesting that during this period, Willis denotes that there is a distinct shift in the trend of institutional critique from artist to museum administration induced critique:

Throughout the period from the mid ‘70s to the early ‘90s, theorists, artists, and museum administrators alike acknowledged the limits and imperfections of the museum system. Largely in agreement with one another, and partly responding to the previous critique [institutional], they jointly considered the museum’s identity, evaluated its limits, and weighed its interests and obligations.

If institutional critique is a movement or style of art, how can it be continued by a group including a majority of non-artists for a period recognized by Willis that spans almost twenty years? This period is too great to be overlooked as a flash in the pan movement and should instead be recognized as a significant point in history where conceptualized art truly transcended idea and became a physical art. If art can be made by non-artists, then the appropriation of curatorial responsibilities for collection and exhibition could also potentially be accepted as a medium for art.

This period is markedly different than previous periods of art development as artists are identified for the first time as an integral part of the museum infrastructure. Artists begin to move their work outside of the grasp of galleries and museums through earthworks and happenings, as well as a greater promotion of public art through the endorsement of art history in the public sphere.⁵⁶ In addition to the movements of earthworks and happenings, a new genre of art was being developed in the American university that would further open the gates for curatorial-driven American art.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

*Norman Daly, Artist and Curator (1911-2003): Creating Both
Object and Installation*⁵⁷

In 1971 the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art at Cornell University opened a new exhibition by Cornell Professor Norman Daly entitled, “An Exhibition of Artifacts from the Recent Excavations of Vanibo, Houndee, Draikum, and other sites.”⁵⁸ This exhibition is the first known showing of work recognized as archaeological fiction, a subcategory of a greater movement known as fictive art. Fictive art is a genre of art that creates a new artifact whose understanding is contingent on engaging a historical past.⁵⁹ Comprised of over 150 multimedia objects, this exhibition presented an invented culture in its entirety, featuring a vast range of objects from those of everyday use to ritualistic. The exhibition presented the culture in a manner so believable that even some of Daly’s own colleagues were shocked to discover that it was in fact, a fake.⁶⁰

Daly makes a good case study for the new type of artists that emerged during this period. He was both a professor and practicing studio artist who joined the Cornell

⁵⁷ Portions from this section of Chapter Three were presented at the 2010 ICMAH Annual International Conference “Original-Copy-Fake: On the Significance of the Object in History and Archaeology Museums” in Shanghai, China in October 2010. The paper, “The Potential of Museum *ARTifacts*: Meta-Historical Art in the Museum World,” will be included in the proceedings publication from this conference.

⁵⁸ These putative archaeological sites were inventions of the artist; Norman Daly and the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, *The Civilization of Llhuros* (Ithaca: Office of University Publications, 1971).

⁵⁹ Norman Daly and Beauvais Lyons, “The Civilization of Llhuros”: The First Multimedia Exhibition in the Genre of Archaeological Fiction.” *Leonardo* 24, no. 3 (1991), 265; “It is the first conceptualization of an entire civilization presented as an archaeological discovery and installed as an anthropological study.”

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 265-266.

University faculty in 1942 after completing a M.F.A. at Ohio State University.⁶¹ While Daly falls just prior to the post-World War II enrollment boom, his tenure at Cornell University aligns with it.⁶² In addition, Daly had experience outside of the university as a lecturer in French and Italian museums for the Parsons School of Design from 1950-1951, as well as serving as a museum consultant for the Roberson Art Center in Binghamton, New York from 1966-1967. These two experiences affected Daly greatly, and he noted specifically about his experience at the Roberson Art Center, “I had previously studied museum training and was reminded of how the factors of placement, position, partial or full enclosure, flow and barriers, lighting, color, and texture determine the vitality and intrigue of a museum installation.”⁶³

Daly’s awareness of the curatorial role was also strengthened through his experience as a museum consultant with responsibilities for writing label copy and preparing the instructional material for the installation of traveling exhibitions, as well as the exhibitions themselves. Most insightful as to Daly’s awareness of the curatorial role, which was entering a state of flux during this period, is his interest in incorporating interpretive narrative, comparative viewing, mental reconstruction, and planned interference into the exhibition of *The Civilization of Llhuros*—techniques commonly utilized in the museum profession.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 266; It is also worth noting that as an undergraduate Daly’s works were influenced by New Mexico’s Indian Culture and that he completed graduate work in Art History as well.

⁶² Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 158, 163-64.

⁶³ Norman Daly and Beauvais Lyons, “‘The Civilization of Llhuros’: The First Multimedia Exhibition in the Genre of Archaeological Fiction,” 266.

Daly undoubtedly grew familiar with the use of interpretive narrative and comparative viewing (asking audiences to compare and contrast two or more images) through his familiarity and various museum employments. Mental reconstruction was an imaginative practice encouraged by Daly that would allow the audience to visualize objects on new scales. An instance from the exhibition that illustrates this technique was the incorporation of an image of a mural accompanied by a fragmentary piece of said mural. The image of the mural was relatively small in scale when compared to the large fragment from the mural, the juxtaposition of which Daly hoped invited the audience to envision the mural on a much larger scale. Perhaps the technique most indicative of the changes to come in the museum profession, however, was the use of what Daly termed “planned interference.”⁶⁴

“In the exhibition, planned interference is a deliberate attempt to delay, block, and even challenge the credulity of the audience. The intention is to make the audience more conscious of its willingness to accept the imaginary or the improbable.”⁶⁵ Daly conceptualized planned interference during attendance at an orchestral concert while on faculty at Cornell University. Fascinated by the ability for a sound or movement to distract his attention from the concert, Daly began to conceive ways of incorporating the technique intentionally and eventually developed his theory of planned interference. In *The Civilization of Llhuros*, planned interference manifests in oversights of artifacts such

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 266 – 269.

⁶⁵ Norman Daly and Beauvais Lyons, “‘The Civilization of Llhuros’: The First Multimedia Exhibition in the Genre of Archaeological Fiction,” 269.



Figure 4. Norman Daly. *Votive*. 1971. Metal. Photo. Image from *The Civilization of Llhuros* catalogue.

as an exposed serial number or visible product labeling on objects said to have been from the ancient culture (Figure 4 and Figure 5).⁶⁶

Was Daly questioning the credulity of the museum as had the institutional critique artists who emerged before him? Perhaps, but he was also utilizing a technique that would be recognized for its use by a nationally recognized institution seven years later in the publication of *The Art Museum As Educator* (University of California Press, 1978).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 267-269.

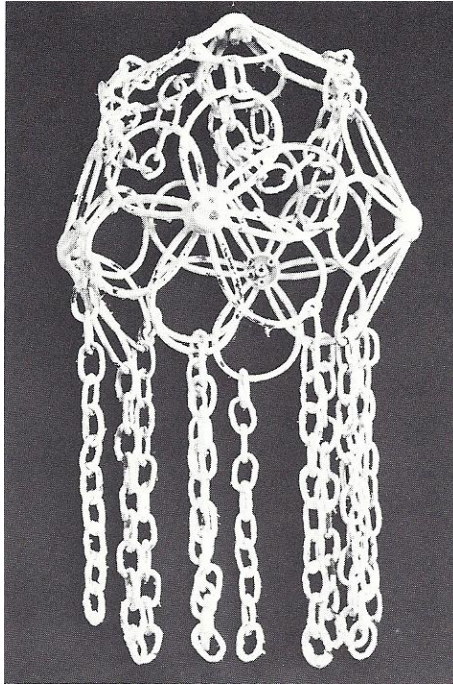


Figure 5: Norman Daly. *Helmet Worn by Temple Virgins* 1971. Metal. Photo. Image from *The Civilization of Llhuros* catalogue.

In “The Minneapolis Institute of Arts: ‘Fakes, Forgeries, and Other Deceptions,’ an Exhibition,” a case study is presented of an exhibition simultaneously featuring original works and skillfully completed replicas as an opportunity to promote connoisseurship in museum visitors. While there were no visual signs or consistent placement indicating which of the works were in fact replicas, there was narrative labeling to cue visitors as to the actuality of the works. Howard Gardner, a renowned American developmental psychologist and published museum education advocate, visited the exhibition and supported this manner of intellectual stimulation.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ John A. Hagerty, “The Minneapolis Institute of Arts: ‘Fakes, Forgeries, and Other Deceptions,’ an Exhibition,” in *The Art Museum as Educator: a Collection of Studies as Guides to Practice and Policy*. Edited by Barbara Y. Newsom and Adele Z. Silver (Berkley: University of California Press, 1978), 86-88.

Daly's desire for audience interaction echoes a retort made by Andy Warhol during his "Raid the Icebox I" installation. When questioned about his decision to include the storage units, Warhol responded to this line of questions by suggesting that the opening and closing of the unit would provide a vehicle for audience participation.⁶⁸ While Warhol suggested a more literal participation, Daly aspired to challenge his audience to participate mentally as well through the incorporation of mental reconstruction and planned interference. Both Daly and Warhol's techniques showed general awareness of museum exhibition practice, an awareness at the time attributed to museum curators.

Although the inclusion of Andy Warhol and "Raid the Icebox I" will come as no surprise of scholars interested in the museum as medium or artist as curator, the inclusion of artist Norman Daly and the genre of fictive art might. This chapter has attempted to define the role of curator and outline the events which led to the emersion of the artist as curator. It has illustrated the various curatorial responsibilities these two artists engaged themselves in while creating their respective exhibitions. The question remains whether these artists can be considered curators, but before this question can be answered, further analysis of developments of concerning the artist / curator must be examined.

⁶⁸ Schaffner, "Deep Storage," 16; Ingrid Schaffner references David Bourdon's account of Warhol's visit to the RISD Museum of Art where he tours the collections in preparation for the exhibition, and when questioned about his intention to include the storage cabinet holding the objects he selected, Warhol responds proactively to the idea of the visitor being allowed to investigate the exhibition on his or her own.

CHAPTER FOUR

Artists as Museum Collaborators and Museum Creators

In 1954 Herbert Read published an article in the *College Art Journal* titled “The Museum and the Artist.” Read questioned the relationship shared between the artist and museum, asking, “What creative influence can the museum have on the artist, and what can the creative artist contribute to the functioning of the museum?”¹ At the time of the article’s publication, the relationship between the museum and the artist remained one-sided—the museum was either a place of influence and instruction for the artist or a place of exhibition for the artist. Read’s questioning of the contributing role of the artist to the museum was preceded nearly a decade earlier by universities and colleges questioning the role of artists as they sought to establish art as a university recognized discipline. As art became a formalized discipline within the university system, artists found themselves fulfilling new roles as professors and gallery directors. This resulted in a major growth in the recognition of university art programs, theory-based post-modernist art, and perhaps even the invitations for artists to serve in a curatorial capacity.

Today, art museum departments of education are the strongest allies with artists. “One of the most important contributions made by educators has been the commissioning of artists as collaborators in the engagement of audiences,” wrote journalist David

¹Herbert Read, “The Museum and the Artist,” *College Art Journal* 13, no. 4 (Summer 1954), 289.

Henry.² By recognizing the artist as a collaborator, the museum has restored a humanistic quality that for many visitors to art—as well as history, science, and cultural museums—has been lost; that no matter the age, many of the objects on view were either made by or at some point used by humans.

Alice Wexler, Associate Professor at the State University of New York at New Paltz, writes of the phenomenon of the importance of personal connection in art. She describes the impact of a personal connection as a “...possibility to penetrate the boundaries between looking and participating in art.”³ For museums in the twenty-first century, this has been articulated as a mandate by the American Association of Museums and has been achieved in numerous instances by museum collaboration with artists.

Most often manifesting itself in the form of an Artist-In-Residency program, an initiative to invite artists to collaborate with the museum to produce a named outcome, museums today are commissioning original artworks (both temporary and permanent) as well as inviting artists to temporarily join their staff and assist in programming. These initiatives have certainly benefitted from AAM educational mandates in the past forty years. Yet, in spite of their success, tension still exists within the internal museum structure regarding the quality of such programming. “Museum-based artists’ residencies, that publicly manifest strong pedagogical programming, are often quietly dismissed as being of lower quality by curators who still hold on to lingering notions of

² David Henry, “Artists as Museum Educators: The Less Told Story,” *Museum News* (November/December 2004), http://www.aamus.org/pubs/mn/MN_ND04_ArtistsMuseEd.cfm (accessed February 22, 2011).

³ Alice Wexler, “Museum Culture and the Inequities of Display and Representation,” *Visual Arts Research* 33, no. 1 (64) (2007), 25.

purity,” states artist Ernesto Pujol in regards to the professional perception of artist’s residencies.⁴

This chapter will consider artist-curator Fred Wilson, known for his collaborative works with museum institutions, and curator, entrepreneur David Wilson, known for his independently created Museum of Jurassic Technology (the two Wilsons are unrelated). Herbert Read declared in his article, “We need, not only artists, but also teachers; not only creators, but also interpreters,” and both of these artists are fulfilling all of these roles simultaneously.⁵

Fred Wilson (b.1954) Mines the Museum

The most well-known artist working within this vein of artist as curator without a doubt is Fred Wilson (born 1954). His 1992-93 installation *Mining the Museum* at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore forever changed the museum world as he re-examined interpretive perspectives which had been taken for granted. During a one year residency, Wilson organized an exhibition of objects from the society’s permanent collections that thoughtfully questioned whose history was being told through the objects and their installation in exhibitions. ““The museums don’t know where to put me because I’m not a registrar. I’m not a curator,”” Wilson stated in a 1993 *Museum News* publication.⁶ As Wilson notes, a change was happening in the museum and a new niche for artists was being carved out. By examining Wilson and other contemporary artists

⁴ Ernesto Pujol, “The Artist as Educator: Challenges in Museum-Based Residencies,” *Art Journal* 60, no. 3 (Autumn 2001), 5.

⁵ Read, “The Museum and the Artist,” 291.

⁶ Donald Garfield, “Making the Museum Mine: An Interview with Fred Wilson,” *Museum News*, (May/June 1993), 47.

working in a similar vein, the relationship of artist to museum as well as the role of artist functioning in the educational capacity can be further explored.

It is essential to understand Fred Wilson's internal affiliation with museums and the educator. Wilson first began visiting museums with his mother, an educator, as a child. Wilson acknowledged the impact that visiting a wide array of museums initially had on him in a number of interviews with *Museum News*, as well as exhibition catalogues.⁷ He first began working in museums while an art student at the State University of New York in Purchase (he would graduate in 1976). During this period, he maintained a position as a museum guard at the Neuberger Museum, which also happened to be the location of the classes in his art program.⁸

In addition to working at the Neuberger, Wilson also worked as an educator for the Metropolitan Museum of Art while a college student. His experience at the Metropolitan was a résumé builder and was a starting point for employment after graduation. After graduating he was hired by an East Harlem arts program. In this position, Wilson both taught art programs and also hired other New York artists to work in partner museums in the area.⁹ Wilson's museum experience also included a period as

⁷ *Ibid.*,

⁸ Garfield, "Making the Museum Mine: An Interview with Fred Wilson," 48; This experience would be capitalized on later in Wilson's work with installations such as *Guarded View* which features four African American guards lined up.

⁹ Lisa Corrin, Leslie King-Hammond and Ira Berlin, eds., *Mining the Museum: An Installation / by Fred Wilson* (Baltimore: The Contemporary; New York: New Press: Distributed by W.W. Norton, 1994), 27-28.

an educator at both the American Museum of Natural History and the American Craft Museum, as well as a brief stint as an art handler at the Museum of Modern Art.¹⁰

By 1981 Fred Wilson had been hired by the Just Above Midtown Gallery and had left his position in East Harlem. In discussing his various positions within the museum profession, Wilson acknowledges the important role they played in connecting him to the arts community. This was especially true for the Just Above Midtown Gallery. While working for the gallery, Wilson was placed in charge of the organization of a program that addressed the industry needs of the art community and artist. Wilson saw this time as fundamental to his growth and understanding of his own personal desire within the museum industry and sought out the opportunity to organize his very first exhibition. Shortly after, Wilson was hired to run the Longwood Art Gallery funded by The Bronx Council for the Arts. Wilson installed two major exhibitions – *Room With a View: The Struggle Between Culture and Content and the Context of Art* (1987) at the Longwood Art Gallery and *The Other Museum* at White Columns (1990) (Figure 6) – that solidified the museum as his medium and opened the gates to his biggest commission yet.¹¹

Lisa Corrin, then assistant director of for the Museum of Contemporary Arts (more commonly referred to as The Contemporary) in Baltimore, can be credited as the catalyst for the “Mining the Museum” exhibition. The Contemporary, founded in 1989,

¹⁰ Garfield, “Making the Museum Mine: An Interview with Fred Wilson,” 47-48.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 31-32; It is of note to recognize that this period represents a simultaneous work ethic in both Wilson’s museum and gallery employment as well as his work as a studio artist. Wilson never gave up the pursuit of his studio work, but he did make significant shift in his work from large scale public sculpture to more institution-focused installations.



Figure 6. Fred Wilson. *The Other Museum* (Exhibited at White Columns). 1990. ARTstor Collection, Contemporary Art (Larry Qualls Archive). Photograph by Larry Qualls.

then was a young contemporary art museum in Maryland whose mission was to redefine the museum as it was currently known. Having already mounted a number of exhibitions in the Baltimore area, Corrin invited Wilson to Baltimore and facilitated the collaboration between Wilson, The Contemporary and the Maryland Historical Society.¹²

Wilson was given free-reign in the collections of the Maryland Historical Society and completed a residency of over thirteen months which culminated in an exhibition (Figure 7). To give Wilson the freedom deemed necessary to create the exhibition, the Maryland Historical Society was expected to treat Wilson as a professional member of the staff fulfilling various roles – curator, educator, registrar, director, etc. – and provided

¹² *Ibid.*; Garfield, “Making the Museum Mine: An Interview with Fred Wilson,” 46-49, 90.



Figure 7. Fred Wilson. *Mining the Museum* (Exhibited at Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore). 1992. ARTstor Collection, Contemporary Art (Larry Qualls Archive). Photograph by Larry Qualls.

Wilson with an unbiased staff of volunteers with specialty areas in history – both museum history and local/state history, as well as other areas.¹³

The result of Wilson's residency was opened to the public on April 4, 1992. The exhibition called "Mining the Museum" was mounted on the third floor of the Historical Society and featured numerous objects that had never been exhibited in the society's one hundred and forty plus year history.¹⁴ Visitors were oriented with a video on the ground floor then were taken by elevator to the third floor and the exhibition. Wilson used a number of museological tools to construct his exhibition. Most important, however, and unique to his approach was his use of irony. Wilson's use of ironic didactic labeling in the opening gallery was evident for example in the pairing of three busts from the Society's collection of Napoleon Bonaparte, Henry Clay, and Andrew Jackson with three

¹³ Corrin, *Mining the Museum: An Installation / by Fred Wilson*, 12; Bias here is used in reference to the staff's familiarity and predisposition to the collection and exhibition techniques and less towards Wilson as an artist working in the museum capacity. Wilson was ultimately given "studio" space that had previously been the president of the board of trustee's office.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, lxxi, 11.

empty pedestals labeled Benjamin Banneker, Frederick Douglas, and Harriet Tubman (Figure 8 and Figure 9). Wilson's labeling proposed a question to the audience—Where are the statues of these historically important figures? The question that would ring throughout the exhibition would be whose history is really being told here?¹⁵

Mining the Museum was received with critical acclaim from the public and the academic community, and it even won the American Association of Museum's Fifth Annual Curators Committee Exhibition Competition in its category.¹⁶ One child who visited the exhibition is recorded in the exhibition catalogue stating, "I like Fred Wilson, he asks more questions than he answers."¹⁷ Describing the professional community's response, Randi Korn, renowned museum planning, evaluation, and research consultant, commented in her review of the exhibition, "Museum professionals who visited the Maryland Historical Society to see *Mining the Museum* said it was a landmark exhibit: it made them feel humble and lost; they were dazed by the heartfelt questions it raised about history, truth, value, ownership, interpretive perspective."¹⁸ The question that arises from Korn's assessment is how did Wilson do it? How did he create a narrative

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13; Randi Korn, "Review: [untitled]," in "The Multicultural Museum: A Medley of Voices," special issue, *The Journal of Museum Education* 18, no. 2 (Spring-Summer 1993), 22; Judith E. Stein, "Sins of Omission: Fred Wilson's *Mining the Museum*," *Art in America* (October 1993): 110-15.

¹⁶ Korn, "Review: [untitled]," 22; The exhibition competed in the category of exhibitions with a budget of \$50,000 or less.

¹⁷ Corrin, *Mining the Museum: An Installation / by Fred Wilson*, 18.

¹⁸ Korn, "Review: [untitled]," 22.



Figure 8. Fred Wilson. *Mining the Museum* (Exhibited at Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore). 1992. ARTstor Collection, Contemporary Art (Larry Qualls Archive). Photograph by Larry Qualls.



Figure 9. Fred Wilson. *Mining the Museum* (Exhibited at Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore). 1992. ARTstor Collection, Contemporary Art (Larry Qualls Archive). Photograph by Larry Qualls.

that would connect with over 55,000 visitors and be the Maryland Historical Society's most visited exhibition in its institutional history?¹⁹

Sydney R. Walker, author of *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking*, discusses the impact Wilson's museum past had had on him, stating, "Wilson's experience in museum education departments had sensitized him to consider the museum's role in society, its practices, and its possibilities. Without these experiences, Wilson's artmaking likely would have moved in another direction." Walker's conclusion is justified when compared to Wilson's own statements about his experience. Reflecting on his museum experience, Wilson commented to Donald Garfield in 1993 after detailing his work at the Metropolitan and other New York museums, "This, in retrospect, was a really linchpin experience."²⁰ In an interview with Martha Buskirk in 1994, Wilson stated, "I've been asked if my work came from various theoretical discussions, but actually it didn't; it came from my experience in museums."²¹ Building upon Wilson's statements, it is logical to deduce that without his experience and background in the museum that the

¹⁹ Erika Doss, *Twentieth-Century American Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2002), 245; Angela L. Miller, Janet C. Berlo, Bryan Wolf and Jennifer L. Roberts, *American Encounters* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007), 642.

²⁰ Garfield, "Making the Museum Mine: An Interview with Fred Wilson," 48.

²¹ Martha Buskirk, Sherrie Levine, Louise Lawler and Fred Wilson, "Interviews with Sherrie Levine, Louise Lawler, and Fred Wilson," in "The Duchamp Effect," special issue, *October* 70 (Autumn 1994), 109; "I've been asked if my work came from various theoretical discussions, but actually it didn't; it came from my experience in museums. Having worked as both a curator and an artist, there is a big difference between the two. With curating, the whole notion of irony is not involved, often for good reason – because the public in the museum space often expects some form of universal truth or knowledge, a notion I hold suspect. The fact that I'm an artist in an institution gives the viewer a certain leeway in how to respond to this work. All my work is extremely personal. In curating, that is forced more to the background because of the emphasis on so-called objective scholarship, which tends to make the viewers passive in their experience of the exhibition. I'm always trying to push the exhibitions farther than I would expect a museum curator to go."

revolutionary exhibition or installation of *Mining the Museum* at the Maryland Historical Society would have never happened.²²

This brings us back to the question posed by Herbert Read that opened this chapter, “What creative influence can the museum have on the artist, and what can the creative artist contribute to the functioning of the museum?”²³ In the case of Fred Wilson, the museum inspired his medium, museological methods, and his conceptual thought process; Wilson reminded museum professionals about an essential truth about history: that it is malleable. History is written by those in culturally dominant positions, and he gave back to the museum a method of connecting with a community not reached by the museum and a way of scrutinizing the authority of historical perspective— whose story is the museum responsible to tell, and how can that story be told when objects are not present? But what happens if the story that needs to be told is a story that was once believed to be true, but is now proven false? Or what if the story was never true to begin with, but by telling this story, a greater means can be served?

Artists Create Their Own Museums: David Wilson (b.1946)

In 1989 a small storefront museum opened in Culver City, California (Figure 10). Founded and directed by David Hildebrand Wilson, the Museum of Jurassic Technology has become a cultural phenomenon. It was the subject of Lawrence Weschler’s *Mr. Wilson’s Cabinet of Wonder* (shortlisted for the Pulitzer Prize) and has been recognized by institutions such as the Smithsonian as one of “Eight Unusual All American

²² Sydney R Walker, *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking* (Worcester, Mass: Davis Publications, 2001), 31-35.

²³ Read, “The Museum and the Artist,” 289.



Figure 10. David Wilson. *The façade of the Museum of Jurassic Technology*. Culver City, California. Photograph by Jennifer Bastian (Metropolis Magazine, December 29, 2006).

Museums.”²⁴ Before proceeding, it must be made clear that there is no relationship between David Wilson (born 1946) and the previously discussed artist, Fred Wilson (born 1954). Though both worked with museological approaches, David Wilson

²⁴Lawrence Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder* (Toronto: Pantheon, 1995); Tony Petrotlett, “The Museum of Jurassic Technology,” in *Smithsonian Magazine* (June 2011). <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/Eight-All-American-Curiosities-The-Museum-of-Jurassic-Technology.html> (accessed September 17, 2011).

established his own museum. The Museum of Jurassic Technology is an actual incorporated 503(C) non-profit organization.²⁵

David Wilson had no formal training in the museum profession. He earned a bachelor's degree from Kalamazoo College, Michigan, in urban entomology with a minor in art. Wilson spent a number of years working a variety of jobs after his graduation in 1969, but ultimately found himself enrolling as a student at the California Institute of the Arts in 1974.²⁶ He studied at Cal Arts for two years in Experimental Animation, graduating in 1976 with a Master of Fine Arts degree.²⁷ It was during this time that Wilson established himself as an emerging short film maker. His work in film ultimately led him to the installation work that he does today.²⁸

Prior to his work with the Museum of Jurassic Technology, Wilson did an installation in 1980 at the Pasadena Film Forum. The theater was to be closed during the summer, and Terry Cannon, then responsible for the programming, contacted Wilson about a possible temporary installation. The installation mounted by Wilson consisted "... of four exquisitely evocative, dream-like vitrine-dioramas, each of them fronted by a stereoscopic viewing device modeled on the catoptric (or so-called beam-splitting) camera."²⁹ Inside the vitrines, Wilson projected short videos which he had created. The installation was open throughout the summer and was a rather successful exhibition based

²⁵ Internal Revenue Service, "Search for Charities," Online Version of Publication 78, Internal Revenue Service, <http://www.irs.gov/app/pub-78/> (accessed December 15, 2011).

²⁶ Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder*, 45; Kalamazoo College, "People in the News," Kalamazoo College, <http://www.kzoo.edu/pr/insidek/peopleinnews.html> (accessed September 17, 2011).

²⁷ CalArts. "School of Film/Video Alumni," School of Film/Video, <http://filmvideo.calarts.edu/alumni> (accessed September 17, 2011).

²⁸ Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder*, 46-50.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

on the positive word of mouth response from the community. Wilson continued to make these small museum-styled installations and exhibit them in community venues.

The actual idea for the Museum of Jurassic Technology came to Wilson in 1984, according to his wife, Diana Wilson, but it was not until 1988 that the museum had a permanent home of 1500 square feet at 9341 Venice Boulevard. After securing this location, Wilson began gathering the materials he had loaned to local galleries, museums, and community centers and installed them permanently at the Museum of Jurassic Technology. At the time of Weschler's book, the museum was run on a combination of income Wilson earned from his animation business, grants, and sheer luck. One of the difficulties the museum encountered in attempting to secure funding is that most grant agencies were not sure where Wilson's museum fit into their Linnaean system of eligible institutions.³⁰

Wilson's museum is unlike other museums most visitors have ever come in contact with. Commenting on this very idea in the 2004 documentary *Inhaling the Spore*, Wilson states, "We do present material that many other museums wouldn't present, looking into areas that are out of the sharp focus of the cultural eye. We find ourselves looking into those areas and finding astonishing things to draw on."³¹ The line between fantasy and fiction is often blurred in exhibitions at The Museum of Jurassic Technology, which include natural history and science, as well as art. Wilson's exhibitions feature numerous miniatures that require scientific amplification in order to be seen, as well as

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 51-55; Petrotlett, "The Museum of Jurassic Technology."

³¹ *Inhaling the Spore: A Journey through the Museum of Jurassic Technology*, Directed by Leonard Feinstein. (San Francisco, CA: Leonard Feinstein, 2004).

visual illustrations of historic medical remedies and phenomenon such as the human horn (Figure 11). Weschler summarizes Wilson's museum most accurately in his book when stating, "The visitor to the Museum of Jurassic Technology continually finds himself shimmering between wondering *at* (the marvels of nature) and wondering *whether* (any of this could possibly be true)."³² This dichotomy leads us to a discussion of Wilson's true intentions for the museum and whether or not the museum is solely a work of institutional critique or an independent museum in itself.

Lisa G. Corrin, co-curator of *Mining the Museum* and recently retired director of the Williams College Museum of Art, commented on the conceptual strategy behind the Museum of Jurassic Technology in the *Mining the Museum* catalogue, stating, "Wilson's method is to lead the museum visitor from the familiar to the unfamiliar by presenting quasi-scientific exhibitions that redefine the concept of what knowledge really is."³³ This idea of redefining knowledge—of rejecting the Linnaean knowledge system embraced by museums in the Enlightenment—has ironically allowed for scholars and art historians to classify Wilson in the genre of institutional critique and consider his work as a case closed, as illustrated by Lisa Corrin. But is Wilson's Museum of Jurassic Technology only a postmodern work of institutional critique? Can Wilson be defined as more than just an artist? Does Wilson's background in academic fine arts help make the case that Wilson's museum deserves more than recognition as an art installation?

In 2008 the American Association of Museums published National Standards and Best Practices for U.S. Museums with a commentary by Elizabeth Merritt. In this

³² Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder*, 60.

³³ Corrin, *Mining the Museum: An Installation / by Fred Wilson*, 6.



Figure 11. David Wilson. *The Horn of Mary Davis of Saughall, Museum of Jurassic Technology*. Culver City, CA. Photograph by Jennifer Bastian (Metropolis Magazine, December 29, 2006).

publication, AAM attempted to define a museum. It is of interest that the Museum of Jurassic Technology is mentioned in this effort. If “whether the organization has education as one of its core functions” is to be used a defining characteristic, then Merritt argues that the Museum of Jurassic Technology certainly must be included.³⁴ Susan A. Crane, Associate Professor of History at Arizona State University, uses the Museum of Jurassic Technology as a comparative institute in her essay, “Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum,” along with the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum

³⁴ American Association of Museums, *National Standards and Best Practices for U.S. Museums*, commentary by Elizabeth E. Merritt (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2008), 2.

and the United States Holocaust Museum in discussing the role in which historical consciousness effects the museum visitor. Crane describes Wilson's museum as,

Part installation art-performance, part curiosity cabinet, part testimony to the fact that truth is stranger than fiction, and purely David Wilson's creation... Inside, the museum provides an eclectic selection of professionally-designed, interactive displays (Mr. Wilson's other business is special effects design) of natural history, historical objects, and visiting exhibitions....³⁵

While Crane recognizes the value of the Museum of Jurassic Technology as art, her use of it as comparative model to such nationally established institutions indicates professional recognition of the institution as a museum.³⁶

In 2000 Maura C. Flannery, Professor of Biology and Associate Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at St. John's University, Jamaica, NY wrote in *The American Biology Teacher* about the power of wonder in education and specifically referenced the work of David Wilson's Museum of Jurassic Technology. Flannery defends the blurring of fact and fiction in the museum, as well as in other fictive artworks, asking, "How are people to judge where to draw the truth/fiction line? This is a difficult task even for trained scientists let alone for our students...."³⁷ Flannery's argument here represents the educational facilitation that museums and exhibitions such as Wilson's provide and recognizes their importance from the university level.

³⁵ Susan A. Crane, "Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum," "Producing the Past: Making Histories Inside and Outside the Academy," special issue, *History and Theory* 36, 36, no. 4 (December 1997), 44.

³⁶The University of Arizona, "Susan A. Crane," The University of Arizona, <http://scrane.web.arizona.edu/> (accessed September 17, 2011); Susan Crane is also the editor of the 2000 publication *Museums and Memory* by Stanford University Press.

³⁷ Maura C. Flannery, "Wonder-full," *The American Biology Teacher* 62, no. 5 (May 2000), 384.

Wilson's Museum of Jurassic Technology has been decidedly controversial among art historians and professionals in determining whether a museum such as David Wilson's is an art installation or a museum. Wilson is not alone in his creation of an independent museum or collection, nor was he the first, as evidenced through work by Norman Daly in the previous chapter. The Museum of Jurassic Technology builds upon existing objects and utilizes art installation to create a new narrative that has led many to write about the state of "wonder" which visitors are left in. In defining David Wilson's work in this manner, it is easy to see the connection to the work of Fred Wilson.

Fred Wilson began making pseudo –museum installations in galleries in New York in the 1980s, building upon objects that he collected and made, and he eventually moved into the museum to create new narratives utilizing museum collections. In another interesting parallel to David Wilson, much of the work that Fred Wilson did in the exhibition *Mining the Museum* utilized video or audio technologies. In Fred Wilson's narrative for *Mining the Museum*, the history of African Americans which had been very limited in previous installations of the collection, is given a dominant voice, telling a story which was not being heard. Once again, a parallel is drawn as we reflect on David Wilson's museum and his mission to show what other museums will not.

Perhaps the most astonishing similarity between Fred Wilson and David Wilson is that each has been named a MacArthur Fellow – Fred Wilson in 1999 and David Wilson in 2001. The grant is awarded on the basis of three criteria – "...exceptional creativity, promise for important future advances based on a track record of significant accomplishment, and potential for the fellowship to facilitate subsequent creative

work.”³⁸ The MacArthur Fellowship is commonly referred to as the “genius grant.” According to the foundation it is “intended to encourage people of outstanding talent to pursue their own creative, intellectual, and professional inclinations.”³⁹ Is it simply chance that these two contemporary artists working in a similar vein at approximately the same time received such a prestigious recognition within two years of one another?

Reflecting on the awarding of the MacArthur Grant to these two artist/curators, the question that opened this chapter asked by Herbert Read once again comes to the foreground—“What creative influence can the museum have on the artist, and what can the creative artist contribute to the functioning of the museum?”⁴⁰ The awarding of the MacArthur Grant recognizes the profound impact the foundation believes these two artists have had on both the art and museum world. Fred Wilson verbally credits the trajectory of his work to his experience in the museum profession, and the reception of *Mining the Museum* and his continued success in collaboration with other museum institutions verify the continuing impact his work has in the museum profession with regards to giving voice to narratives unheard in museum collections. While David Wilson has no trajectory of museum employment to credit as to the creative influence of the museum, he can credit the museum somewhat for his experience as a visual artist –

³⁸MacArthur Foundation, “About the Program - MacArthur Foundation,” MacArthur Foundation http://www.macfound.org/site/c.1kLXJ8MQKrH/b.4536879/k.9B87/About_the_Program.htm (accessed September 18, 2011).

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰MacArthur Foundation, “Fellows List - July 1999 - MacArthur Foundation,” MacArthur Foundation, http://www.macfound.org/site/c.1kLXJ8MQKrH/b.1142725/k.2948/Fellows_List_July_1999.htm (accessed September 18, 2011); MacArthur Foundation, “Fellows List - October 2001 – MacArthur Foundation,” MacArthur Foundation, http://www.macfound.org/site/c.1kLXJ8MQKrH/b.1142731/k.6679/Fellows_List_October_2001.htm (accessed September 18, 2011); In their respective descriptions in their class lists, Fred Wilson as described as “Installation Artist” and David Wilson as both “Artist and Curator,” Read, “The Museum and the Artist,” 289.

both formally through his academic training and through industry experience, as well as through childhood memory. In addition, David Wilson's partner in the Museum of Jurassic Technology, his wife, Diana Wilson, holds a doctoral degree in Anthropology from UCLA and works to repatriate Native American remains in collections across the United States. Diana Wilson's affiliation with the Museum of Jurassic Technology further deepens the potential relationship between museum and artist when considered. If we are to analyze what David Wilson gives back to the museum, the re-establishment of wonder and connoisseurship as an objective of the museum—as well as the creation of a personal experience of fascination, curiosity, and doubt—certainly are profound for the profession.

So, what can the artist give to the museum? The artist can give a refreshing look at material that museums have grown tired of. He or she can help museums re-imagine their collections and identify the varied values of the objects in their possession from aesthetic to presence to absence. The artist engages with the public openly, and for museums that struggle with connecting to their communities, artists can be used as a platform to find common ground with a museum's audience. It is no wonder that artists have worked heavily in cooperation with museum departments of education as they share such similar goals of forming connections. Yet, somehow viewing artists in the museum only through this perspective neglects to address the important issues that artists have raised in their exhibitions. Artists bring more than human connection—they bring intellectual thought and rigor to the museum table as well. Artists openly question what is and has been, and it is this curiosity and fearlessness that I will continue to explore in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Contemporary Artist/Curators

Artist, art critic, and Dean of the Yale School of Art Rob Storr and the regionally-acclaimed printmaker and professor Beauvais Lyons are the two most notable figures contributing to the artist-as-curator realm today. Each has operated outright as both artist and curator, and each continues to produce work in his respective field. Storr is serving as a consulting curator to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Dean of the Yale School of Art; Lyons teaches at the University of Tennessee and continues to produce exhibitions under the guise of *Hokes Archives*. This chapter will compare and contrast the two divergent opinions of these artist/curators on the subject in hopes of further clarifying the role of the artist/curator in contemporary galleries and museums.

Robert Storr (b. 1950)

Robert Storr is the epitome of the artist as curator. He began his academic career at Swarthmore College, graduating with high honors in French and History in 1972.¹ Following his graduation, he studied painting at the Boston Museum School and Harvard University and earned an M.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1978. His training in the liberal arts and formal visual arts equipped Storr to voice his opinions on art works. By 1981, he was a contributing editor to *Art in America*. He entered academia as a part-time professor on the East Coast at schools such as the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia and through the publication of volumes on American contemporary

¹ Swarthmore College, "President Bloom's Charge to Robert Storr '76," Swarthmore College, <http://www.swarthmore.edu/x18781.xml> (accessed November 29, 2011).

artists such as Chuck Close.² Storr's career as a curator truly took off in 1990 though when he was named as curator of the painting and sculpture department at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.³

Storr's hiring came at a time when MoMA struggled to identify its collecting and exhibiting prerogative with contemporary art, and his arrival heralded a change in attitudes among the institution. "From conversations I've had with Kirk [Varnedoe] and Dick Oldenburg and trustees, it's my perception that there's a real desire to do something now, and there are spaces and resources available that may not have been there before," Storr stated to the *New York Times* in an article that announced his new appointment.⁴ Storr's responsibilities as curator of painting and sculpture included the planning of exhibitions on contemporary works as well as fostering growth of MoMA's contemporary collections. In addition, Storr was charged with the responsibility of the "Projects" series – a rotation of small exhibitions of contemporary artists organized internally by staff members.⁵

One of Storr's earliest successes after his appointment at MoMA was "The Devil on the Stairs: Looking Back on the Eighties," an exhibition he co-curated for the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, which opened in 1991 at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia. The exhibition was recognized as one of the first surveys of art from the 1980s and was lauded for its audience-friendly approach. Storr intentionally chose to break down linguistic barriers when titling the sections of the

² Bruce Ferguson, "The Accidental Curator," *Artforum* (October 1994): 76-79, 116, 118.

³ Grace Glueck, "New Curator Named at the Modern," *New York Times*, September 14, 1990.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

exhibition, stating to a *Los Angeles Times* writer, “At a time when people are talking about the ‘deconstruction of the fetishtistic object,’ calling a bunch of sculptures ... just *Things* at least gets people back to a point where they can treat the object and not the language.”⁶ This breakdown was a formalization of Storr’s curatorial style – a return of art to the object and the object to the people, a method of communication that was noted even early on in his career as something which he related as the closest to his own artistic practice, painting. Storr even used a similar method in his critical works as he attempted to wrestle with artworks that perplexed and haunted him.⁷

Storr continued this pattern of bringing new ideas at MoMA as well with his 1994 exhibition “Mapping” and continued to be a source of interest to art writers as they explored Storr’s evolving role as curator. Storr recognized the institutional flaw in the polar model of exhibitions—either large statement exhibitions or smaller less significant exhibitions—and proposed a shorter interim exhibition that would allow the curatorial staff to test their own evolving thoughts on the state of contemporary art. “Mapping” was such an exhibition that created what Storr referred to as a “...slalom ride through a huge amount of art made over a long period of time. The idea is that if you cross-reference the things selected you’ll get a feel for the overall possibilities and variety of existing map-based work...,” though Storr did note that the vast number of extant works made it impossible for the exhibition to be comprehensive.⁸ Storr’s creativity was clearly at play in the formulation of the exhibition and gives us insight into his view of the curatorial role as one that requires not only visual but mental creativity.

⁶Cathy Curtis, “A Forward-Thinking Look at the ‘80s: Art: MOMA curator Robert Storr didn’t set out to record a decade but rather to plot a series of discoveries for viewers,” *LA Times*, June 12, 1992.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Ferguson, “The Accidental Curator,” 79.

Storr evidenced little change in his perspective of the curatorial role from “The Devil on the Stairs: Looking Back on the Eighties” in interviews after the exhibition but did suggest that the institutional constraints made curatorial creativity and risk-taking problematic.

Nowadays there are a lot of pressures on museums to play it safe. Eccentric purchases are discouraged not only because of the possible embarrassment of being ‘wrong’ in the long haul, but because the cost of mistakes has soared. But you simply have to set aside those constraints as best you can, and stick to your intuitions. The point is to get off the beaten track – to get out there and find out if anything’s happening, then if it isn’t go back again because something new might have shown up in the interim.⁹

In retrospect, this statement can be applied to the condition of MoMA prior to Storr’s arrival in 1990. Perhaps the evolving popularity of MoMA during the 1990s can be partially attributed to the changes that Storr brought about.¹⁰ Storr’s comments are then expanded to include exhibition programming too as MoMA began to step out of its traditionally “Modern” exhibition schedule which built on the museum’s collections and present challenging contemporary work.¹¹

Storr’s duality as both artist and curator made him a part of a select and growing group of professionals during this period. In 1995 he was invited to participate in the Bergen Museum of Arts and Sciences’ exhibition, “The curator as artist/the artist as curator,” an exhibition featuring works from professionals who functioned in this duality.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁰ Bruce Ferguson, “The Accidental Curator,” 76-79, 116, 118; It is worth noting that Storr is of the school of thought that Modernism has not ended and that post-modernism should not be separated into its own category. Storr views contemporary art as still very much a part of the Modernist movement, and his addition to MOMA staff at a time when the institution struggled with its own understanding of what its collecting perspective should be was fundamental to the institutional changes that took place.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 116.

The exhibition was designed and curated by Judith Landsman Slishman, an educator who found herself intrigued by the dilemma these professionals faced. The exhibition catalogue contained interviews with each of the participating artists, providing background information regarding their history of curatorial work, grants and awards, group exhibitions, and critical work. In his interview Storr emphasized the role of experience in both his curatorial and painting practices, describing himself as prepared and trained in both roles to utilize the tools but never capable of predicting the outcome of either process.

One of the most striking comments Storr makes in the interview addressed the influence that his curatorial work has on his paintings, stating, “Installing shows has clarified the way I see enormously... my sense of composition, scale and proportion have definitely been influenced by moving shapes around the room and across the walls.”¹² Storr is here making a direct reference to the relationship and influence of his two professions on one another, notable because Storr is more famous for his curatorial work than his practice as a painter. However, Storr is quick to note that the artist as curator is no new concept, stating,

There have always been cross-over characters, some more distinguished for their curatorial efforts, some the other way around. There have always been people who moved with relative freedom across these vocational lines. Things are now, more stratified. When the art world mattered less to the culture as a whole, anybody could play. The art world has become bigger and more competitive and that creates guilds and ‘career’ ladders. But there is still room for people who make it up as they go along.¹³

¹² Judith Landsman Slishman, “Robert Storr,” in *The curator as artist/ the artist as curator: exhibition* (Paramus, NJ: Bergen Museum of Arts and Sciences, 1995), 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 3, Storr’s comment is made in response to the question, “It feels as if the crossover of artist to curator, curator to artist is relatively recent.” Storr replied, “Actually, that’s not true, though the professional tracking of museum personnel has changed. Think of John Graham, for example, who lived in

Again, Storr defends the combined role of artist and curator and even can be seen justifying the contribution of the artist to the curatorial practice. In addition, if placed into perspective with events discussed in previous chapters, Storr clearly lays out the historical path taken by artists such as Andy Warhol, Norman Daly, Fred Wilson, and David Wilson. Each is an artist who visualizes himself not only as an artist but also as a curator, and each has a healthy disregard for the modern obstacles that have developed with the professionalization of museum-related work.

Storr spent the following seven years at MOMA designing exhibitions, writing catalogues, and publishing books, but on May 17, 2002, the *New York Times* ran an article stating that Storr had accepted a teaching position at the New York University's Institute of Fine Arts.¹⁴ By no means was Storr finished with curatorial work though, and in September, it was announced that he had been selected as curator for Site Santa Fe's fifth international Biennial.¹⁵ Storr followed this curatorial position in 2005 with his appointment as consulting curator of modern and contemporary art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In addition to his previous international biennial experience, Storr was invited to serve as commissioner of the 2007 Venice Biennale, the first American ever to be invited.¹⁶ Only a few months after the announcement of his Venice invitation, Storr

Paris, knew everybody, advised Frank Crownshield on his collection, wrote books, introduced Gorky, Stuart Davis and others to the latest ideas from Europe. He was a one-man band. Philip Johnson, the architect, has been another."

¹⁴ Carol Vogel, "Inside Art," *New York Times*, May 17, 2002; Carol Vogel, "Inside Art," *New York Times*, June 21, 2002; Storr's appointment as a Professor of Modern Art was confirmed in June 2002.

¹⁵ Carol Vogel, "Inside Art," *New York Times*, September 13, 2002.

¹⁶ Carol Vogel, "Inside Art," *New York Times*, December 9, 2005.

was named the Dean of Yale's School of Art, one of America's most competitive arts programs.¹⁷

Storr continues in this appointment today having been reappointed in 2011 for another five year period. President Richard C. Levin commented on the occasion that the school had profited from "...his [Storr's] refreshing and exciting vision for the school and for opening the school to new sources of artistic influence, both domestically and internationally."¹⁸ His scholarship and lectures in the past years have continued to address the topic of the artist as curator, as illustrated by the talk given for the Metropolitan Museum of Art on June 5, 2010 entitled "The Artist as Curator."¹⁹ Storr presents an interesting case study for the artist as curator, having worked in both the artist and curator's realm for over twenty years and now in a position to guide up and coming artists into the professional world.

In spite of his joint tenure as Dean of the Yale School of Art and consulting curator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Storr firmly attests to the separateness of his roles, "I do not think that curators are artists."²⁰ Storr elaborates, "I am both an artist and a curator. When I am a curator, I am a curator. When I am an artist, I am an artist. One of those criteria I would use is roughly: an artist has every right to be ruthless with materials at hand in order to make their work. If those materials happen to be another artist's work,

¹⁷ Yale Bulletin and Calendar 34, no. 21 (March 3, 2006).

¹⁸ "Art World Visionary Robert Storr Reappointed Dean of Yale School of Art," Yale News (February 9, 2011).

¹⁹ The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Concerts and Lectures," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, <http://www.metmuseum.org/tickets/calendar/view.asp?id=3012> (accessed September 9, 2010).

²⁰ Robert Storr, Interview with Author by phone, October 27, 2010; This statement is startling when compared to earlier comments made in his career where he discussed the influence of his curatorial work on his artistic vision.

they do not have that right.”²¹ In contrast, Storr defines curators as professionals who “... act[s] as interpreters of art and as presenters of art, hopefully with a light rather than a heavy hand, and that they bring art that is not generally known to the public to the general public. They bring a more sophisticated understanding of the art that is known and also the changing interpretation of art that is known or unknown to that public as well.”²²

Storr’s differentiation between the artist and curator sheds light on the discussion in previous chapters of artists acting in the curatorial vein. Storr’s statement regarding the use of another’s artist’s work destroys the grounds for which the artists presented in earlier chapters have been defined as curators and represents one spectrum of the academic opinion of artist as curator. According to Storr, artists such as Andy Warhol, Fred Wilson and David Wilson who have used other “artists” whether fine arts or common objects, to create their installations or exhibitions are not curators. Yet to reduce Storr’s statement to the idea that an artist cannot be a curator for the use of someone else’s objects minimizes his argument. There is much more to Storr’s argument, particularly in the concept of an artist being “ruthless.” The term first must be defined and contextualized as Storr’s use of rhetoric to describe what an artist might do. If the term is considered, synonyms such as persistent, unabashed, or brutal might even come to mind, and these are certainly not terms any museum would want associated with its curatorial department, particularly as ruthless might imply a purposeful malicious

²¹ *Ibid.*, Randy Kennedy, “The Koons Collection,” *The New York Times*, February 28, 2010; Storr is referring here to the recent Jeff Koons’ curatorial episode which was met with bad publicity for his use of the work. In 2009, Koons’ accepted an invitation to curate an exhibit of privately owned worked for the New Museum of Contemporary Art in 2010.

²² Robert Storr, Interview with author by phone, October 27, 2010.

intent. Yet, if ruthless can be understood through the lens of Storr's rhetoric and as an intentional trope, perhaps more appropriate synonyms might be intrepid, daring, or fearless.

Storr deftly separates the artist's prerogative—"ruthlessness"—from the curator's. The question we are left to ask is why? Why is there such a clear delineation between the two? Storr himself argues in early interviews for curatorial fearlessness in the face of institutional constraints on the collecting and exhibiting of modern and contemporary art. He can even be understood to have brought such practices to MoMA during his curatorial tenure, a characteristic that brought MoMA back to the forefront of American museums. What is so hazardous in the artist's intrepid approach? Is there no value for risk taking? What happens when artists embrace their innate intrepidity and use it in their curatorial pursuits?

Beauvais Lyons (b. 1958)²³

Beauvais Lyons is an academically trained artist who began his studies at Alfred University in Alfred, New York (1976-77) and holds both a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1977-80) and a Master of Fine Arts Degree from Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona (1980-83).²⁴ Lyons first exhibited works of fictive art, specifically archaeological fiction, in 1980 at the Center Gallery in Madison, Wisconsin. This exhibition entitled "Arenot Noawa River Ceremonial Complex," included works of print and ceramics and was the point of origin for what has

²³ Portions from this section of Chapter Five were presented at the 2010 ICMAH Annual International Conference "Original-Copy-Fake: On the Significance of the Object in History and Archaeology Museums" in Shanghai, China in October 2010. The paper, "The Potential of Museum *ARTifacts*: Meta-Historical Art in the Museum World," will be included in the proceedings publication from this conference.

²⁴ Beauvais Lyons, Personal letter to author, July 8, 2010.

become Lyons' life's work. Three years later, Lyons began exhibiting a new body of work under the title *The Excavation of the Apasht* (Figure 12). This body of work was exhibited by a number of galleries and museums in over ten states and featured over forty-five two- and three -dimensional works, and even included performances by Lyons. Just as the *Arenot Noawa River Complex*, *The Excavation of the Apasht* was strongly built on works of print and ceramics; however, this exhibition represents the moment of transition for Lyons from solely being artist to also being curator.

Specifically, Lyons' creation and inclusion of prints from the fabricated twenty-one page *Catalogue of the Apasht Excavations, Volume II*, in support of the three-dimensional objects, as well as performances as Heinrich Dreckmüller, a German archaeologist, began to indicate that his intentions extended much further than the simple creation of objects.²⁵ Lyons' work was a form of institutional critique, defined in Chapter Two as a technique in art that developed as a way for artists to comment on the practice of exhibiting institutions addressing the value audiences placed in interpretive labeling as well as challenging audiences to think more critically about the plausibility and content with which they were presented. *The Excavation of the Apasht* was conceived wholly from its inception with a thesis to be argued—the existence of Lyons' fictional culture.

In 1985, Lyons joined the faculty at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville as a Professor of Art. During this time he continued exhibiting his works and contributed articles to major publications such as *Leonardo: Journal of the International Society for the Arts, Sciences and Technology* in 1985 and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*

²⁵ Roy R. Behrens, "History in the mocking," *Print* 51, no. 3 (May 1997):70-77.

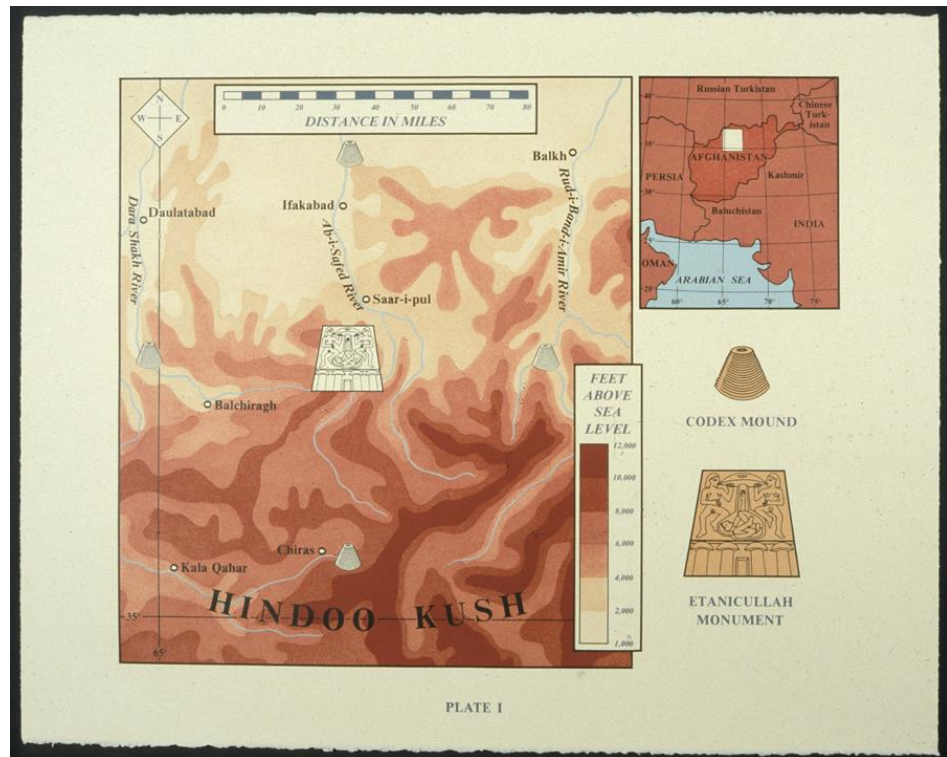


Figure 12. Beauvais Lyons. *Plate I* from *The Excavation of the Apasht*. 1983. Lithograph. Photograph courtesy of Hokes Archives.

1989.²⁶ In the latter, Lyons stated, “I believe that society is poorly served by the packaging of advertising and politics, that such packaging deflects scrutiny. If teachers, including artists, have a purpose, it is to raise questions and create an air of skepticism.”²⁷ It is no surprise that shortly after publishing this article, Lyons received university support in the form of a Faculty Research Grant to assist Norman Daly with the research, writing, and publication of “‘The Civilization of Llhuros’: The First Multimedia Exhibition in the Genre of Archaeological Fiction” in *Leonardo* (1991), an exhibition

²⁶ Beauvais Lyons, “The Excavation of the Apasht: Artifacts from an Imaginary Past,” *Leonardo* 18, no. 2 (1985): 81-89; Beauvais Lyons, “Archaeological Fiction,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 18 (1989).

²⁷ Lyons, “Archaeological Fiction.”

which pre-dated his own work by ten years but was compatible to his artistic mission.²⁸

Contemporaneously, Lyons began working in conjunction with other faculty members at the University of Tennessee to orchestrate the purchase and installation of an artwork for the campus that further established Lyons' artistic practice and capacity within the curatorial role.

The artwork desired for acquisition was a work created by Professor of Biology and Artist William Willers from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. The artwork consisted of an embedded skeleton from a centaur burial and had been created by the fusion of an equine and human skeleton stained with tea (Figure 13).²⁹ The centaur had previously been exhibited at the Madison Arts Center (now the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art) in Madison, Wisconsin, as well as at the Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts.³⁰ Lyons, who had been introduced to Willers by the curator at the Madison Art Center, was contacted by Willers as a resource to find new exhibition venues or a potential buyer for the centaur. Lyons shared Willers' intentions to sale the centaur with a university colleague, Professor Neil Greenberg of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, while giving a talk for a graduate seminar in life sciences on Science Fiction, and together, they began raising the necessary funds to purchase the centaur in 1992.³¹

²⁸ Norman Daly and Beauvais Lyons, "The Civilization of Llhuros": The First Multimedia Exhibition in the Genre of Archaeological Fiction," *Leonardo* 24, no. 3 (1991): 265-271; See Chapter Two for more on Norman Daly

²⁹ Beauvais Lyons, "Subversive Public Art: The Centaur Excavations at Volos," *Number 64* (Summer 2009): 8-9.

³⁰ Marilyn Sohi, email message to author, September 23, 2010. Marilyn Sohi, Head Registrar of the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art scanned and emailed archival documents from the exhibition of William Willers' "Centaur Excavation at Volos" in 1984.

³¹ Beauvais Lyons, Interview with author by phone, December 8, 2010; Beauvais Lyons, "Subversive Public Art: The Centaur Excavations at Volos," 8-9.



Figure 13. *Professor William Willers with the centaur in his studio.* Photograph courtesy of Hokes Archives.

The *Excavation of the Centaur at Volos* was installed in 1994 in its permanent home at the Hodges Library on the campus of the University of Tennessee (Figure 14). The centaur is prominently displayed, and features the centaur skeleton, interpretive paneling, and supportive ceramic works included in its original exhibition (Figure 15).³² The presentation is intended to confound the viewer as he or she is confronted with the question, “Do you believe in centaurs?” This bold use of irony is a measure taken by Lyons and the library to acknowledge their role in the fabrication of the centaur skeleton. Lyons addressed the potential controversy facing the university with the installation of the exhibit stating, “While presenting a work of fiction as fact may be construed as counter-productive to the educational mission of the university, Paula Kaufman, Dean of

³²*Ibid.*, An original woodcut could not be included with the exhibition but a similar image was included in the content of the interpretive panel.



Figure 14. William Willers. *The Centaur Excavations at Volos*. Hodges Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee. Photograph courtesy of Hokes Archives.



Figure 15. William Willers. Back view of *The Centaur Excavations at Volos*. Hodges Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee. Photograph courtesy of Hokes Archives.

Libraries at the University of Tennessee, endorsed the exhibit as a valuable object lesson on skepticism.”³³

This lesson in skepticism as well as his use of irony is characteristic of Lyons’ work. In his first exhibitions, *Arenot Noawa River Valley* and *The Excavations of the Apasht*, Lyons uses irony in his titling—such as “are not—as an intellectual indicator to the audience of the fiction that they are about to encounter. Lyons’ use of irony is further extended as he functions purely in the curatorial capacity with the installation of the *Centaur Excavation at Volos* and through the interpretive narrative that is included. This artistic practice, both visually and academically, brings a new dimension to the discussion of artist as curator. Lyons is both an academic scholar of print and an artist, and he utilizes his experience in both areas to create exhibitions. Lyon’s heavy-handed application of irony in his works is a point of contention for some, but irony links the work of Beauvais Lyons to artists such as Fred Wilson, David Wilson, Norman Daly, and Andy Warhol, all of whom have worked in the curatorial vein.

Lyons replied when asked if he saw himself as a curator in an interview with the author,

Absolutely. I think that curators in the current or for a number of decades have played the role of artist. In the sense that as the artwork is not expected to speak for itself anymore, it is only appropriate for the artist to realize that they need to take control of the context of their work in terms of how it is presented and control to some extent how it might be received.³⁴

Lyons’ personal belief in this has played out in his own life through the formation of *Hokes Archives*, a host organization for all works created by Lyons. The organization is

³³ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁴ Beauvais Lyons, Interview with author by phone, December 8, 2010

described on its website as “...devoted to the fabrication and documentation of rare and unusual cultural artifacts.”³⁵ The use of fabrication contradicts our traditional belief of the curator’s role, but documentation is certainly on more familiar grounds. Asked whether or not he sees his practice as curatorial, Lyons firmly stated, “I definitely see the practice as curatorial because if you conceded that role to someone else, I think it is a lost opportunity as an artist.”³⁶

Lyons also cited his academic training, and conversely, the academic training of postmodern artists, as a source for the formation of the artist as curator. Particularly, Lyons emphasized the necessary “objective” position asked of students in college classroom critiques when discussing their own artworks. Discussing the role of the university further, Lyons related the formation of academic art in the American university as the reunification of the artist as both manual and intellectual worker, a “...reclaiming of the artist and artistic knowledge as legitimate aspects of the academy.”³⁷

This reunion of manual and intellectual has been seen in the realm of art education in K-12 systems as well through Discipline Based Art Education (a method emphasizing art history, aesthetics, theory, and studio practice). When questioned on whether he could connect DBAE at the collegial level and within his own works, Lyons advocated for the practice of joint appointments of studio art professors as well as a combined approach of art and science education. Citing the University of Michigan for its joint appointments of professors in both studio art and natural sciences, Lyons is supportive of such collaborations and recognizes complementary roles of the two

³⁵ Beauvais Lyons, “About the Archives,” Hokes Archives, <http://web.utk.edu/~blyons/> (accessed December 14, 2011).

³⁶ Beauvais Lyons, Interview with author by phone, December 8, 2010.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

disciplines and is hopeful of forging even stronger interdisciplinary relationships at his own institution. Lyons does however warn, “Artists are, as you know Plato has told us for millennia, not to be trusted. They’re fakers. They’re liars. They’re sophists.”³⁸

The question that arises from Lyons’ conclusion should first address the value of those lies by artists, and if artists are liars, is it the curator’s responsibility to advocate the truth? Installations by Andy Warhol and Fred Wilson most directly deal with this next to Lyons’ own work. At the Rhode Island School of Design, Warhol identified the un-truths in the curatorial past about the museum through his installation of *Raid the Icebox I*. Is Warhol’s critique solely of the institution, or of a greater cultural apathy? Fred Wilson is known for his re-installations of collections, most notably at the Maryland Historical Society. Wilson’s installations use fictional personas and combinations of objects to tell a truer version of the history than had been presented. Value to such fiction was obviously seen by the American Association of Museums in its awarding of a curatorial prize for the installation. And let us not forget that Wilson first began by creating objects and his own museum installations in galleries before the invitation to work with institutional collections.

Lyons has created fictive bodies of work that include archaeological finds and has advocated for the installation of a centaur skeleton in the heart of a university library. In addition to this, he has also created a fictive body of folk art that has been criticized for its attempt to replicate this vernacular art. Lyons has contended that he has no intention

³⁸ *Ibid.*

of degrading the artistic tradition of folk artists and the objects they make, and professes his own interest in simply providing a parody of the work.³⁹

The George and Helen Spelvin Folk Art Collection is intended to foster an understanding of the role of the folk art collector in contemporary folk art practice, and through its use of fictive art, Lyons is able to do so without a depreciative use of authentically produced folk art (Figure 16). If compared to *Raid the Icebox I* by Warhol, initially the viewer is jolted by the use of Lyons' own work rather than an institutional collection, but it must be recognized that the critique and the curatorial method remains the same, asking what is the role of the collector (whether institutional or individual) in fostering our understanding of the work?

This method is similar to ones employed by Fred Wilson in earlier works, which Maurice Berger describes as "... 'mock' museum installations in which he placed artifacts and the ideologically encoded devices of museum display and education—tasteful wall colors, object labels, didactic texts, isolating pedestals, and vitrines—into ironic and humorous dialogue with each other.”⁴⁰

This discussion brings the reader back to the concept of “ruthlessness” that Rob Storr suggested differentiates the artist from the curator. While an artist can be experimental and daring with his or her materials, according to traditional beliefs of the curatorial canon, the curator cannot. Certainly, evidence has been presented to suggest that Lyons, Andy Warhol, Fred Wilson, and even David Wilson have intrepidly employed materials and interpretive methods in both their artistic and curatorial pursuits.

³⁹Ann Oppenheimer, “Beauvais Lyons: Folk Art Fabricator,” *Folk Art Messenger* (Spring 2002): 11-13.

⁴⁰Maurice Berger, “Viewing the Invisible: Fred Wilson’s Allegories of Absence and Loss,” in *Fred Wilson: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Doro Globus (London: Ridinghouse, 2011), 123.

They have not only used other artists' works but also their own, and their exhibitions have been greeted with fanfare and excitement, not because of the attachment of an artist name (Fred Wilson was little known at the time of the Maryland Historical Society show) but because of the innovative ideas which they present in their exhibitions.

Perhaps the clear distinction between artist and curator as delineated by Storr is a polarity between subjective and objective approaches to exhibiting and interpreting art. Artists, particularly of the postmodern vein, have adapted a transparent method of production, allowing audiences to more personally relate to both the creator and the work; whereas, curators have appeared as emotionally distant from their installation practices. The use of emotion in the curatorial decision-making process allows a constant reminder of human presence to be evident in the exhibition; yet, by allowing emotion to impact curatorial decisions, curators are left vulnerable. Emotion is not infallible, and according to our traditional canon, curators are. Since the Enlightenment, curators have been asked fulfill the scientific role of naming, organizing, and studying the objects of their discipline, but they have been refused the right to test their own hypotheses in regard to their personal connections with their works.

This suggestion of a scientific approach to curatorial practice has recently been explored in Bruce Altshuler's *Collecting the New* by curator Howard N. Fox of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Fox insists, "Contemporary curators like scientists, and contemporary artists, should not resist experimentation; it's part of the job."⁴¹ Curators need to fearlessly approach their exhibitions, Altshuler urges, with a reminder to remember "An 'unsuccessful' experiment is as useful and necessary as a 'successful'

⁴¹ Howard N. Fox, "The Right to Be Wrong," in *Collecting the New: Museums and Contemporary Art*, ed. Bruce Altshuler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 15.



Figure 16. Beauvais Lyons, *George and Helen Spelvin Folk Art Collection* (Installation view at Vanderbilt University). 2004. Photograph courtesy of Hokes Archives.

one; an untried theory only exists to be put to the test. And disproved theories do not become discarded and forgotten knowledge; they remain part of the ever-evolving history of ideas.”⁴² There is perceivable value for museum audiences and curators alike to adventure beyond their comfort zones of historical trajectory and experience art in new ways.

Storr himself writes of this phenomenon in the closing paragraph of his catalogue essay for “The Devil on the Stairs: Looking Back at the Eighties,” commenting, “Nostalgia, it often seems, is the only form of history which Americans are emotionally at ease.”⁴³ Audiences are comfortable with what they know and uncomfortable with what challenges them academically and emotionally. Art historians have been universally

⁴² *Ibid.*, 27

⁴³ Robert Storr, *The Devil On the Stairs: Looking Back On the Eighties* (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1991), 22-23.

aware of this in the context of modern and contemporary art since the publication of Leo Steinberg's, "Contemporary Art and the Plight of Its Public," which thoroughly investigated not only the casual audience response but also a very personal critical response by Steinberg to Jasper Johns' work. Steinberg clarified the cyclical nature of the human response to new and challenging ideas, and the article emanated the importance of the initial encounter and following re-encounters as part of the cyclical nature.⁴⁴

Artists functioning in the capacity of curator have challenged institutional and public conceptions of the curatorial role. Robert Storr discarded the usual esoteric terminology in hopes of returning the art object back to its audience with his exhibition "The Devil on the Stairs: Looking Back on the Eighties." Andy Warhol illuminated rather than hid internal practices and prejudices without reservation for "Raid the Icebox I." Norman Daly was relentless rather than apathetic in his attempts to suspend his audiences in a state of disbelief as they experienced his *Civilization of Llhuros*. Fred Wilson unapologetically displayed the truths that were buried in the Maryland Historical Society vaults. David Wilson is constantly visible in his continual performance and creation of the Museum of Jurassic Technology. Last, but certainly not least, Beauvais Lyons employs a ruthless agenda through many works of his *Hokes Archives* in an attempt to bring his audience to a greater understanding of their unwavering faith in what they are told rather than what they see and challenges them to inquire more.

Is Plato right? Are artists liars? Perhaps, but I think the more interesting question to ask is whether curators are liars if they propose an interpretation that is proven wrong?

⁴⁴ Leo Steinberg, "Contemporary Art and the Plight of Its Public," *Harper's Magazine* (March 1962), 31-39.

Plato never questioned the value of a lesson learned from a lie. To know what reality is, we must know what fiction is, and to know what does work, we have to know what does not. Just maybe, it is the artist that can guide us in the right direction.

CHAPTER SIX

Contemporary Artist/Curators in the University Art Gallery and Museum: Institutional Data Analysis

In previous chapters, the history of artists acting in the role of curator has been explored through the histories of Andy Warhol, Norman Daly, Fred Wilson, David Wilson, Robert Storr, and Beauvais Lyons. Each of these artists contributes uniquely to the story of the artist as curator and each has a distinctive relationship to the museum institutions in which they have exhibited. To thoroughly examine the relationship of artist as curator, a thorough look at the relationship from the institutional perspective is necessary. This chapter will present data collected during 2010 and 2011 from university museums and art galleries across the United States in regards to their institutional staff and mission, definition of curator and educator, and invitation of artists as curators inside their institutions.

Methodology

Twenty institutions were initially contacted beginning in December 2010 to solicit their participation in this research project. Ten institutions were selected at the outset for their known exhibition of works by artist/curators from the case studies. An additional ten institutions that were not known to have had exhibitions by artist/curators were matched to the initial ten based on location, student body size, and overall cost of tuition [Table 1, *Original Research Design*]. To ensure the incorporation of non-university museums and galleries, two museums unaffiliated with a university were also included in this sample. Institutions were presented with a series of surveys addressing three major

areas pertinent to this study: institutional exhibitions, curatorial staff, and educational staff. Surveys were conducted through phone and personal interviews, traditional mail, and e-mail.¹

Of the twenty institutions contacted, two institutions (Vanderbilt University and the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art) openly declined to participate in this research.² Vanderbilt University recommended the Bates College gallery, run by an artist-director, in its place.³ This institution was contacted to participate, and its inclusion brought the data pool to a total of twenty-one institutions.⁴ The Madison Museum of Contemporary Art wished to not be included in research related to the university museum and gallery as it felt it had no such affiliation.⁵ The University of Massachusetts – Dartmouth accepted the offer to participate in the research but failed to return its survey to the author. Multiple attempts were made to receive the completed survey; unfortunately, the institution never responded.⁶ Eight institutions accepted the offer to participate in the research project, and the following is based on their answers. It is of note that the eight museum and gallery institutions that participated are all university-affiliated.⁷

¹ The survey questions as they were distributed to the institutions can be found in Appendix E.

² Joseph Mella, email message to author January 20, 2011; Stephen Fleischman, email message to author, January 20, 2011.

³ Joseph Mella, email message to author January 20, 2011.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Stephen Fleischman, email message to author, January 20, 2011.

⁶ Lasse B. Antonsen, email message to author, January 21, 2011.

⁷ Karen Gilliam, interview by author, Waco, TX, December 9, 2010; Gary Freeburg, interview by author, December 7, 2010; Kelly Wacker, interview by author, Montevallo, AL, December 14, 2010; Jes Owings, interview by author, December 15, 2010; Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Terri Dowell Dennis, interview by author; January 12, 2011; Lyndel King, interview by author, January 31, 2011; Shelly Casto, email message to author, February 17, 2011; Nicole Roylance, email message to author, February 23, 2011.

Table 1, *Original Research Design*

Institution, Museum or Gallery	Location	Enrollment	Tuition
+ Vanderbilt Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery	TN	12, 506	39, 932
* Baylor University, Martin Museum of Art	TX	14, 614	29, 754
University of North Alabama University Art Gallery	AL	7, 260	7, 590
*University of Montevallo, The Gallery, Bloch Hall	AL	3, 048	7, 590
* James Madison University Sawhill Gallery/ Madison Art Collection	VA	18, 971	7, 860
* University of North Carolina - Greensboro Weatherspoon Art Museum	NC	18, 433	4, 520
University of Pennsylvania Arthur Ross Gallery	PA	19, 311	40, 514
Carnegie Mellon University Miller Gallery	PA	11, 443	41, 940
~University of Massachusetts – Dartmouth University Art Gallery	MA	9, 302	10, 358
University of Massachusetts – Boston Harbor Gallery	MA	14, 912	10, 611
Western Kentucky University Kentucky Museum	KY	20, 712	7, 560
University of Louisville Hite Galleries	KY	21, 016	8, 424
* Belmont University Leu Art Gallery	TN	5, 424	23, 680
Samford University Art Gallery	AL	4, 658	21, 942
* University of Minnesota - Twin Cities Weisman Art Museum	MN	51, 659	11,293
* Ohio State University Wexner Center for the Arts/ OSU Galleries	OH	55,014	9,420
St. Lawrence University Richard F. Brush Art Gallery	NY	2, 401	41,155
* Vassar College Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center	NY	2,453	43,190
- Bates College Bates College Museum	ME	1,738	53,300
+ Madison Museum of Contemporary Art	WI		
Boston ICA	MA		

* Designates an institution that participated in the survey.

~ Designates a university that consented to participate but never provided data.

+ Designates an institution that openly declined to participate.

- Designates the institution recommended by a declined institution.

Analysis

To gauge the breadth and depth of each gallery or museum, each was asked to provide information on any professional gallery or museum memberships and on staff size. Six of the eight surveyed institutions reported membership in the American Association of Museums.⁸ Of the eight institutions interviewed, three institutions hold AAM accreditation, an optional application for designation of excellence in contemporary museum practice [Table 2, *AAM Membership and Accreditation*].⁹ Membership in the American Association of Museums alone suggests an awareness and engagement with contemporary museum practices and according to the results of this survey, seventy-five percent of the institutions interviewed indicate such and thirty-eight percent exhibit qualities which suggest they are leaders in the museum profession. Collectively, this data implies that the institutions participating in the survey are recognizable gallery and museum spaces within their contextual frame of university art museums and galleries.

Building upon this data, staff sizes at the galleries and museums were then examined to determine any institutional departmental bias that might affect an

⁸Gilliam, interview; The Martin Museum of Art reported membership in an additional regional museum association; Freeburg, interview; Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Terri Dowell Dennis, interview by author; January 12, 2011; King, interview; Shelly Casto, email message to author, February 17, 2011; Nicole Roylance, email message to author, February 23, 2011; American Association of Museums, "Membership," American Association of Museums, <http://www.aam-us.org/joinus/> (accessed December 16, 2011); Membership in the American Association of Museums is non-exclusive. Three categories of membership exist: Individual, Institutional, and Industry Partner. Institutional membership is "open to museums and organization that operate museums."

⁹American Association of Museums, "List of Accredited Museums," American Association of Museums, <http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/accred/list.cfm> (accessed December 12, 2011); American Association of Museums, "Accreditation," American Association of Museums, <http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/accred/index.cfm> (accessed December 12, 2011). Accreditation is defined by the AAM as "a widely recognized seal of approval that brings national recognition to a museum for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards and continued institutional improvement."

Table 2, *AAM Membership and Accreditation*

Institution	Professional Membership		AAM Accreditation
	Self-Report	Verified	
Martin Museum of Art	Yes	Yes	N/A
Sawhill Gallery / Madison Art Collection	Yes	Yes	N/A
Weatherspoon Art Museum	Yes	Yes	Accredited
Weismann Art Museum	Yes	Yes	Accredited
Wexner Center for the Arts/ OSU Galleries	Yes	Yes	N/A
Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center	Yes	No	Accredited
Leu Art Gallery	No	Yes	N/A
The Gallery, Bloch Hall	No	Yes	N/A

institution's use of artist/curators. Total staff sizes for the galleries and museums ranged from one to seventy-five staff members (including full and part-time staff).¹⁰ Staff numbers were further examined by a departmental break down between curatorial and education offices, the two departments commonly cited for invitation of an artist/curator [Table 3, *Total and Departmental Staff Size*].

One institution reported no designated curatorial staff, while seven reported curatorial staffs of at least one but no greater than five [Table 4, *Curatorial Department Specialty Subject Areas*].¹¹ In comparison, one institution reported no educational staff, and seven institutions reported educational staffs at a minimum of one but no greater than twelve [Table 5, *Education Department Specialty Subject Areas*].¹² In percentages, curatorial

¹⁰ Gilliam, interview; Freeburg, interview; Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Terri Dowell Dennis, interview by author; January 12, 2011; King, interview; Shelly Casto, email message to author, February 17, 2011; Nicole Roylance, email message to author, February 23, 2011; Wacker, interview; Owings, interview.

¹¹ Gilliam, interview; The institution which reported no curatorial staff makes curatorial decisions using a committee of faculty members and museum staff; Institutions reporting a curatorial staff of one were the two institutions that were not members of the American Association of Museums and whose staff member has responsibility for all positions associated with the gallery.

Table 3, *Total and Department Staff Size*

Institution	Staff Size	Curatorial	Education
*Martin Museum of Art	6	No Designation	1 (17%)
*Sawhill Gallery / Madison Art Collection	4	2 (50%)	No Designation
*+Weatherspoon Art Museum	18	2 (11%)	2 (11%)
~*+Weismann Art Museum	25	5 (20%)	2 (8%)
*Wexner Center for the Arts/ OSU Galleries	75	4 (5%)	12 (16%)
*+Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center	10	3 (30%)	1 (10%)
Leu Art Gallery	1	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
The Gallery, Bloch Hall	1	1 (100%)	1 (100%)

*Denotes an AAM member

+ Denotes an AAM accredited museum

~ The Weismann Art Museum was functioning with a skeletal staff at the time of interview due to the temporary closing of the main building for renovations.

Table 4, *Curatorial Department Specialty Subject Areas*

Curatorial Staff Highest Degree Earned Subject Area				
Institution	Staff Size	Studio	Art History	Other
Martin Museum of Art	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sawhill Gallery / Madison Art Collection	2	2	0	0
Weatherspoon Art Museum	2	0	1	1
Weismann Art Museum	5	1	3	1
Wexner Center for the Arts/ OSU Galleries	4	0	3	0
Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center	3	1	2	0
Leu Art Gallery	1	1	0	0
The Gallery, Bloch Hall	1	0	1	0

staff made up five to fifty percent of the total staff at the surveyed institutions, whereas

educational staff made up eight to seventeen percent.¹³

¹² Wacker, interview; Owings, interview; Institutions reporting an educational staff of one were the two institutions that were not members of the American Association of Museums and whose staff member has responsibility for all positions associated with the gallery; Nicole Roylance, email message to author, February 23, 2011. An additional institution with an educational staff of one accounts for a total of ten percent of its staff. This institution notably does not represent the lowest percentage of educational staff to total staff in the surveyed institutions.

¹³ Gilliam, interview; Freeburg, interview; Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Terri Dowell Dennis, interview by author; January 12, 2011; King, interview; Shelly Casto, email message to author, February 17, 2011; Nicole Roylance, email message to author, February 23, 2011; Wacker, interview; Owings, interview.

Table 5, *Education Department Specialty Subject Areas*

Institution	Staff Size	Studio	Art History	Ed.	Other
Martin Museum of Art	1	0	0	0	0
Sawhill Gallery / Madison Art Collection	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Weatherspoon Art Museum	2	1	0	1	0
Weismann Art Museum	2	0	1	1	0
Wexner Center for the Arts/ OSU Galleries	12	2	6	3	1
Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center	1	0	1	0	0
Leu Art Gallery	1	1	0	0	0
The Gallery, Bloch Hall	1	0	1	0	0

In addition, each institution was asked to define the role of curator and educator in order to differentiate the work assigned to each department and to clarify the role that the curator or educator might play in inviting an artist/curator to the institution. Each institution articulated its definition uniquely; however, as a whole, they seemed to echo the importance of the curator as an organizer for the presentation of materials related to the museum's mission, as well as the developer of intellectual content that accompanies it.¹⁴ Perhaps one of the clearest explanations came from Jes Owings, gallery director of Leu Art Gallery who stated, "I would call a curator a person who brings together ideas that culminate into something, so either a show or an exhibition."¹⁵ Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center's representative expounded on this definition suggesting, "A curator focuses on developing and presenting exhibitions and presenting the permanent collection."¹⁶ These two opinions present viewpoints of curatorial roles from varied perspectives of focus of interest from the curatorial staff as well as institutional missions. The Leu Art Gallery represents an institution with a curator solely of a studio art

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Owings, interview.

¹⁶ Nicole Roylance, email message to author, February 23, 2011.

background and no permanent collection, whereas the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center's curatorial staff has a dominant art history background complemented by a studio art background and an institutional collection.¹⁷

When considering the role of educator in contrast to curator, institutions uniformly expressed the importance of an educator's interaction with the public.¹⁸ Weatherspoon Art Museum's Associate Curator of Education Terri Dowell-Dennis thoughtfully stated,

It's always important to remember that all museum professionals are united in their passion for art. The curator has primary responsibility for considering the balance of exhibitions to be presented and the nature of the scholarship that will accompany those exhibitions. This is particularly challenging for the contemporary curator who must always be examining works and ideas of the moment and their relevance for the museum's home community as well as for the field at large. Ideally, the curator works in concert with the educators to coordinate these aspects of what can be a complex set of issues. Educators are very good at framing issues for the lay person and at finding modes of translation that enable viewers to access even the most challenging works of art in nonthreatening ways.¹⁹

Dennis differentiates the educator from the curator by the means in which they communicate with the public. A similar explanation was provided by Wexner Center for the Art's Director of Education, Shelly Casto, "Educators work directly with the public to interpret and explore visual art, film and performing arts. We work with the public directly and actively engage the audience perspectives in exchange."²⁰ Again, an emphasis of work with the public is stressed, as well as

¹⁷ Owings, interview; Nicole Roylance, email message to author, February 23, 2011.

¹⁸ Gilliam, interview; Freeburg, interview; Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Terri Dowell Dennis, interview by author; January 12, 2011; King, interview; Shelly Casto, email message to author, February 17, 2011; Nicole Roylance, email message to author, February 23, 2011; Wacker, interview; Owings, interview.

¹⁹ Dowell-Dennis, interview.

²⁰ Shelly Casto, email message to author, February 17, 2011.

the participation of the exhibition audience. The institutions represented by these quotations demonstrate opinions from institutions with an education staff that is equal in size or greater to that of the curatorial staff and a dominant or equal specialization in Art History.²¹

This data provides a snapshot of the institutions and their departmental priorities through staffing in regards to its curatorial and educational mission. Building upon this foundation of emphasis on curatorial or educational work, institutions were then asked whether they had ever invited a curator with a non-traditional background (qualified by holding a degree outside of art history such as studio art or another area) to curate an exhibition.²² Five of the eight institutions responded positively to the question, stating that they had invited such curators into their galleries, and that the exhibitions had been staged main gallery spaces.²³ Of these five institutions, three stated that the invitation of non-traditional curators occurred on a regular basis, and two stated that the invitation occurred on a periodic basis.²⁴

The institutional decision to invite artists to serve as curators is notably a combined decision of curatorial, educational, and other administrative departments for

²¹ Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Terri Dowell Dennis, interview by author; Shelly Casto, email message to author, February 17, 2011.

²² This definition of a non-traditional curator is explicitly limited to the field of art and was developed in collaboration with my thesis chair and through my own experience working with art museum curators.

²³ Freeburg, interview; Wacker, interview; King, interview; Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Terri Dowell Dennis, interview by author; January 12, 2011; Owings, interview; Shelly Casto, email message to author, February 17, 2011; It is of note that the Wexner Center for the Arts responded that they had not invited a curator with a non-traditional background in light of Mark Dion installing the exhibition *Cabinet of Curiosities for the Wexner Center for the Arts* in 1997. Please see Mark Dion and Colleen J. Sheey, *Cabinet of Curiosities: Mark Dion and the university as installation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

²⁴ Freeburg, interview; Wacker, interview; King, interview; Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Terri Dowell Dennis, interview by author; January 12, 2011; Owings, interview

four of the five institutions.²⁵ Only one institution, Weatherspoon Art Museum, claims that the invitation is in the sole control of the curatorial department, and this institution had made the decision to invite artist/curators because it believes, “As a part of a university with a strong department of art, it is interesting to engage studio arts; they bring different perspectives and expertise to the table.”²⁶ The background of the curatorial department at this institution indicates a stronger emphasis in art history, and it is worth noting that this institution clearly states the importance of bringing artist/curators in because they provide a varied outlook on material.²⁷ This data collectively suggests that for the majority of museums and galleries, the decision to invite an artist/curator is made by the whole institution, but it also demonstrates the importance placed on the decision to invite in a guest curator, and for our purpose, an artist/curator.

Complementing this direct line of questioning regarding the use of artist/curators within museums and galleries, participating institutions were also asked whether their institution had an Artist in Residency program [Table 6, *Artist in Residency Programs*].²⁸ Four institutions claimed outright that they had such a program.²⁹ One institution, the Weismann Art Museum, described its program as an indirect and unofficial program, but it also cited the development of a new program which would be targeting artists as well

²⁵ Freeburg, interview; Wacker, interview; King, interview; Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Owings, interview.

²⁶ Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ For the purpose of this discussion, an Artist in Residency program consists of an assigned period where an artist is present on a regular basis at the institution and actively participating in the day-to-day activities that are not limited to but might include educational and exhibition programming.

²⁹ Freeburg, interview; Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Terri Dowell Dennis, interview by author; January 12, 2011; Shelly Casto, email message to author, February 17, 2011; Nicole Roylance, email message to author, February 23, 2011.

Table 6, *Artist in Residency Programs*

Institution	Artist in Residence Program	Exhibition in Main Gallery	Curatorial Decision for Exhibition	Artist Input on Related Programming
Martin Museum of Art	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sawhill Gallery / Madison Art Collection	Yes	Yes	Combined	Yes
Weatherspoon Art Museum	Yes	Yes	Curator	Yes
Weismann Art Museum	Indirect	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wexner Center for the Arts/ OSU Galleries	Yes	Sometimes	Curator	Yes
Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A
Leu Art Gallery	Developing	Yes	Combined	Yes
The Gallery, Bloch Hall	No	N/A	N/A	N/A

as other collaborators for residencies.³⁰ The Leu Art Gallery reported an inaugural master class that was accompanied by a one-week artist in residency.³¹ The Martin Museum of Art and The Gallery, Bloch Hall stated that they had no such formal program, but the The Gallery, Bloch Hall expressed interest in developing a formal program in the future.³²

Of the four museums and galleries that responded that they did have Artist in Residence programs, two institutions claimed to mount exhibitions by said artists in their main gallery spaces, while one institution noted that it sometimes mounts exhibitions in its main gallery space.³³ The developing program replied that it too had staged exhibitions for its artist in residence in the main gallery space.³⁴ The curatorial decision

³⁰ King, interview.

³¹ Owings, interview.

³² Gilliam, interview; Wacker, interview.

³³ Freeburg, interview. Casto, email message to author, February 17, 2011; Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Terri Dowell Dennis, interview by author; January 12, 2011; Nicole Roylance, email message to author, February 23, 2011; The fourth institution chose to not specify information beyond that they did have an artist in residence program.

³⁴ Owings, interview.

of works to be included in the exhibition of the four main responding institutions were delegated to solely curatorial staff in two of the institutions, and one institution noted that it used a combined method of curatorial staff and artist to select the works.³⁵ The developing artist in residence program also chose to use a combined method of curatorial decision-making for its installation.³⁶ In addition to questions regarding the exhibition, institutions were also asked about the input given by artists to the associated programming, and three of the institutions responded that artists did have a voice in the creation of such programming.³⁷ This response was echoed by the developing program as well.³⁸

The final area to be examined through survey is the influence of the American Association of Museum's issuance of its first ever education mandate, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums* (1992) on these institutions. As museums and galleries of recognizable stature, it seems plausible that this document could have affected their decision to invite outside curators.³⁹ When asked whether the issuance of *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums* had any impact on such decisions, four institutions replied that it had not affected their

³⁵Freeburg, interview; Shelly Casto, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Terri Dowell Dennis, interview by author; January 12, 2011; Nicole Roylance, email message to author, February 23, 2011; The fourth institution chose to not specify information beyond that they did have an artist in residence program

³⁶ Owings, interview.

³⁷Freeburg, interview; Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Terri Dowell Dennis, interview by author; January 12, 2011; Nicole Roylance, email message to author, February 23, 2011; The fourth institution chose to not specify information beyond that they did have an artist in residence program

³⁸ Owings, interview.

³⁹ The importance and impact of *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums* (1992) is thoroughly outlined in Chapter Two under the sub-heading of "Museum Education: A Current History."

decision at all.⁴⁰ The fifth institution replying that it had been impacted by the issuance of *Excellence and Equity* is an accredited institution which clearly stated in its interview that it had engaged outside curators prior to the document's issuance and continued to do so in support of the new mandates. In the institution's own words, "We were doing it before *Excellence and Equity*, so yes, but it was just something we had always kind of done."⁴¹ The Weismann was not alone in their response that they had been incorporating outside curators before *Excellence and Equity* though. The Weatherspoon Art Museum also answered in such a way to indicate that the invitation of guest curators had been an institutional practice pre-dating the issuance of AAM's official education mandate.⁴² Both institutions citing the use of artist/curators prior to the issuance of *Excellence and Equity* are accredited institutions.

The data gathered here presents a holistic picture of the contemporary state of artist/curators in university art galleries and museums and the institutional approach to utilizing these professionals. The first trend to recognize is that seven of the eight participating institutions have either utilized an artist/curator for exhibition or have established an artist-in-residency program. This is a significant figure, and of these institutions, six schedule exhibitions by the respective artist in their main gallery spaces

⁴⁰ Freeburg, interview; Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll, email message to author, December 20, 2010; Terri Dowell Dennis, interview by author; January 12, 2011; King, interview; Shelly Casto, email message to author, February 17, 2011; Nicole Roylance, email message to author, February 23, 2011; Wacker, interview; Owings, interview.; Two of these galleries should be recognized as institutions that have no affiliation with the American Association of Museums and had no previous knowledge of the existence of such a document prior to our interview.

⁴¹ King, interview.

⁴² Xandra Eden and Nancy Doll; email message to author, December 20, 2010; Dowell-Dennis, interview.

which suggests that these artists are by no means being treated as inferior curators on a regular basis in these institutions.⁴³

The second trend to be examined from this data is that institutions that have only artist-in-residency programs appear to have curatorial and educational staffs with predominantly art history backgrounds. In contrast, programs with staff who have predominantly specialized in studio art and education in their staff have a higher likelihood of having both artist/curators and artist-in-residency programs. This data indicates that a barrier still exists for institutions with staffs of a dominant training in art history for sharing curatorial control with artists and other entities.

Thirdly, these institutions as a whole differentiate the role of curator and educator clearly through its direct contact with the museum's audience. All institutions articulated the curator's role in selecting material for exhibition and assisting with institutional needs in regards to collections, but few institutions mentioned the curator's role in interpretive projects or their direct access to the public. This is contradicted by the definition of the educator who is expected to be in constant contact with the museum audience.

Lastly, the issuance of *Excellence and Equity* in 1992 has had no substantial impact on the invitation of artist/curators or artist-in-residency programs, according to the institutions surveyed. The indication by two accredited institutions that this practice predated AAM's mandate suggests compliance with earlier calls such as *Museums for a New Century* (1984) or even within the discipline earlier as it was art educators who led the movement for museum reform in the early to mid-1970s.

⁴³ Data was not collected on the frequency of artist-curated exhibitions in comparison to exhibitions designed by curatorial staff or outsourced to companies.

Collectively, this data suggests the duality of the artist/curator remains dominant in the contemporary university art museum and gallery. If an institutional or academic source is to be named as a driving force behind the development of the artist/curator duality it would certainly be recognized as the amalgamation of the separate art disciplines of art history, studio art, and art education into a single entity. The artist/curator's emergence cannot be solely reduced to the result of a professional mandate. What is evident in regards to the artist/curator is that there is a driving force for the continuing development of these professionals that has yet to be identified. This clearly sets the stage for a comparison of this data set with the case studies presented earlier in this thesis and a conclusion regarding the artist/curator and whether or not he or she is curating at all.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

But Are They Really Curators?

Returning to Ellis Burcaw's definition of a curator cited earlier, we recall that a curator is someone with the following responsibilities for an institutional collection: care, growth, conservation, study, and exhibition.¹ Elizabeth Chambers expanded Burcaw's definition, considering the various responsibilities attributed to curators in a wide range of institutions.² What Burcaw's and Chambers' definitions fail to allow for is the development of the independent, or unaffiliated curator, and the museum without a permanent collection, or for our purpose, a gallery without a permanent collection.³ Whether between institutional positions or simply seeking independence, this sub-category of curators can meet the qualifications of "curator" without an association with a particular collection. They possess the knowledge to complete all tasks asked of a curator; yet, they choose to work with a variety of collections rather than a single collection.⁴ Are they any less curators than institutional curators?

1 G. Ellis Burcaw, *Introduction to Museum Work*, 3rd ed. (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Altamira Press, 1997), 45.

2 Elizabeth A. Chambers, "Defining the Role of the Curator," in *Museum Studies Perspectives and Innovations*, eds. Stephen L. Williams and Catharine A. Hawks (Washington, D.C.: Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections, 2006), 47-66.

3 Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Altamira Press, 2008), 42-46; Alexander and Alexander account for this development as a challenge to Art Museums in *Museums in Motion*.

4 Catherine Zusy, "The Stranger Among Us: Managing the Guest Curator Relationship," *Museum News* (September/October 1998). http://www.aamus.org/pubs/mn/MN_SO98_ManagingGuestCurator.cfm (accessed February 22, 2011).

The inherent difficulty presented by an independent curator or a guest curator hired by a museum is the concern of whether or not it is appropriate for an institution to give the opportunity for an individual not necessarily aligned with the museum's mission to speak for the museum. Publications by established and well-recognized curators, however, indicate that there is a universal desire among curators' for a taste of such freedom.⁵ This debate adds momentum to the continued development of artist/curators.

Building off of the concepts of the independent or guest curator, the context in which Andy Warhol's "Raid the Icebox I" (1970) installation at the Rhode Island School of Design and Fred Wilson's "Mining the Museum" (1991-92) at the Maryland Historical Society were initiated indicates that these artists were functioning in a guest curatorial position.⁶ The relationship between these two exhibitions and shared intent of the artists, separated by nearly two decades, is further underscored by the significant fiscal support that the Maryland Historical Society and The Contemporary received from the Andy Warhol Foundation in support of the exhibition and catalogue for "Mining the

5 Christina Rees, "The Guerilla Curators," Glasstire.com, November 21, 2011, http://glasstire.com/2011/11/21/the-guerilla-urators/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newsletter+11-21-11&utm_content=Newsletter+11-21+11+CID_60daf509f081f51868a629e50897fa4c&utm_source=Email+marketing+software&utm_term=The+Desperate+Need+for+Guerrilla+Cura (accessed November 22, 2011); Bruce Ferguson, "The Accidental Curator," *Artforum* (October 1994), 76-79, 116, 118.

6 Deborah Bright, "Shopping the Leftovers: Warhol's collecting strategies in *Raid the Icebox I*," *Art History* 24, No. 2 (April 2001), 278-280; Norman Daly and the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, *The Civilization of Llhuros* (Ithaca: Office of University Publications, 1971); Norman Daly and Beauvais Lyons, "The Civilization of Llhuros": The First Multimedia Exhibition in the Genre of Archaeological Fiction," *Leonardo* 24, no. 3 (1991): 265-271; Lisa Corrin, Leslie King-Hammond and Ira Berlin, eds., *Mining the Museum: An Installation / by Fred Wilson* (Baltimore: The Contemporary; New York: New Press: Distributed by W.W. Norton, 1994); Lawrence Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder* (Toronto: Pantheon, 1995); Bruce Ferguson, "The Accidental Curator," 76-79, 116, 118; Roy R. Behrens, "History in the mocking," *Print* 51, no. 3 (May 1997), 70-77.

Museum.”⁷ In these particular cases, the artists’ background and intuition, as well as unfamiliarity with the collection and desire to connect with audiences, played a significant role in the success of these exhibitions. This success is further understood to be a driving force behind the continued employment of artist/curators within the university art museum and gallery as revealed by the data collection presented in Chapter Six.

Yet, relegating the artist/curator to the sub-category of independent or guest curator alone fails to recognize the contributions of other major artists acting in the curatorial vein. In addition, it de-emphasizes the role of the institutional curator. Artists with semi-permanent or permanent collections of artworks such as Norman Daly’s *The Civilization of Llhuros*, David Wilson’s Museum of Jurassic Technology, and Beauvais Lyons’ Hokes Archives represent the institutional influence on the artist/curator.⁸ These artists work within a particular frame of collection—whether of works self-generated or collected—and their continual engagement with these collections reflects the responsibilities of the institutional curator. In addition, all of the aforementioned artists represent postwar generations of university-driven artistic training and all have received the terminal degree of M.F.A. which prepared them to personally disengage with their

7 Lisa Corrin, Leslie King-Hammond and Ira Berlin, eds., *Mining the Museum: An Installation / by Fred Wilson*.

8 Norman Daly and the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, *The Civilization of Llhuros*; Norman Daly and Beauvais Lyons, "The Civilization of Llhuros": The First Multimedia Exhibition in the Genre of Archaeological Fiction," 265-271; Lawrence Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder*; Roy R. Behrens, "History in the mocking," 70-77; Donald Garfield, "Making the Museum Mine: An Interview with Fred Wilson," *Museum News*, (May/June 1993): 46-49, 90. It is worth noting that Fred Wilson also exhibited curatorial practice with self-made objects before his commission at the Maryland Historical Society.

work in order to critique.⁹ With the exception of David Wilson's Museum of Jurassic Technology, the distinguishing characteristic of these collections is that they have no permanent home institution. The question that I pose is that if a traditionally trained professional is unaffiliated for a period of time with an institution, does that make him or her any less of a curator?

Perhaps the most clear cut case of artist/curator is represented by the inclusion of Robert Storr in this discussion. Storr has notably navigated the institutional art world and held internationally recognized positions of curatorial authority at the Museum of Modern Art and the Venice Biennial.¹⁰ While Storr adamantly dismisses the duality of artist/curator stating, "This is nonsense. I am both an artist and a curator. When I am a curator, I am a curator. When I am an artist, I am an artist," Storr's belief in the university-trained artist is evident through his continued service as the Dean of the Yale School of Art, indicating the importance of a university education and its influence on the professional prospects of up and coming artists.¹¹ The implications of this training and influence have been indicated earlier in relation to all of the artists included in the case studies.

There is certainly space and demand for artist/curators as suggested by my qualitative study. The active presence of artists was evident in seven of the eight institutions responding to the survey, and it is notable that artist presence was apparent at

9 Robert Storr, Interview with author by phone, October 27, 2010.

10 Carol Vogel, "Inside Art," New York Times, May 17, 2002; Carol Vogel, "Inside Art," New York Times, June 21, 2002; Storr's appointment as a Professor of Modern Art was confirmed in June 2002; Carol Vogel, "Inside Art," New York Times, December 9, 2005.

11 "Art World Visionary Robert Storr Reappointed Dean of Yale School of Art," Yale News (February 9, 2011).

the eighth museum through its university and department affiliation though not formally recognized. Curatorial staff analysis indicated that next to Art History (61% of surveyed staff), curators' highest degree held was in the subject of Studio Art (27% of surveyed staff). Only 11% of curatorial staff members held degrees outside of Art History or Studio Art. Educational staff analysis indicated higher percentages in both Studio Art training (20% of surveyed staff) and Education (25% of surveyed staff), including degrees in Art Education that consist of studio components, and a lower percentage in Art History (45%) in comparison. These statistics imply a growing number of studio-trained artists functioning in capacities previously understood to have been reserved for art historians and educators.

This growing number can be attributed to the increasing number of graduates in the visual and performing arts in all areas. A 2008-2009 statistical study executed by the National Center for Educational Statistics indicated that in the 2008-2009 year 89, 140 bachelor's degrees, 14,918 master's degrees, and 1,569 doctoral degrees were conferred. The study also evidenced a fairly steady increase of conferred degrees over the thirty-nine year period of data collection beginning in 1970 with 30, 394 bachelor's degrees, 6, 675 master's and 621 doctoral degrees being awarded in that year.¹² These statistics reflect the postwar change in the discipline of art as outlined in Chapter Two and suggests a relationship between the increasing numbers of artists entering the museum field, particularly curatorial practice, during this period.

12 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred" surveys, 1970-71 through 1985-86; and 1986-87 through 2008-09 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, "Completions Survey" (IPEDS-C:87-99), and Fall 2000 through Fall 2009. (This table was prepared August 2010.)

Collectively, the data presented in this thesis suggests that the role of curator in the postmodern university art museum and university gallery continues to evolve, yet reflects the traditional association of museum and artist outlined in the introduction. The frequency of artist-curated exhibitions has consistently increased over the period of 1970-2010, with these exhibitions sometimes being celebrated as the most outstanding exhibitions of the year according to the American Association of Museums. Continued research and a larger statistical analysis of artist-curated exhibitions both inside and outside of the university art museum and gallery system would further advance the understanding of the artist-curator role in art museums and galleries and clearly define the significance of this evolving duality.

Artist/curators contribute uniquely to the curatorial field through their continual interest in audience engagement. Each of the artists presented in this thesis actively seeks audience participation in their museum and gallery installations. This desire for direct contact with the greater general public has separated the educator and curator in the past and it explains the delegation of artist-curated exhibitions to museum departments of education. Yet, the reception of these exhibitions suggests that art museums and galleries not utilizing artist/curators have much to learn from the practice. The curatorial field is even beginning to show evidence of a desire to work with similar freedom to that ascribed to the artist/curator.

Additionally, artist/curators are appreciated (and hated) for their ability to clearly articulate their individual standpoint—separate from the institution—on the given topic of his or her exhibition. This honesty and openness appears to have been well-received by audiences and the museum profession alike and indicates a need for a continued shift in

the institutional curators' approach. This individual articulation and perhaps creative expression suggests an answer to the question of whether there truly is an art to curating but cannot be relied upon for a definitive answer. Contradictory attributions of both artist and curator will continue to exist for the artist/curator duality as evidenced by recent American Art Historical texts that label Wilson as an "installation artist" and describe his approach,

Wilson's work for the project ["Mining the Museum"] did not involve creating new objects, but rather creatively curating the existing objects. He simply reinstalled the museum's collections, redistributing objects from storage to display contexts, rewriting didactic wall texts and manipulating light, color, and display architecture.¹³

With inconclusive findings among art historians regarding the attribution of an art practice to curatorial methods, the conclusion is left to the audience in a similar manner that artist/curators leave their exhibitions open for audience interpretation and questioning. Yet the existence of the duality of the artist/curator can certainly be confirmed and suggests that Herbert Read was right in his prediction of the duality needed, "We need, not only artists, but also teachers; not only creators, but also interpreters."¹⁴

13 Erika Doss, *Twentieth-Century American Art (Oxford History of Art)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2002), 243; Angela L. Miller, Janet C. Berlo, Bryan Wolf and Jennifer L. Roberts, *American Encounters* (Upper Saddle River, NJ.: Prentice Hall, 2007), 642.

14 Herbert Read, "The Museum and the Artist," *College Art Journal* 13, no. 4 (Summer 1954), 291.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Integrated Timeline

1874	Independents Exhibition (first so-called Impressionists exhibition)
1911	Norman Daly born
1912	Earliest citation of professional rift between art historians in curatorial and professorial capacities
1917	Marcel Duchamp produces <i>Fountain</i> signed R. Mutt rejected by Society of Independent's Artists' jury
1928	Andy Warhol born
1941	1 st guest curator at the National Gallery in D.C.
1945	End of World War II, Enrollment boom in colleges
1946	David Wilson born
1947	<i>Creative and Mental Growth</i> published by Viktor Lowenfeld
1949	Andy Warhol graduates from Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
1950	Robert Storr born
1954	Herbert Read publishes "The Artist and the Museum" Fred Wilson born
1958	Beauvais Lyons born
1960	Clement Greenberg publishes "Modernist Painting"
1962	Andy Warhol exhibits at the Stable Gallery in NYC Leo Steinberg publishes "Contemporary Art and the Plight of Its Public"
1968	Andy Warhol is shot by Valerie Solanis on June 3, 1968
1969	<i>America's Museum: The Belmont Report</i> published David Wilson graduates college
1969-1970	Andy Warhol, "Raid the Ice Box I" at the Museum, Rhode Island School of Design
1971	Norman Daly exhibits "An Exhibition of Artifacts from the Recent Excavations of Vanibo, Houndee, Draikum, and other sites" at the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, Cornell University

- 1972 Founding of the Council on Museums and Education in the Visual Arts with many of the members serving on this council also serving on the AAM president's Education Committee
Robert Storr graduates from Swarthmore
- 1973 AAM Annual Meeting, Milwaukee, WI and EdCom founded
- 1974 "In Quest of a Professional Status" by Robert A. Matthai published in *Museum News*
- 1976 Fred Wilson graduates from SUNY Purchase
- 1976-77 Beauvais Lyons attends Alfred University
- 1978 *The Art Museum as Educator* published
Robert Storr received M.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago
- 1978-80 Beauvais Lyons attends University of Wisconsin-Madison
- 1980 David Wilson installation at Pasadena film forum
Beauvais Lyons exhibits "Arenot Noawa River Ceremonial Complex" at Center Gallery in Madison, WI
- 1980-83 Beauvais Lyons receives Master of Fine Arts Degree from Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona
- 1981 Robert Storr is a contributing editor to *Art in America*
Fred Wilson hired to run Just Above Midtown Gallery
- 1984 *Museums for a New Century* published
Discipline Based Art Education developed by W. Dwaine Greer and the Getty Center for Education in the Arts
- 1985 Patterson Williams publishes Educational Excellence in Art Museums: An Agenda for Reform in *Journal of Aesthetic Education*
Beauvais Lyons joins University of Tennessee Knoxville faculty
- 1987 Fred Wilson *Room With a View: The Struggle Between Culture and Content and the Context of Art* at Longwood Gallery
Andy Warhol dies
- 1989 Museum of Jurassic Technology opens
The Contemporary founded in Maryland
- 1990 *Fred Wilson's The Other Museum* at White Columns
Robert Storr named curator of painting and sculpture at MoMA
- 1991 Robert Storr curates "The Devil on the Stairs: Looking Back on the

- Eighties,” at Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania
- Beauvais Lyons writes article with Norman Daly for *Leonardo*
- 1992 *Excellence and Equity: Education in the Public Dimension* published
- 1992-93 Fred Wilson installs “Mining the Museum” at Maryland Historical Society
- 1993 Dwaine Greer responds to criticisms of DBAE in *Studies for Art Education*
- 1994 Robert Storr curates “Mapping” for MoMA
- Beauvais Lyons coordinates installation of *The Excavation of the Centaur at Volos* installed at Hodges Library
- 1995 Lawrence Weschler publishes *Mr. Wilson’s Cabinet of Wonders*
- Robert Storr Bergen Museum of Arts and Sciences’ exhibition, “The curator as artist/the artist as curator,”
- 1999 Fred Wilson awarded MacArthur Genius Grant
- 2001 David Wilson awarded MacArthur Genius Grant
- 2002 Rob Storr appointed professor at NYU and is named curator for Site Santa Fe’s fifth international Biennial
- 2003 Norman Daly dies
- 2005 Robert Storr is named consulting curator of modern and contemporary art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art
- 2006 Robert Storr appointed Dean of Yale School of Art
- 2007 Robert Storr is named as first American to serve as commissioner of Venice Biennale
- 2008 AAM National Standards and Best Practices published, naming Museum of Jurassic Technology in an effort to define the museum
- 2010 Rob Storr gives the talk, “The Artist as Curator,” at the Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 2011 Rob Storr is re-appointed Dean of the Yale School of Art

APPENDIX B

Selected Bibliography of Female Artist/Curators

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APPENDIX C

Artist Survey Questions

1. What is your perspective on artists serving as curators?
2. If you have had curatorial experience, was a particular museum department dominant in your correspondence and activity with the institution?
3. Has any artist played an influential role on your experience as an artist/curator?
4. Do you consider yourself to fulfill other professional roles outside of artist (educator, curator, etc.)?
 - a. If so, which ones?
5. Are you aware of or have you ever had discussions with museum professionals regarding the mandates set forth by the AAM reports *Museums for a New Century* or *Excellence and Equity* in regards to the exhibition that you curated?
6. Have you ever been exposed to theory of art education known as Discipline Based Art Education (D.B.A.E.)?
 - a. If so, was this exposure through an education program or your own research?
 - b. Have you used D.B.A.E. as an educational pedagogy in the classroom?
 - c. Do you feel like it has had an impact on the way contemporary artists are working today?
 - d. Has it affected your artistic process?
7. What is your perspective on the contemporary artist as both educator and artist?
8. Do you feel like the university and college professor /artist has contributed to the persona of the artist/educator?
9. Does your art work have an instructional component?
10. Have you completed an artist-in-residency program?
 - a. If so, where were you in residence and for how long?
 - b. What was the objective for your residency?
11. Would you consent to a fifteen-minute phone interview for possible follow up questions?

APPENDIX D

Contemporary Art Museum and University Gallery Survey Questions

Institutional Background and Exhibition

Name:

Museum Position:

1. What is the total staff size of your museum or gallery?
2. Is your museum or gallery a member of the American Association of Museums or any other professional gallery or museum associations?
3. Has your museum invited professionals with non-traditional curatorial backgrounds (e.g. studio art or other) to curate exhibitions?

If your institution answered yes to question #3, please answer the following questions:

- a. Were these exhibitions staged in main gallery spaces?
 - b. Were there printed interpretive materials available to the audience?
 - i. Are traditional or digital copies available of these materials?
 - c. Who was the intended audience for this exhibition (adults, college students, high school students, school children, etc.)?
 - d. What has been the frequency of this curation? (Once a year, an ongoing series, etc.)
 - e. What prompted your institution to invite artists with non-traditional backgrounds (e.g. , artists or others) to curate exhibitions?
 - f. Departmentally, who was responsible for the invitation of the outside curator (Education, Curatorial, Director, etc.)?
 - i. If no department was responsible, was the institution sought out by the artist or another organization?
 - g. Has the issuance of *Excellence and Equity* affected your decision to invite outside curators?
4. Does your museum or gallery have an Artist In Residency program?

If your institution answered yes to question #4, please answer the following questions:

 - a. Does your institution provide that artist the opportunity to exhibit in a main gallery space?
 - b. If an exhibition is held for the Artist-In-Residence, who selects the works included in the exhibition?
 - c. Does the artist have any input into the curatorial and educational interpretation of the exhibition?
 5. Would you consent to a fifteen-minute phone interview for possible follow up questions?

Curatorial Staff

Name:

Museum Position:

The following series of questions will address staff make-up and job definition within your institution. The purpose of these questions is to assess size and staff background within your institution. Please answer these questions as honestly as possible.

1. How many staff members make up your Curatorial Department? (Please include full and part-time staff.)
2. Do some members of your staff perform multiple roles (e.g., curatorial and registrar functions)?
3. How many of your curatorial staff members hold Art History degrees?
 - a. How many of them hold B.A. degrees?
 - b. How many of them hold M.A. degrees?
 - c. How many of them hold Ph.D degrees?
4. How many of your curatorial staff members hold Studio Art degrees?
 - a. How many of them hold B.A. degrees?
 - b. How many of them hold B.F.A degrees?
 - c. How many of them hold M.A. degrees?
 - d. How many of them hold M.F.A. degrees?
5. How does your institution define the role of curator?
6. How does your institution define the role of educator?
7. Do any of your curatorial staff work outside of the institution as an adjunct professor at a university or college?
8. Would you consent to a fifteen-minute phone interview for possible follow up questions?

Education Staff

Name:

Museum Position:

The following series of questions will address staff make-up and job definition within your institution. The purpose of these questions is to assess size and staff background within your institution. Please answer these questions as honestly as possible.

1. How many staff members make up your Education Department? (Please include full and part-time staff.)
2. Do some members of your staff perform multiple roles (e.g., education and registrar functions)?
3. How many of your education staff members hold Art History degrees?
 - a. How many of them hold B.A. degrees?
 - b. How many of them hold M.A. degrees?
 - c. How many of them hold Ph.D degrees?
4. How many of your education staff members hold Studio Art degrees?
 - a. How many of them hold B.A. degrees?
 - b. How many of them hold M.A. degrees?
 - c. How many of them hold Ph.D degrees?
5. How many of your education staff hold Education degrees?
 - a. How many of them hold B.A. or B.S. degrees?
 - b. How many of them hold M.Ed. degrees?
 - c. How many of them hold Ed.D. degrees?
6. How does your institution define the role of educator?
7. How would you differentiate the role of an educator to that of a curator?
8. Do any of the education staff work outside of the institution as an adjunct professor at a university or college?
9. Would you consent to a fifteen-minute phone interview for possible follow up questions?

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