

beti
žerovc

charles
esche

■ U kustoskoj karijeri Charlesa Eschea (r. 1962.) isprepliću se razdoblja nezavisnog djelovanja s razdobljima djelovanja u institucijama. Od kraja 1992. godine do 1997. godine bio je direktor galerije za suvremenu umjetnost *Tramway* u Glasgouu. Sada je direktor *Rooseuma* centra za suvremenu umjetnost u Malmöu u Švedskoj. Ugledni pozivi za najrazličitije projekte svjedoče o tome da je danas vrlo cijenjen - među ostalim za obavljanje kustoskih poslova u londonskoj galeriji Tate, za odabir mladih britanskih umjetnika za madridski likovni sajam ARCO, na kojem je godine 2001 Velika Britanija bila posebno predstavljena, da sudjeluje kao kustos u pripremi lanjskoga *Bijenala Gwangju* itd. Nerijetko sudjeluje na raspravama i simpozijima o poslu kustosa i o problematici povezanoj s njim. Često drži predavanja. Uz to je i pisac i suurednik časopisa *Afterall*, koji izdaje Central St. Martins College of Art and Design u Londonu. Aktivno se zanima za školovanje na području umjetnosti. U Edinburghu je potaknuo projekt pod naslovom *proto academy*, u okviru kojega pokušava oblikovati forum za progresivno razmišljanje i djelovanje na području umjetničkoga obrazovanja, jer dosadašnje načine podučavanja na umjetničkim akademijama smatra slijepom ulicom. Pri tome nije riječ o školovanju formalnoga značenja, nego o udruživanju najrazličitijih profila stručnjaka s područja umjetnosti, kao i drugih zainteresiranih u mrežu koja omogućuje kolektivnu diskusiju, povezivanje, susretanje i zajedničko djelovanje izvan uskih lokalnih okvira ili okvira profesionalnih specijalizacija.

■ ■ Pojam kustosa je, u smislu u kojem ga danas shvaćamo, nešto relativno novo, koristi se tek dvadesetak ili tridesetak godina. Kome se osjećate bližim: tradicionalnom kustosu u muzeju, privatnom *dealeru* ili kritičaru? Po mojem se mišljenju kustos na neki način razvio ili je preuzeo ponešto od svih tih funkcija.

Da, i ja tako mislim. Postoji i povijesno značenje riječi kustos, koje nije vezano isključivo uz umjetnost. Na primjer, u škotskom je pravu kustos zapravo osoba koja se brine o djetetu nakon smrti njegovih roditelja. On ima odgovornost brige o djetetu i taj aspekt može biti vrlo zanimljiv u pogledu razmjene između umjetnika i kustosa. U pravom značenju te riječi kustos je također onaj tko se brine za neku zbirku. Tako kustosi postoje od osamnaestog stoljeća,

● The curator's career of Charles Esche (born in 1962) is marked by alternating periods of independent activity and those of activity within institutions. From late 1992 until 1997, he acted as manager of the Tramway gallery of contemporary art in Glasgow. Presently, he is manager of the Roseum centre for contemporary art in Malmö, Sweden. Distinguished invitations to participate in extremely diverse projects testify of the high esteem that Esche enjoys today - among others, the invitation to act as curator for the Tate Gallery, London, to select young British artists for the Madrid Fair of Visual Arts ARCO, in which Great Britain was a special guest in 2001, to participate as curator in the preparations for the last year's Gwangju Biennial, etc. Esche frequently takes part in debates and conferences on the work of curators and related issues. Gives lectures on a regular basis. Also acts as contributor and co-editor for the *Afterall* magazine, published by Central St. Martin's College of Art and Design in London. He takes keen interest in education in the field of art. In Edinburgh, he has initiated a project entitled *Protoacademy*, within which he seeks to establish a forum for progressive thinking and acting in the field of artistic training, since he considers the present teaching methods in art academies futile. Personally, he does not endorse formal training, preferring instead a fusion of most diverse types of professionals from the field of art, as well as others who are interested in creating a network that would enable collective discussion, cohesion, encounter, and cooperation beyond narrow local boundaries or boundaries of professional specialization.

● ● Curator, as we understand it today, is something that is relatively new, twenty, maybe thirty years old. To whom do you feel closer: to the traditional curator in a museum, to the private dealer or a critic? In my opinion the curator somehow developed or took something from all of these positions.

Yeah, I think so. There is also the historical meaning of curator, which is related not only to art. For instance, in Scottish law, a curator is actually a person who looks after a child when his parents are no longer alive. They have responsibility for the care of a child, which could be quite interesting in relation to the artist-curator exchange. Curator in its real meaning is also somebody who cares for a collection. So, curators have



vjerojatno od začetaka zbirke kurioziteta. Povijest te vrste kustosa je duga, a postoji i moderno značenje kustosa kao onoga tko sastavlja izložbu, *Ausstellungsmachera* ili nečeg sličnog, i to se značenje pojavilo prije dvadesetak godina. To je uistinu sasvim drugačiji koncept, kojemu se pridaje ista riječ; postoji vrlo malo veze između pojma brige za zbirku, za dijete ili nešto slično i suvremenog značenja kustosa. Moglo bi se reći da bismo zapravo morali izmisliti neku novu riječ, budući da nisam baš siguran da je ta povijesna veza od koristi.

Osobno mogu reći da sam se počeo baviti poslom kustosa zato što sam se zainteresirao za umjetnost, ali nisam bio školovan za umjetnika niti se smatram umjetnikom. Postao sam kustos zato što sam se na taj način mogao baviti umjetnošću, a da ne budem i sam umjetnik. Stoga na neki način baš i ne razmišljam previše o tome što ta riječ znači i često je za sebe ni ne koristim, budući da bi me se također moglo smatrati piscem, a za svoje sam razne poslodavce službeno urednik, voditelj projekta i istraživač. Zapravo rijetko imam naslov kustosa, ali me, dakako, uvijek tako zovu. U okviru stvarnog posla ponekad sam prije katalizator umjetnikova projekta; ponekad osjećam da radim paralelno s umjetnikom, budući da raspravljamo o projektu od samog početka i imam priliku vidjeti stvarnu razmjenu ideja; ponekad sastavljam izložbe, a odnedavno se intenzivno bavim razvojem ideje umjetničke institucije kao takve - za razliku od pukog izložbenog programa.

U svojstvu kustosa često osjećate kao da morate uspostaviti distancu prema svakoj vrsti kreativnog angažmana, ali mislim da bismo morali priznati da je u tom novom pojmu kustosa implicitno sadržana stvarna kreativnost. Vjerojatno je razlog zbog kojega od nje odustajemo u nasljeđu povijesne upotrebe termina, koja je postojala prije naše djelatnosti. Sada se zapravo bavimo proizvodnjom i stvaranjem raznih konteksta i mogućnosti, a sve to sadrži element kreativnosti. Osobno me najviše zanima umjetnost u smislu oruđa - oruđa za zamišljanje svijeta na drugi način. Ne zanimaju me toliko estetske vrijednosti zbog njih samih i uopće me ne zanima umjetnost zbog umjetnosti kao takve. Prije se radi o načinu na koji se umjetnost uklapa u okolnosti koje je okružuju te ih mijenja, način na koji djeluje na imaginaciju. Stoga su ograničenja mojeg shvaćanja kustosovih mogućnosti uvjetovana tim osobnim i političkim programom.

existed since the eighteenth century, probably since the beginning of the cabinet of curiosities. There's a long history of that kind of curator and then there's the new meaning of curator as exhibition maker, *Ausstellungsmacher* or whatever, which comes in around twenty years ago. The latter is really a completely different concept to which the same word has been attached; there is very little relationship between this notion of caring for a collection or a child or whatever and the contemporary meaning of curator. So you could say we should actually find another word, because I am not sure that that historical connection is very useful.

What I can say is that I became involved in curating because I got interested in art but was not trained and do not think of myself as an artist. I fell into curating because that was what you could do in order to be involved with art and not be an artist. So in some ways, I don't think very much about what the word means and I often don't use it about myself because I could also be called a writer and officially I'm an editor, director and research fellow to my various employers. I actually rarely have the title curator, but of course I'm always called it. In terms of my actual work: sometimes I'm more a facilitator of an artist's project; sometimes I feel I'm working in parallel with an artist, where we are discussing the project from the start and I can see a real exchange of ideas; sometimes I make exhibitions and recently I've been most concerned with developing the idea of the art institution itself - rather than just its exhibition programme.

Often, as a curator you feel like you have to back away from any kind of creative involvement, but I think we should admit to a real creativity implicit in this new term of curator. Probably the reason we back away from it is because of the legacy of the historical use of curator that pre-existed our activities. Now we're actually involved in production and the creation of contexts and opportunities, all of which have a creative element. And speaking personally, I'm most interested in art in the sense of a tool - a tool to imagine the world otherwise. I'm not so interested in aesthetic values for themselves, and I'm certainly not interested in art for art's sake. It's more how art engages and changes conditions around itself, how it operates on the imagination. So the limitations of my understanding of the possibilities of the curator

■ ■ Govorite o počecima svog rada u svojstvu kustosa kao da ste iznikli ni iz čega: naprosto ste voljeli umjetnost i tako dalje. Ipak, postoje li osobe koje biste nazvali svojim prethodnicima ili neki posebni događaji koji su Vas nadahnuli?

Da, postoje takve osobe, ali to su uglavnom umjetnici. Hoću reći, razlog zbog kojega sam se počeo baviti umjetnošću bio je umjetnik po imenu Stephen Willats, koji je od šezdesetih godina nadalje radio na nečemu što bismo danas nazvali socijalnim projektima. Što se tiče prethodnika, mislim da tu moram biti sasvim osoban i reći da je razlog zbog kojega sam se zainteresirao za umjetnost bilo moje razočaranje politikom. U svojim sam dvadesetima, barem na početku, bio član britanske Laburističke stranke i vrlo aktivan u onome što se tada nazivalo ljevicom. Međutim, postupno sam, osobito nakon iskustva s velikim štrajkom rudara '84.-'85. godine, postao krajnje razočaran mogućnostima politike - njezinom mogućnošću da utječe na ljudsku imaginaciju, da izazove promjene u mišljenju i djelovano, da ponovo promisli globalizaciju, nepravdu, emancipaciju, gotovo sve što je izvan nade za revoluciju ili svakodnevnu primjenu. Činilo mi se da se opcije zatvaraju jedna za drugom (osobito u Britaniji, budući da su se u to vrijeme moja razmišljanja još uvijek čvrsto zasnivala na nekoj vrsti nacionalnog shvaćanja). U umjetnosti sam vidio, kroz nekoga kao Stephen Willats, način da izadem na kraj s nekim pitanjima za koja sam osjećao da ih želim postaviti u političkoj sferi, ali to nisam mogao. Tako je moj put krenuo od pokušaja da promijenim svijet preko politike do toga da sam se zainteresirao za umjetnost.

■ ■ Ali zbog čega niste mogli postaviti ta pitanja u političkoj sferi?

Zato što se činilo da su se u ljevici stvari već stvrdnule u nekakav ideološki kamen i da nitko više ni ne razmišlja o odnosu ideologije prema opazivim činjenicama. Na primjer, nitko nije bio spreman postaviti pitanje je li marksizam ispravan, je li Trocki bio u pravu ili nije, ili ste to prihvatili ili ste ispalili iz igre. Nitko nije bio spreman upotrijebiti politiku na imaginacijski ili spekulativan način, a to je i danas apsolutno tako. Navest ću jedan primjer: 1980. i 1981. godine svim smo se silama trudili da na neki način podržimo *Solidarnost*, iako nekima nije bilo pravo što se time suprotstavljamo "socijalističkoj" vladi.

are dictated by that personal and political agenda.

● ● You were talking about the beginnings of your curatorial work as if you emerged from some point of nothing; that you just liked art and so on. But are there any people that you could call forerunners or special events, which inspired you?

Yes, there are such people, but they're mostly artists. Well, I mean the reason I got into art was an artist called Stephen Willats who was working on what we could now call social projects from the 1960's onwards. In terms of forerunners, I think I have to be quite personal and say the reason I got interested in art is through my disillusionment with politics. In my twenties, early twenties at least, I was a member of the British Labour Party and very active on what was then called the left. And gradually, particularly with the experience of the big miners' strike in '84-'85, I became extremely disillusioned with the possibilities of politics - its possibility to affect people's imagination, to affect changes in thinking and acting, to rethink globalisation, injustice, emancipation, almost anything beyond the hope for the revolution of everyday management. It seemed to me that the options were being closed down (particularly in Britain because at that time my thoughts were still based very much on some kind of national understanding). I saw in art, through somebody like Stephen Willats, a way of dealing with some of the questions I felt I wanted to ask in the political sphere, but couldn't. And so my journey was from trying to change the world through politics to becoming interested in art.

● ● But why couldn't you pose those questions in the political sphere?

Because things on the left seemed already set in an ideological stone and nobody was even considering ideology's relation to observable realities. Nobody was prepared for instance to question whether Marxism was correct, whether Trotsky was correct or not, you either accepted it or you were out. Nobody was prepared to use politics, and that is still absolutely true now, in an imaginative or speculative way. I'll tell you an example: in 1980-81 we were very involved in trying to support *Solidarnosc* in some way, though many were troubled to be opposing a "socialist" government. Then in '84 when the miners' strike was on, we

Zatim smo '84., dok je trajao štrajk rudara, išli na dokove Hulla, luke u istočnoj Engleskoj, kako bismo pokušali zaustaviti brodove koji su dovozili poljski ugljen koji su iskopali isti oni rudari koji su tri godine prije toga okupirali rudnike kako bi obranili *Solidarnost*. Međutim, nitko nije ozbiljno progovorio o ironičnosti našeg protesta ili o odnosu između onoga što smo radili 1981. i 1984. Na kraju se činilo da se borimo protiv svakoga tko se suprotstavlja našem britanskom interesu radničke klase i ja u toj poziciji nisam mogao vidjeti nikakvu budućnost, budući da ideja interesa nacije i klase naprosto više ništa nije značila. Nitko nije želio raspravljati o mogućnosti promišljenog odgovora na globalizaciju, na složenost zajednice i onoga što bi to moglo značiti, pa čak ni ponovno zamisliti novu Internacionalu, ništa od toga. Činilo se da je sve što je globalno, ekonomski ili čak estetski izazovno, zlo - do te se mjere zapalo u simplifikaciju i malodušnost. Ljevica je izgubila razum zbog propasti koherentne klasne strukture i grčevito se držala njezine olupine. Svi su se oko mene naprosto zabili u svoje defenzivno raspoloženje, pokušavajući zaštititi prava koja su izborna već pedesetih ili šezdesetih godina, ali više nisu bila toliko važna. Nije postojao mehanizam da se zamisli na koji bi se način mogli modificirati globalni odnosi ili kako bi se reaganizam - thatcherizam mogao okrenuti sam protiv sebe promjenom vizije svijeta. Ne, budućnost je bila zapečaćena, a mi smo ostali u vječnoj opoziciji čekajući "revoluciju" i bili smo gotovo sretni u svojoj malodušnosti i pomanjkanju obaveze da postignemo bilo kakvu stvarnu promjenu.

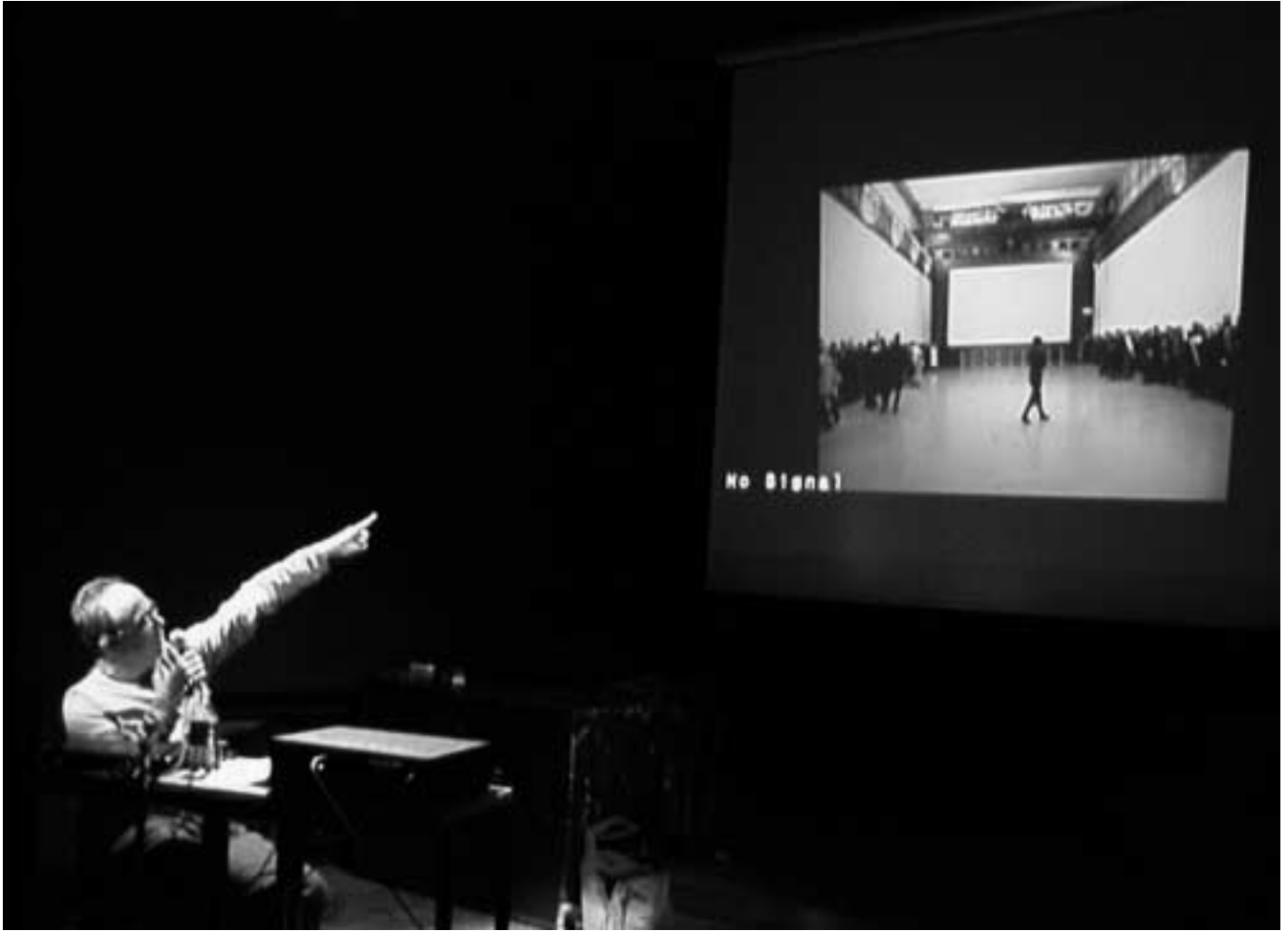
U politici, dakle, nismo imali (i nemamo) na raspolaganju imaginacijsko mišljenje. A to je jedini spas koji nam preostaje, da zapravo zamišljamo svijet drugačije. Moramo krenuti od temelja i pokušati izgraditi neke drugačije ideje o tome kako bismo se mogli željeti organizirati kao društvo. Inače nam preostaje samo jedno slobodno tržište, ono prema demokratskom kapitalističkom modelu. A meni se čini da bi umjetnost mogla biti teren na kojemu se to danas može dogoditi. Od osamdesetih sam godina još sigurniji u to da se neće dogoditi u tradicionalnoj stranačkoj politici, a druga su područja - filozofija, znanost, ekonomija - često tako brižljivo specijalizirana da sama sebe onemogućavaju u učinkovitim izjavama. Ali to je već druga priča ...

went down to the docks in Hull, which is a port in eastern England, and tried to stop the ships that were bringing the Polish coal dug up by the same miners who three years before had been occupying the mines to defend *Solidarnosc*. Yet, no one would seriously discuss the irony of our protest or the relationship between what we were doing in 1981 and 1984. In the end, it seemed we were fighting anybody who opposed our British working class self-interest, and I couldn't see a future in that position at all, because the idea of the self-interest of a nation and class just didn't mean anything anymore. Nobody would discuss the possibility of a thoughtful response to globalisation, to the complexity of community and what it might mean, even to re-imagine a new International, nothing. It seemed everything global, economic or even aesthetically challenging was evil, it was that simplistic and defeatist. The left was freaked out by the end of a coherent class structure and was clinging to its wreckage. Everybody around was just stuck in defensive mode, trying to protect the rights that have been won in 1950's or 1960's but that no longer meant so much. There was no mechanism to imagine how global relationships could be renegotiated, or how Reaganism-Thatcherism could be turned against itself by changing our vision of the world. No, the future was fixed, we were in eternal opposition until the "revolution" and we were almost happy in our defeatism and lack of responsibility to effect any real change.

So, there was (and is) no imaginative speculation available in politics. And that's the only salvation that we have, actually to think the world differently. We have to start from the ground and try to build up some different ideas of how we might want to organize ourselves as a society. Otherwise we only have the one free market, democratic capitalist model. And for me it seems art could be the terrain where that can happen today. Since the 1980's I am even more sure it's not going to happen in traditional party politics and other areas - philosophy, science, economics - are often so carefully specialised they stop themselves from making effective statements. But this is another story...

● ● Please, continue with it.

For me, art has possibility. Possibility is a very important word for me, because I think that's what we have to grasp, to cre-



■ ■ Molim Vas, nastavite s njom.

Za mene umjetnost sadrži mogućnost. Mogućnost je za mene vrlo važna riječ jer smatram da je to ono za čim trebamo težiti, za stvaranjem mogućnosti. Ernst Bloch je rekao da u svijetu postoje interesi koji nastoje onemogućiti mogućnost - stoga je mogućnost itekako politički termin. Mogućnost promjene, mogućnost imaginacije, mogućnost promišljanja, mogućnost da se stvari zamisle drugačije, to je sve vrlo važno. Dakle, ako na umjetnost gledamo kao na generalizam, polje koje može u sebe uvući razne specijalizme, spojiti ih i možda pogrešno shvatiti ili upotrijebiti, ali i stvoriti nešto drugo iz te kombinacije, što bi odgovaralo zajedničkom interesu, onda mislim da je pozicija umjetnosti jedinstvena po svojem mogućem učinku na pitanja zajedništva ili zajednice i da je stvarno oruđe koje se može upotrijebiti za razmišljanje u tom pravcu. A to je ono što me kod umjetnosti uzbuđuje. Dakako, na području umjetnosti postoje i drugi aspekti, koji me odviše ne

ate possibility. Ernst Bloch said there are interests in the world that try to deny possibility - so, possibility is a very political term. Possibility to change, possibility to imagine, possibility to speculate, possibility to think things otherwise, these are very important. Now, if we see art as a generalism, a field which can draw in various specialisms, bring them together, perhaps misunderstand or misuse them, but create something else out of the combination that speaks to a common interest, then I think the position of art is unique in its possible effect on questions of commonality or community and a real tool to be used to think in that way. And that's what excites me about it. Of course there are other aspects in this terrain of art that I have little interest in, which have to do with commercialism or to do with the gallery structure or to do with the way that art affirms the status quo or relates to fashion. That's fine, I don't like them and I don't dislike them, they don't interest me. The real possibility for art is to be a specu-

2



3



4

zanimaju, a to su oni koji se tiču komercijalizma, galerijske strukture ili pak načina na koji umjetnost potvrđuje *status quo* ili se odnosi prema modi. To je u redu, ja te aspekte ne volim niti ih mrzim, oni me ne zanimaju. Stvarna mogućnost umjetnosti je ta da bude spekulativni teren, da zamišlja svijet drugačije i da crpi iz drugih disciplina, bila to filozofija, fizika ili nogomet, da progovara o našim stanjima i o tome kako se ona mogu popraviti.

■ ■ Dakle, uzimajući sve to u obzir, što bi točno bila zadaća kustosa?

Zadaća kustosa je da njeguje taj teren mogućnosti, da pazi na nj, da gradi na njemu institucije ili strukture u kojima se može dogoditi takvo promišljanje. Da stvori ogradeni prostor, ako tako želite, u kojemu se neke od tih stvari mogu dogoditi, dakako unutar kapitalizma, ali donekle zaštićene od njegovih destruktivnih, podrugljivih sila.

■ ■ Sjećam se da ste negdje objasnili da je kustos stručnjak za umjetnost i da je uistinu poznae. Stvarno me zanima u čemu se to znanje sastoji?

Gledajte, na jednoj razini je to jednostavno poznavanje različitih praksi koje se događaju u svijetu. Time želim reći da su kustosi plaćeni za to i od njih se očekuje da znaju što se događa u određenom trenutku i na određenom mjestu. Stoga bi njihova osnova znanja i razumijevanje aktualnih djelatnosti trebali biti daleko širi od onih koje posjeduje netko tko ne provodi toliko vremena na polju umjetnosti.

■ ■ Znači li to da bi netko tko posjeduje veće znanje bio bolji kustos?

Shvaćam što želite reći ... Ne, budući da se tu radi o primjeni znanja. A način na koji primjenjujete to znanje proizlazi iz spe-

lative terrain, to imagine the world differently and to draw on other disciplines, whether it's philosophy, physics or football, to talk about our conditions and how they could be revised.

● ● So, taking all this into account, what exactly would be the task of the curator?

The task of the curator is to cultivate that terrain of possibility, to look after it, to build institutions on it or structures on it in which such a speculation can happen. To develop an enclosure if you like, where some of these things can happen, within capitalism of course, but a little bit defended from its destructive, mocking forces.

● ● I read something where you were explaining that the curator is an expert on art and that he has real knowledge of art. I'm really interested in what that knowledge would be?

Look, on one level it's a simple knowledge of different practices that are going on around the world. I mean, curators are paid and expected to know what is going on at a particular moment and place. So their knowledge base and understanding of current activities should be much wider than somebody who doesn't spend all that time in the art field.

● ● So if you have somebody who has greater knowledge, does that mean that he would be a better curator?

I see what you mean ... No, because it's about applying that knowledge. And how you apply that knowledge comes from the specific position that you articulate as a curator. So the curator has a specific position and specific interest. I've tried to point towards that in my own journey from politics to art. If you ask another curator,

2-5. C. Esche, na predavanju 24. 9. 2002., Galerija Kapelica, Ljubljana, u organizaciji SCCA Ljubljana / C. Esche, lecture held on 24 September 2002, organised by SCCA Ljubljana, Galerija Kapelica, Ljubljana

cifične pozicije koju izražavate kao kustos. Tako kustos ima specifičnu poziciju i specifičan interes. Pokušao sam na to ukazati na svojem vlastitom putu od politike do umjetnosti. Ako pitate drugog kustosa, čut ćete drugu poziciju i tako dalje. Barem se nadam.

■ ■ Kako se onda može najbolje vrednovati kustos i je li to uopće moguće?

Jedan u odnosu prema drugome i također u odnosu na termine koje bih ja pritom upotrijebio, kao što su mogućnost ili pojmovi preuzeti od Jacquesa Derrida i Klossowskog, na primjer gostoljubivost, generalizam, možda čak i fluidnost. Ako kustos želi napraviti izložbu, moguće je donijeti sljedeći sud: stvara li ta izložba u tom trenutku mogućnost za to mjesto i umjetnike? Djeluje li na publiku na način koji je gostoljubiv, koji potiče neku vrstu angažmana? Funkcionira li u odnosu prema društvenoj situaciji, koja se neprestano mijenja, ili je nepokretna? Progovara li o širim društvenim pitanjima ili samo o onima vezanim uz umjetnost? To su vrste sudova koje možete donijeti s obzirom na izložbu koju postavi neki kustos. Želim reći da postoji vrlo mnogo načina na koji možete suditi, ali ove bih kriterije ja želio primijeniti.

■ ■ Znači li to da kustosa smatrate samostalnim autorom?

Smatram ga prije posrednikom ili katalizatorom nego autorom. Dakako, svatko ima vlastite ideje, mislim da ne bismo trebali poreći činjenicu da kustos ima svoju poziciju, ali ta se pozicija sastoji u tome da bira, da izabire one umjetnike ili projekte koje smatra fascinantnima, zanimljivima, koji zadovoljavaju njegove kriterije te da im posluži kao katalizator i posreduje ih publici.

then you'll have another position and so on. I would hope.

● ● So how can a curator be valued at all or at best?

Against each other and also in relationship to terms I would use, like possibility, like notions taken from Jacques Derrida and Klossowski of hospitality, of generalism, perhaps even of fluidity. If a curator wants to do an exhibition, the judgement offered might be: Does it create possibility for that moment, for the place and for the artists? Does it work for an audience in a way, which is hospitable, which encourages some kind of engagement? Does it function in relationship to a social situation, which is constantly changing, or is it fixed? Does it address broad social questions or only art's own issues? Those are the kind of judgements you might bring to an exhibition that a curator makes. I mean there are all sorts of ways that you can judge but those would be the criteria that I would want to use.

● ● Does that mean that you see a curator as an independent author?

I mean it more as a mediator or a facilitator than an author. Of course you have your own idea, I don't think we should deny the fact that a curator has a position, but your position is to choose, select those artists or projects that you find compelling, interesting, that satisfy the criteria you have and then to facilitate them and mediate them to an audience. That's why the judgements have to be about the context as much as the precise content.

● ● You often talked about your friendship with artists, the fact that you work very closely with them, how important that is ...



Upravo se zbog toga sudovi trebaju ticati konteksta jednako kao i konkretnog sadržaja.

■ ■ Često spominjete svoje prijateljstvo s umjetnicima, činjenicu da vrlo blisko suradujete s njima i kako je to vrlo važno ...

Da, to je važno, od ključne važnosti.

■ ■ Ali to vjerojatno u velikoj mjeri utječe na Vaš izbor?

Apsolutno, apsolutno, ne bih to želio poreći ni u jednom trenutku. Ali zbog čega želite objektivne kriterije izvan mene samoga? Hoću reći, ako me pozovete da napravim neki projekt kao kustos, dovest ću ljude koje poznajem, volim, u koje vjerujem i imam u njih povjerenja. To se temelji na ranijem iskustvu pa se krug neprestano širi, ali ja nisam neovisan o tim ljudima i mislim da se oko toga uopće ne bih trebao uznemirivati. Ja imam svoju vlastitu poziciju. Na primjer, ako želite zgradu kao što je Koolhaasova, potražiti ćete Rema Koolhaasa, a ako želite zgradu kao što je Gheryjeva, potražiti ćete Franka Gheryja. Jer znate da imaju vlastite pozicije.

■ ■ Da. Ali ipak možete pitati Koolhaasa zašto radi određenu kuću, zašto je radi upravo na taj način itd. Isto tako ja to pitam Vas. Znači, za Vas se prijateljstvo i umjetnička kvaliteta na neki način preklapaju?

Ne uvijek. To se, naime, mijenja u odnosu na to kako otkrivате situacije istražujući, putujući, susrećući ljude, gledajući radove koji vas privuku. Privuku vas upravo prema onim kriterijima koje sam ranije naveo, kao i iz razloga iznenađenja, inovacije, stvari koje ne možete unaprijed predvidjeti. Vidim nešto i kažem: "Wow! Ovo je stvarno super." To je vjerojatno vezano uz određena društvena, politička ili ekonomska pitanja koja me zanimaju i to što vidim da ih umjetnik doista preispituje na način na koji o njima nikada nisam razmišljao. Tada je moj posao da ih upoznam, moj posao nije da kažem: "Wow, ovo je super, uzet ćemo taj rad." Mogao bih i to, dakako, ali ako to kažem, želim također doznati s kime imam posla. Stoga to prijateljstvo i ta politika prijateljstva nastanu iz rada koji vidim i rada koji me zainteresira. U tom smislu prijateljstvo nije slijepa emocionalna reakcija, već se zasniva na mojim interesima.

■ ■ Ali vidite li neke problematične strane tog načina promatranja stvari? Na primjer, Viktor Misiano također ima posebne i na

Yes, it's important, vital.

● ● But that probably affects your choice, your selection to a great degree?

Totally, totally, I wouldn't deny it for a moment. But why do you want some objective criteria outside of myself? I mean if you invite me as a curator to do a project, I bring the people I know, believe in, love and trust. It's based on previous experiences so the circle does grow constantly, but I'm not independent from those people and I don't think I should be nervous about that at all. I have my own position. Like, if you want a building like Rem Koolhaas, you ask for Rem Koolhaas, if you want a building like Frank Ghery, you ask Ghery. Because you know, they have positions.

● ● Yes. But you can still ask Koolhaas why is he doing the particular house, why is he doing it in such a way, etc. In the same way as I'm asking you those things. So for you, in a way, friendship and artistic quality are coinciding?

Not always. Because it depends: as you discover situations by research, by travelling, by meeting people, by looking at work you're drawn to. You're drawn to it for those criteria I already mentioned, as well as for reasons of surprise, innovation, things you can't predict in advance. I see something and go "wow! that's really great". Probably it's connected to particular social, political or economic questions that I'm interested in and I can see the artist is really investigating those in a way that I had never thought about. Then my job is to get to know them, my job is not to say: 'Wow, that's great, let's take that work'. I might do that, of course, but in saying it I also want to get to know who I'm dealing with. So, the friendship, the politics of that friendship come out of the work that I see and the work that interests me. In that sense, friendship is not a blind emotional reaction but grounded in my interests.

● ● But do you see any problematic sides in this way of seeing things? For example, Viktor Misiano also has some special and in a way very similar ideas on friendship as you do. But since he is the strongest and if we emphasize a little, the "only" curator who is really working outside Russia and in the West that means ...

... you have to be friends with Viktor in order to get out.

neki način slične ideje o prijateljstvu kao Vi. Ali budući da je najjači i, ako baš želimo naglasiti, "jedini" kustos koji doista djeluje izvan Rusije i na Zapadu, to znači ...

... da morate biti prijatelj s Viktorom kako biste se probili.

■ ■ Kako to možemo riješiti?

Mislim da bi situacija u zapadnoj Europi mogla biti donekle drugačija, budući da ima više pluralizma; postoje drugi ljudi s kojima možete raditi. Slabost je u tome što postoji vrlo mali broj ljudi koji doista prave ovakvu vrstu sudova. Ono što nam je potrebno je više ljudi koji će praviti ovakvu vrstu sudova, kao i više prozirnosti i iskrenosti u načinu na koji to funkcionira.

■ ■ Zamislimo, na primjer, da sam ja dobra umjetnica, odavde iz Slovenije, za koju ste zainteresirani, ali koja Vas sada čini nervoznim jer postavlja ovakva pitanja. Što bi to značilo? Da se ne uklapam u Vašu izložbu? Ako se ne slažem s Vama, utječe li to na neki način na kvalitetu mog rada s Vama?

Mislim da je to zanimljivo jer me tjera da razmišljam. Prema tome, prilično mi se sviđa i vjerojatnije je da ću poželjeti vidjeti Vaše radove. S druge strane, nisam sasvim siguran da je to bitno. Moje je iskustvo s marginalnim mjestima kao što su Glasgow i Malmö da ondje stvari doista funkcioniraju (kao i u Ljubljani) jedino onda ako se počnu održavati tako što razvijaju podršku lokalne zajednice, kritičko mnoštvo sasvim skromnih institucija i samopouzdanje. To je ona energija koju će netko tko dolazi izvana moći vidjeti i koja će ga uzbuditi. Stoga su stvari i pod vašom kontrolom i ne treba samo čekati na blagoslov međunarodnih kustosa. U Gwangjuu smo to nastojali odraziti pozivajući 26 malih skupina i mjesta kojima upravljaju umjetnici kako bi predstavljali sami sebe.

■ ■ Vi radite u muzeju. Negdje sam pročitala da ste, prije nego što ste počeli, izjavili kako ćete pokušati pretvoriti uobičajeni i postojeći izložbeni program u nešto raznolikije, što će imati produktivniju ulogu. Dakle, kako ste daleko došli s time?

Prvo što sam učinio bilo je da sam razbio tradicionalni izložbeni prostor u više različitih funkcija. Upotrijebili smo tri kata na različite načine, a gore smo napravili dva studija koji su napola privatni, napola javni. Umjetnici koji se ondje nalaze neće nužno biti prikazani na izložbi, ali za njih vrijedi

● ● How can we solve this?

I think it may be slightly different in Western Europe because there's more pluralism; there are other people that you can work with. The weakness of it is if there are only very few people who are actually making these kinds of judgements. What we need are more people making these kinds of judgements and more transparency or honesty in how it works.

● ● Let's say that I'm a good artist, here from Slovenia, who you are interested in, but who is now making you nervous because I'm posing these questions. What would that mean? That I don't fit in your exhibition? If I don't get along with you, does that then somehow affect the quality of my work with you?

I find this interesting because it's making me think. So I'm quite enjoying it and it's more likely I'll want to see your work. But then, I'm not sure it really matters. My experiences working in marginal places like Glasgow and Malmö, is that the situation in such places (also like Ljubljana) only really functions if it starts to sustain itself by developing a supportive local community, a critical mass of quite modest institutions and a self-confidence. That's the energy that somebody coming from the outside could see and get turned on by. So things are in your control as well, rather than only waiting for the blessing of the international curators. In Gwangju, we tried to reflect this by inviting 26 small groups and artist run spaces to represent themselves.

● ● You work in a museum. I read somewhere that you explained, before you started, that you would try to move the ordinary existing exhibition program into something more various, that it would have a more productive role. So, how far are you with that?

The first thing that I did was basically to cut what has traditionally been a showroom for art into different functions. We used the three floors differently and upstairs we made two studios that are semi-private/semi-public. The artists who are there won't necessarily ever show in an exhibition, but the invitation is for them to be present around the building. Meeting our visitors. Upstairs we also set up a project room, which is a kind of a really boring idea and we did it because we couldn't think of anything else. Now we're running a course with the

poziv da budu prisutni u zgradi. Da se upoznaju s našim posjetiteljima.

Gore smo također uspostavili sobu za projekte, što je na neki način doista dosadna ideja, ali smo to učinili jer nismo mogli smisliti ništa drugo. Sada je u tijeku tečaj s Umjetničkom akademijom u Malmöu, s osam studenata, četiri umjetnika i četiri osobe koje se deklariraju kao nešto drugo: kustosi, umjetnički kritičari ili čak sociolozi. Na srednjem katu je glavna izložbena dvorana, gdje nastojimo koristiti jezik izložbe na što je moguće zanimljiviji i učinkovitiji način. Međutim, u travnju ćemo je upotrijebiti kao filmski studio i otvarati je za javnost samo povremeno. Naša će tehnička ekipa biti spremna graditi setove ili konstrukcije koje su potrebne za film. Zatim se za donje prostore poigravamo zamišlju arhiva, tako da s jedne strane imamo Rooseum arhiv, gdje ljudi mogu vidjeti što smo prikazivali u prošlosti, i budući arhiv, za koji od svih umjetnika s kojima radimo tražimo da nam daju popis od deset knjiga, CD-ova ili videozapisa koji ih na neki način nadahnjuju, na njih utječu ili su im važni. Time se stvara vrlo eklektična, čudnovata biblioteka, u kojoj možete upoznati umjetnika s kojim radite na razne načine, budući da možda možete vidjeti gdje počinju njihove ideje ili koja su neka od polazišta za njihova djela, je li to klasična knjiga kao što je Negrijevo *Carstvo* ili film *Mad Max*. Zatim imamo još i mikrokino/prostor za diskusiju, gdje prikazujemo videoprogram te održavamo klupske večeri i razgovore. Tako sada u osnovi, nakon što je nekada cijeli prostor bio izložbeni, imamo četiri ili pet različitih vrsta prostora za različite vrste aktivnosti. I sami ti prostori uvijek su pod znakom pitanja. Tako, na primjer, izložbeni prostor postaje filmski studio, a soba za projekte nije baš uspješna pa smo je zatvorili.

■ ■ Mislim da je na neki način sada u trendu raditi stvari na takav multifunkcionalan, "laboratorijski" način. Možete li navesti neki postojeći i uspješni muzej ili galeriju koja tako djeluje?

Hmmm ...

■ ■ Naime, znate, nedavno sam bila na nekim mjestima koja naginju tome - kao *Palais de Tokyo* - i nisu me se dojmila baš inspirativno.

Stvarno se nadam da nismo kao *Palais de Tokyo*. Nije da ih nastojim kritizirati, ali mislim da je sasvim druga stvar raditi nešto

Art Academy in Malmö with eight students, four artists and four who define themselves as something else, curators or critics or even with a background in sociology. On the middle floor is the main exhibition hall where we try to use the language of the exhibition as interestingly and effectively as possible. However, in April we will use it as a film studio and open in only occasionally to the public. Our technical team will be used to build the sets or build the constructions that are necessary for the film. Then downstairs we're playing with the idea of an archive, so we have on one hand a Rooseum archive, where people can see what we have been showing in the past, and a future archive, where we ask all the artists who we work with, to give us a list of ten books, CDs or videos that are in some way inspirational, influential or important to them. It builds up as a very eclectic, strange library in which you can get to know the artist whom we're working with in different ways because you can see, maybe, where some of their ideas start or some of their points of departure for their work, whether it's classical books like Negri's *Empire* or a *Mad Max* film. And then we have a microcinema/discussion space where we have a video program, club nights and talks. So basically, from the whole thing being a showroom, we now have four or five different kinds of space for different kinds of activity. Those spaces themselves are always up to question. So, for instance, the exhibition space becomes a film studio, the project room wasn't really good so we closed it down.

● ● I think that in a way, now it is a trend of doing things like that, in a multifunctional, "laboratory" way. Is there a successful museum or gallery working in this way that you could mention?

Hmmm, ...

● ● Because you know, I've been to some places with such an inclination lately - like *Palais de Tokyo* - and I did not find them very inspiring.

I really hope that we're not like *Palais de Tokyo*. Not that I want to be critical, but I think it's very different working in a small town with a relatively small audience and doing something in Paris. You have to take the context into account because if you don't then you miss half the reason for doing the things that we're doing.

u malom gradu s relativno malom publikom i raditi nešto u Parizu. Morate uzeti u obzir kontekst jer ako to ne učinite, promašit ćete pola svrhe s kojom radite to što radite.

■ ■ **Ponekad su takva mjesta, koja nastoje biti vrlo otvorena, zapravo istodobno ekstremno zatvorena, možda zato što su odviše usredotočena na ono malo ljudi s kojima rade. I kada dođete na takvo mjesto, osjetite se ...**

Osjetite se izbačenim iz njega. To mi je jasno. Doista vjerujem u ono što radim, ali sam dakako i samokritičan. Ne želim automatski braniti *Rooseum* jer je pitanje na mjestu. I ovaj ću put odgovoriti retoričkim jezikom odredbenih termina, iako mislim da su naši projekti kao *Superflex* stvarni primjeri tog tipa. Jedan je od termina koje sam ranije spomenuo gostoljubivost, koju svim silama nastojim ugraditi u našu instituciju. Barem u kontekstu Derride, gostoljubivost u biti znači reći "Da". To znači reći "Da" drugome, posjetitelju, neočekivanom gostu, živom ili mrtvom, biljnom ili mineralnom, božanskom ili ljudskom. On kaže da se radi o tome da čovjek nauči reći "Da", da pokuša naučiti, prisiliti sam sebe da kaže "Da" nadolazećim zahtjevima. A ja mislim da je gostoljubivost, na jednoj razini, vrlo pragmatičan aspekt dobrodošlice. Zato, kada biste došli u *Rooseum*, nadam se da bi se dogodilo to da biste se osjetili dobrodošlom na način na koji to možda ne biste bili na nekom drugom mjestu ... drugim riječima, netko bi Vam prišao i doista razgovarao s Vama. Na drugoj razini, gostoljubivost znači osluški-vati tuđe potrebe, mijenjati se kako bismo se prilagodili potrebama gosta do te mjere da se odričemo vlasništva ili autorstva. Do-duše, još uvijek radimo na provedbi toga u praksi, ali imamo program pod nazivom *Otvoreni forum*, koji poziva ljude iz Malmöa da predlože i izvedu svoje projekte. Ide po-lagano, ali počinje funkcionirati.

■ ■ **Ali i *Palais de Tokyo* također obećava da će vam ondje stajati na raspolaganju netko s kime ćete moći razgovarati ako želite razgovarati itd.**

Ali zapravo se ništa ne događa.

■ ■ **A zašto se to događa?**

Pa ako vam ulazi onoliko ljudi, možda je teško izaći s time na kraj na toj razini.

■ ■ **Ali to znači da smo suočeni s modelom koji, time što pokušava biti nešto,**

● ● **Sometimes such places, where they're trying to be very open, they are at the same time extremely closed, because they are maybe to concentrated on those few people they work with. And when you come to such a place, it's like ...**

You feel thrown out of it. I understand that. I do believe in what I'm doing but of course I'm self-critical. I don't want to defend *Rooseum* automatically because the question is fair enough. Again, I'm going to answer you through rhetorical language of defining terms though I think our projects like *Superflex* are real examples of this. One term, which I used before, is hospitality, which I'm very interested in trying to embed into the institution. At least in Derrida's terms hospitality, is saying "Yes" essentially. It's saying "Yes" to the other, to the visitor, to the unexpected guest, alive or dead, vegetable or mineral, divine or human. He says it's about trying to say "Yes", trying to learn, disciplining yourself to say "Yes" to the demands that come. Now I think that hospitality is on one level, a very pragmatic aspect of welcome. So if you were to come to the *Rooseum*, I hope, what would happen, is that you would feel welcome in a way that perhaps you might have not been in other places ... In other words, somebody would come and actually talk to you. On another level, hospitality means being responsive to your concerns, changing to accommodate the needs of the guest to the point of giving up ownership or authorship. Now, how that works out in practice is under construction but we have a programme called *Open Forum* that invites people from Malmö to propose and carry out their own projects. It's slow but it is beginning to work.

● ● **But *Palais de Tokyo* also promises that somebody will be there for you with whom you will be able to talk if you want to talk, etc.**

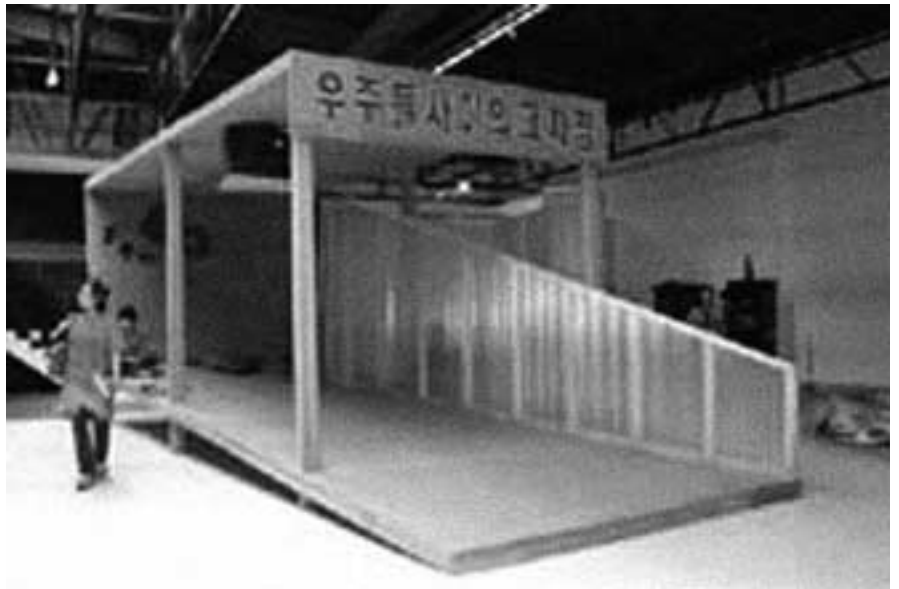
But nothing really happens.

● ● **Why is this happening?**

Well, if you've got that number of people coming in, it's maybe difficult to deal with it on such a level.

● ● **But that means that we are faced with a model, which is by trying to be something, turning it into the exact opposite?**

Yes, I'm really sympathetic to you and I'm thinking about these problems. But the



6

mijenja to nešto u njegovu potpunu su-
protnost?

Da, ja se doista slažem s Vama i razmišljam o tim problemima. Ali naša su nastojanja iskrena. Hoću reći, možda nam i ne uspije i u potpunosti shvaćam da moramo učiti i biti samokritični, ali smatram i da sam pokušaj da budemo gostoljubivi nešto vrijedi. Pokušaj da se pokuša, kao što to radi *Palais de Tokyo*, stvoriti instituciju koja doista ima drugačiji osjećaj vremena koje vam se može posvetiti kao posjetitelju, drugačiji osjećaj načina na koji možete surađivati s umjetnicima, drugačiji osjećaj mogućnosti susreta - mislim da ništa od toga nije pogrešno. Možda bi trebalo kritizirati rezultat, ali je temeljni pristup u osnovi ispravan. Stoga ne bih doista želio kritizirati *Palais de Tokyo* iako stvarno mislim da je na neki čudan način naša prednost to što smo u provinciji. Jer možemo imati intimniji odnos s našom publikom, nismo turistički grad.

■ ■ Prije nego što ste ušli u instituciju, činilo se da ste vrlo ponosni na činjenicu da ste samostalni kustos i o tome ste u više navrata govorili. Zbog toga bih željela znati zašto ste se vratili instituciji?

Donio sam vrlo svjesnu odluku da se vratim instituciji jer nisam više želio biti samostalni kustos. Ono što ste mogli pročitati bilo je u to vrijeme apsolutno istinito, ali ne mislim da moram uvijek biti dosljedan. Mislim da vrijeme prolazi i saznajem više o tome kako postići određene stvari.

attempts are genuine ones. I mean, we might fail, I totally understand and we have to learn and be self-critical, but I think the attempt to be hospitable is one that's worthwhile. The attempt to try, as *Palais de Tokyo* is doing, to create an institution which does have a different sense of the time that you might engage as a visitor, a different sense of the way that you might work with the artists, a different sense of the possibilities of meeting - I think none of that is wrong. Perhaps the delivery should be criticised but the fundamental approach is basically right. So, I wouldn't really want to criticise *Palais de Tokyo* but I do think, in a strange way we have an advantage being provincial. Because we can have a more intimate relation with our audience, we're not a tourist city.

● ● Before you entered the institution you seemed very proud of the fact that you were an independent curator, and you talked about that on numerous occasions. So, I would like to know: Why did you return to the institution?

I made a very deliberate decision to return to the institution because I did not want to be an independent curator any more. And what you might have read was absolutely true then but I don't think I have to be always consistent. I think time passes and I learn more how to achieve things.

● ● What were the main reasons for returning to the institution?

■ ■ Koji su bili glavni razlozi za povratak instituciji?

Sasvim konkretno: kao samostalni kustos koji radi u instituciji imate vrlo malo mogućnosti da promijenite temeljne strukture kojima se tom institucijom upravlja. Do određene ste mjere dekoracija povrh tih struktura. Pozovu vas da učinite svoje, bio to Gwangju Biennial ili Tate Gallery, pozovu vas da učinite ono po čemu vas prepoznaju kao zanimljivog, a zatim odete i ostavljate tu instituciju potpuno nedotaknutu. Ono što me počelo zanimati nije bilo to koga pozvati, ovog ili onog umjetnika, već prije način na koji do takvog poziva dolazi, način na koji razgovarate i stvorite mogućnost za umjetnika ili gosta. A to je bilo nemoguće učiniti kao samostalni kustos, budući da sam se samo selio s jednog mjesta na drugo, a mnoštvo umjetnika je selilo zajedno sa mnom (slažem se oko pitanja prijateljstva), ali zapravo nisam mogao otići mnogo dalje od toga - sve što sam mogao bilo je odvesti ih na drugo mjesto. Nisam to dugo radio, ali dovoljno da shvatim da to nije moj glavni interes. I zapravo mislim da u Rooseumu moj glavni interes postaje strukturalan, ono "kako" pozivate, kakva je priroda poziva, a ne sama činjenica poziva.

■ ■ Kada sam razgovarala s Pierreom Restanyjem, rekao je da kustosa smatra majstorom kompromisa.

To mi je jasno, budući da imate posla s čitavim nizom pragmatičnih stvari. Budući da dolazim s političke pozicije koju sam imao ranije i u osnovi imam još uvijek, ne vjerujem u kompromise, ali, kao što sam rekao, ne postoji više udobna izvanjska pozicija. Morate uprljati ruke da biste postigli ma što željeli učiniti, a to znači kompromis.

■ ■ Smatrate li sebe majstorom kompromisa?

Majstorom ne, smatram se prisiljenim na kompromise.

■ ■ A to je nešto drugo?

Pa da. Osjećam se prije kao njihova žrtva, a na njih gledam kao na neizbježno zlo.

■ ■ U suvremenoj teoriji autori kao što su Christopher Lash, Robert Kurz i Slavoj Žižek govore o našem dobu kao o razdoblju "samoinscenirane kritike", koja nije istinska kritika već prije privid, stav koji drugi trebaju vidjeti. Smatrate li da kustosi često koriste taj privid kritičnosti i zašto?

Very precisely: as an independent curator working in the institution you have very little possibility to change the fundamental structures through which that institution is run. To a certain extent you are a decoration on top of them. You're invited to do your thing, whether it's the Gwangju Biennial or it's the Tate, you're invited to do the thing for which you are identified as being interesting and then you go away and the institution is left completely unmoved. What I became interested in is not who to invite, is not this artist or that artist, but rather how that invitation is made, in what way you have a conversation and create a possibility for an artist or a visitor. And that was impossible to do as an independent curator because you were only moving from one site to another and taking a crowd of artists with you (with this issue of friendship I would agree) but you couldn't actually go very much further - all you can do is take them to another place. Now I didn't do it so much, but I did it enough to realize that that's not my main interest. And actually I think with Rooseum, my main interest is becoming structural the "how" you invite, what's the nature of the invitation, rather than the fact of the invitation.

● ● When I spoke to Pierre Restany, he said that he sees a curator as a master of compromises.

I understand that because you're dealing with the whole series of pragmatics. Coming from the political position that I had before, and basically still have, makes me wary of compromise but, as I said, there's no comfortable outside position any more. You have to get your hands dirty to achieve anything you want to do, and that means compromise.

● ● Do you see yourself as a master of compromises?

Not a master, I see myself as forced into compromises.

● ● Is that different?

Yeah. I feel myself more as a victim of them, or them as an inevitable evil.

● ● In contemporary theory, people like Christopher Lash, Robert Kurz, Slavoj Žižek, speak about our period as of a period of "self-inscenated criticism", which is not a true criticism, but more, an appearance, a stand to be seen by others? Do you



7

8

Pa morat ću razmisliti o tome jer je to složeno pitanje. Ako ne postoji izvanjski ovlaštena pozicija s koje je moguće donositi kritičke sudove (društvena analiza ili nešto slično), onda je kritika do neke mjere inscenirana. A svijet umjetnosti je često auto-legitimacijski, budući da u komisijama sjede sakupljači umjetnina, institucije koje podržavaju galerije i potpisuju umjetničke projekte koji zatim moraju uspjeti itd. Međutim, postavlja se sljedeće pitanje: oduzima li gubitak izvanjskih kriterija nekoj djelatnosti valjanost? Možemo li još uvijek misliti koristeći se kritikom koju smo sami inscenirali ili to samo potvrđuje *status quo*? Moj je odgovor da ne samo da potvrđuje, već također otvara nove pravce u mišljenju, koji mogu dovesti do proboja u novi način zamišljanja svijeta. To nas na neki način vraća na početak.

■ ■ Kako gledate na svoju poziciju u odnosu prema kolekcionarima i komercijalizmu koji ste spomenuli i kako u tome vidite svoju politiku prijateljstva, budući da bi ona mogla biti problematična na sličan način?

Slazem se s time. Ali znate, kao prvo, ne osjećam se osobno blisko vezan uz kolekcionare. Mislim da postoji socijaldemokratska pozicija rada u instituciji koju financira društvo, budući da moramo pronaći opravdanje za to što dobivamo novac. To svakako nije zato da bismo laskali kolekcijama članova odbora ili da bismo podržavali vrijednost nekog umjetnika. Opravdanje za taj društveni novac bit će to da stvaramo istinski, aktivni diskurs, prostor mišljenja, namijenjen umjetnicima na međunarodnoj razini i lokalnom stanovništvu, u kojemu će moći isprobati neke ideje o sebi samima i o našem društvu. E, pa uopće se ne sramim što imam blizak prijateljski odnos s nekima od tih ljudi - u stvari, mislim da bi suprotnost bila potpuno objektivna, znanstveni kustos, koji nema odnos ni sa kime, koji je sasvim otuđen od društva i stupa u vezu isključivo s predmetima. To je do neke mjere stari model kustosa, ali mislim da je to problematičnije nego nepriznavanje društvene razmjene koja utječe na čovjekovo mišljenje. Iako bi rad i dalje trebao biti primarni element koji olakšava društvenu razmjenu koja vodi u prijateljstvo. Mislim da objektivni znanstveni pogled koji tražite naprosto ne postoji. Ako želite da kustos bude izvan kapitalističke strukture i sakupljanja, da bude izvan odnosa s umjetnicima, da bude izvan odnosa s institucijom ... to je

think curators often use this appearance of being critical and why?

Well, let me think about this because it's complicated. If there is no externally validated position to make critical judgements (socialist analysis or whatever) then criticism is staged to some degree. And the art world is often self-validating with collectors sitting on institutional boards, institutions supporting galleries and underwriting artists projects that then have to succeed etc. But the question is: does the loss of external criteria make the activity invalid? Can we still think by using self staged criticism or does it just affirm the status quo? My answer is that it does not only affirm but also opens up new lines of thought that might produce the breakthrough to another way of imagining the world. That goes back to our start, in a way.

● ● How do you see your position in the relationship with collectors and commercialism that you mentioned and how do you see in them your politics of friendship, which could be problematic in a similar way?

I agree with that. But you know, first, I don't feel very engaged with collectors myself. I think there is a social democratic position of working in an institution with public money, where we have to find justification for why you receive that money. It is certainly not in order to flatter board members' collections or support the value of an artist. The justification of that public money will be whether we create a real, active discourse, a speculative territory for artists internationally and people living locally to test out some ideas about themselves and our society. Now, I'm not ashamed to have a close friendship with some of those people at all - in fact I think it is necessary. I mean the alternative would be to have a completely objective, scientific curator who has no relationships with anybody, is completely dissocialised and relates only to the objects. Now that is to some extent the old model of the curator, but I think that's more problematic than not acknowledging a social exchange that affects your opinions. Though the work should still be the primary element that facilitates that social exchange that leads to the friendship. I think an objective scientific view that you're looking for just doesn't exist. If you want the curator to be outside the capitalist structure and collection, to be outside relationships with

7/8. Naslovnica časopisa Afterall, br. 1 i 3 / Cover page of the Afterall magazine no. 1 and 3.

9/10. Naslovnica časopisa Afterall, br. 5 i 6 / Cover page of the Afterall magazine no. 5 and 6.

kao nekakav božanski pogled na stvari i mislim da je uistinu pogrešno. Ono o čemu ja govorim jest da treba stajati usred zbrke društvenog, političkog i ekonomskog pragmatizma i još uvijek nastojati zauzeti poziciju i stvoriti prostor za umjetnost kako bi doprinijela društvenoj promjeni i emancipaciji.

■ ■ Dakle, pridajete veliku važnost razlici između angažmana u privatnom i društvenom sektoru, razlici između privatnog i društvenog financiranja?

Pa da, doista želim stupiti u obranu nekih od tih stvari, na primjer, želim stupiti u obranu razlike između potrošačkog mentaliteta i civilnog društva, želim stupiti u obranu razlike između društvenog i privatnog novca i mislim da je to uistinu važno, inače se prepuštamo najgorim aspektima američkog modela, a da ne preuzimamo i njihovu kulturu individualne odgovornosti.

■ ■ Ali istodobno branite taj model, uključeni ste u privatni, komercijalni umjetnički sektor. Donedavno ste bili i jedan od britanskih članova komisije za ARCO u Madridu?

Dakle, ARCO je bio nešto o čemu ne bih želio previše teoretizirati.

■ ■ Ali ako imate tako čvrste političke stavove, ne mislite li da trebate biti dosljedni, inače dolazimo upravo do samoinscenirane kritike?

Pa ... OK, to je doista dobro pitanje. Razlog zbog kojega sam se bavio ARCO-m bio je taj što se činilo da je to prilika za stvaranje mogućnosti za određeni broj umjetnika koji inače ne bi dobili svoju priliku. Razlog zbog kojega sam rekao "Da" bio je taj što mi je to omogućilo da kroz mehanizam galerijskog sustava pozovem određene ljude kojima sam se divio zbog njihovog rada. To smo riješili tako da nismo pozvali klasične komercijalne galerije, već mnogo različitih vrsta prostora kojima upravljaju umjetnici, a koji prije toga nisu uvijek bili prisutni na umjetničkim sajmovima. Mislim da je vrijedilo truda. Uostalom, galerijski sektor nije loš sam po sebi - ovisno o tome kako radi i što radi - i moguće je da galeristi imaju etičku poziciju. Ja naprosto smatram da je većina onoga što rade nezanimljivo.

■ ■ Da, ali ranije ste mi rekli: Pogledajte kontekst. Što je tu "specifičan" kontekst, zašto biste to trebali raditi?

Dobro, ARCO je po svojem kontekstu

artists, to be outside relationships with the institution ... that's somehow taking a god-like overview, I think that's really mistaken. What I'm talking about is being in the mess of social, political and economic pragmatism and still trying to take a position and create the place for art to contribute to social change and emancipation.

● ● So you're placing a great deal of importance on the difference between the involvement in the private and public sector, the difference between private and public financing?

Yeah, I really want to defend some of those things, for instance I want to defend the difference between consumerism and civil society, I want to defend the difference between public money and private money, I think that's really important otherwise we abandon ourselves to the worst parts of the American model, without their culture of individual responsibility.

● ● But at the same time as you are defending this model, you are involved in the private, commercial art sector. Not long ago you were one of the British selectors for ARCO in Madrid?

I mean ARCO was something that I would not want to theorize about too much.

● ● But if you have such a strong political stand, don't you think you have to be consistent, otherwise we come exactly to self-inscenated criticism?

Well, ... OK, this is a really good question. The reason I did ARCO is because it seemed to be an opportunity to create a possibility for a certain number of artists who otherwise wouldn't have their opportunity. The reason that I said "Yes" to it was because it allowed me to invite certain people who I admired because of their work, through the mechanism of the gallery system. So what we did was not to invite the classical commercial galleries, but many different kinds of artists' run spaces that hadn't always been at the art fairs before. I think that was worthwhile. Anyway, the gallery sector is not bad in itself - it depends how and what it does - it's possible for galleries to have an ethical position. I just find most of what they do uninteresting.

● ● Yes, but before you said to me: Look at the context. What's the "special" context here, why should you do it?



9



10

različit od drugih umjetničkih sajмова. Uspostavljen je odmah nakon Franca kao prvi kulturni fenomen koji je uveo postmodernizam i pluralizam u Španjolsku. Kao takav, on zauzima posebno mjesto u španjolskoj kulturi i oduvijek je sadržavao vrlo snažan obrazovni element. Za razliku od Basela ili Berlina, dolazi ogromni spektar ljudi i gledati, a ne samo kupovati. Tako on ima drugačiju lokalnu ulogu od ostalih umjetničkih sajмова. Također sam vidio mogućnost da ukažem na energiju prostora kojima upravljaju umjetnici, koji nisu komercijalni i ne financira ih vlada, prostora kakvi postoje u Londonu, Glasgowu i drugdje. Dakle, postoje specifični razlozi zbog kojih sam to učinio.

■ ■ U više ste navrata raspravljali o tome kako bi umjetnost trebala imati posebno, zaštićeno mjesto u kapitalističkom sustavu i kako je uloga kustosa da to mjesto osigura. Čini mi se da "nabavljanje umjetnosti" za umjetničke sajmove znači ići u potpuno suprotnom pravcu. Zato mi je ARCO upao u oči.

Možda ste u pravu, ali ... gledajte, to "posebno mjesto" je ionako unutar kapitalizma i stoga ionako moramo djelovati s istog teritorija kao i tržište. Stvar je u tome da se strukture do neke mjere upotrijebe protiv njih samih, za razliku od tupe opozicije kakvu smo imali u ljevici osamdesetih godina.

■ ■ Ali znate, gotovo svaki umjetnički sajam u zadnje vrijeme ima posebnu tematsku izložbu, neku "nacionalnu" reprezentaciju kao posebnog gosta, poziva mlade galerije itd.; pa tako i Basel i Berlin.

Ali ne u istoj mjeri u kojoj smo mi to učinili. Ne, doista ne.

■ ■ Mislite li da se biti imenovan na položaj kao što je kustos *Gwangju Biennala* može smatrati nagradom za lojalan i marljiv rad unutar sustava? Obično ste bili vrlo kritični prema sustavu, a stjecanje takvog položaja znači: ja sam itekako u sustavu.

Pa da ... budući da smatram da ne postoji pozicija izvan sustava. A to sam rekao i o tome sam pisao mnogo puta. Znate, mi smo svi za istim stolom. Stoga uopće nisam nezadovoljan radom unutar sustava i mislim da nikada nisam imao poziciju izvan sustava - uvijek sam bio uključen u sustav, čak i u najmanjim inicijativama u Tramwayu. Ono što smo radili u Glasgowu u velikoj je mjeri bilo to da smo pokušavali

OK, ARCO is, in terms of its context, different from other art fairs. It was set up immediately post Franco, as the first cultural phenomenon that introduced post-modernism and pluralism to Spain. As such it occupies a special place in Spanish culture and it always had a very strong educational element. In contrast to Basel or Berlin a huge range of people attends it, and they come to look not only to buy. So, it does have a different local role than other art fairs. I also saw the possibility of trying to recognise the energy of the artists' run and non-commercial, non-government funded spaces that existed in London, Glasgow and elsewhere. So, there were specific reasons why I did it.

● ● On numerous occasions you discussed how art should have a special place, defended place in the capitalist system and how the curator's role is there to provide that. "Providing art" for art fairs seems to me going exactly the opposite way. So, that's why ARCO fell into my eye.

Maybe you're right but ... look, that "special place" is within capitalism anyway, so we have to work from the same territory as the market anyway. The point is to use the structures against themselves to some extent, not dumb opposition like we had on the left in the '80s.

● ● But you know, almost every art fair lately has a special thematic exhibition, special guest "national" representation, is inviting young galleries etc.: also Basel and Berlin.

Not to the same extent as we did. No, really not.

● ● Do you think that being appointed to positions such as the curator of the *Gwangju Biennial*, could be seen as an award for being a loyal and diligent worker within the system? Usually you were very critical towards the system and getting those positions means: I'm really very much in the system.

Yeah ... Because I don't think there's an outside of the system position. And I've said that and written about it many times. You know, we're all at the same table. So, I'm not unhappy about working within the system at all and I don't think that I've ever had a position outside the system - I have always been involved in it, even in the smallest initiatives in Tramway. What we were

postići da nas sustav primijeti. Bili smo također kritični prema sustavu, i to ne samo zato što nas je on ignorirao: naša je kritika po svojem pristupu bila prije reformistička nego revolucionarna. A ja mislim da je to vjerojatno jedina pozicija koju možete zastupati kao kustos - neka vrsta reformističke, a ne revolucionarne pozicije. Jer revolucija je u ovom trenutku problematična - iako trebamo o njoj nastaviti razmišljati.

■ ■ A reformistička pozicija nije problematična?

Dakako da je i reformistička pozicija također problematična. U ovoj zbrci ne postoji neproblematična pozicija, ali smatram da je reformizam - drugim riječima, raditi unutar sustava, ali istodobno nastojati upotrijebiti oruđe koje on nudi te dati ili stvoriti različite mogućnosti - za mene pozicija s kojom sam zadovoljan. Ne smatram da se njome kompromitiram, budući da ne vidim nikakvu produktivnu alternativu. Ali ovo što ste rekli o nagradi vjerojatno je prilično istinito - nagrada nam se daje za dobro ponašanje. ■

prijevod / translation: Marina Miladinov

doing in Glasgow was trying to a large extent to be noticed by the system. We were also critical of the system, and not only because we were ignored, but it was reformist rather than revolutionary in its approach. And I think that's probably the only position that you can adopt as a curator - a kind of reformist one, rather than a revolutionary one. Because revolution is problematic at the moment - though we need to keep thinking about it.

● ● And a reformist position is not problematic?

Of course a reformist position is problematic as well. There's no unproblematic position in this mess, but I think reformism or, let's say working within the system but also to try to use the tools that it provides, to offer or create different possibilities, is for me one that I'm happy with. I don't feel compromised so much by that because I don't see a productive alternative. But your reward thing is probably quite true - that we are rewarded for good behaviour. ●

→ **Beti Žerovc** - povjesničarka umjetnosti, znanstvena novakinja na Odsjeku za povijest umjetnosti Filozofskog fakulteta u Ljubljani

Beti Žerovc - art historian, junior research assistant at the Department of Art History, Faculty of Philosophy, Ljubljana