
Audio: Simon Sheikh: A Conceptual History of Exhibition-making

Simon Sheikh (Berlin/Malmö): A Conceptual History of Exhibition-making

Lecture Audio: <http://troublingresearch.net/audio/sheikh.mp3> Lecture (on invitation by Tom Holert), May 6, 2010, 7 p.m. Academy of Fine Arts Vienna Room M13 Schillerplatz 3 Since 1989, we have not only seen (geo)political and cultural changes in Europe, former west and east alike, but also a renewed interest in the exhibition as the main vehicle for contemporary art, not only in terms of presentation, but also production: the exhibition as medium. We have also seen the specialization of exhibitions, into what can be characterized as instituted genres of exhibitions. We must therefore ask ourselves not only what a history of exhibitions will tell us about art, but also about history, and about how it is written and read, rewritten and re-read. And whether such histories are necessarily always written by the victors – short term as long term, internationally as nationally? This talk will look at a few examples, both canonical and non-canonical, in order to sketch out how a typology of exhibitions must be established, but also to ask what makes exhibitionary articulations readable and translatable, and indeed successful and unsuccessful within their parameters and strategies... In other words, the question is whether it possible to predetermine the effects and affects of exhibitions within their chosen type and/or efforts to not conform to type? And what are its relation to histories and counter-histories, i.e. what sort of horizon is set up by a given exhibition in its types, forms and articulations? In other words, how does exhibitions produce and reproduce bodies of knowledge, and how can the activity itself be a field of research? Simon Sheikh is a freelance curator and critic. He is a correspondent for Springerin, Vienna, and a columnist for e-flux Journal, New York. He is a researcher for the on-going Former West project, initiated by BAK in Utrecht. He was Coordinator of the Critical Studies Program, Malmö Art Academy in Sweden, 2002-2009. He was director of Overgaden – Institute for Contemporary Art in Copenhagen, 1999-2002 and Curator at NIFCA, Helsinki, 2003-2004. Editor of the magazine Øjeblikket 1996-2000, and a member of the project group GLOBE 1993-2000. Curatorial work includes exhibitions such as Exclusion, Consul, Århus, 1993, I Confess, Nikolaj – Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center, 1995, Escape Attempts in Christiania, Copenhagen, 1996 (with GLOBE), Do-It-Yourself – Mappings and Instructions, Bricks+Kicks, Vienna, 1997, In My Room, Nordic Video, Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1998, Models of Resistance, Overgaden, Copenhagen 2000 (with GLOBE), Naust Øygarden, Bergen, Norway 2000, Circa Berlin, Nikolaj – Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center, 2005, Capital (It Fails Us Now) at UKS, Oslo, 2005 and Kunstihoone, Tallinn, 2006, and Vectors of Possibility, BAK, Utrecht, 2010. Recent publications include the anthologies We are all Normal (with Katya Sander), Black Dog Publishing, London 2001, Knut Åsdam (monograph), Fine Arts Unternehmen, Zug, 2004, In the Place of the Public Sphere?, b_books, Berlin, 2005 and Capital (It Fails Us Now), b_books, Berlin, 2006. A collection of his essays is forthcoming from b_books. His writings can also be found in such periodicals as Afterall, AnArchitektur, Open, Springerin and Texte zur Kunst. Lives in Berlin and Copenhagen.