

A Journal Editor and His Go-Betweens: Richard Sandell and the University of Leicester's *Museum and Society*

By Stuart Burch

Abstract

This article seeks to explore the nature and purpose of academic writing. It does so by setting out the background to a peer reviewed article that I wrote and which appeared fleetingly in the online journal *Museum and Society*. Shortly after publication the chair of the journal's editorial board, Professor Richard Sandell, agreed to remove it following complaints from other members of the board. The reasons for this unusual action are outlined. So too are the wider implications that this might have for the field of Museum Studies. These thoughts prompt additional reflection on some of the issues tackled in my initial paper which sought to scrutinise Sweden's national museum of modern and contemporary art, Moderna Museet. It achieved this through the prism of the artists Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska. Their collaborative practice was critiqued in connection with one of their patrons, the former director of Moderna Museet, Lars Nittve.

My abortive *Museum and Society* article is reproduced here in full and in its original form. This action mimics Cummings and Lewandowska's artwork, *Errata* (1996). Meaning "an error in writing or printing", the term "erratum" encapsulates my earlier paper. Richard Sandell quickly rectified this "error" by expunging it from the journal over which he currently presides. Its reappearance here constitutes an unofficial and undoubtedly unwelcome erratum to *Museum and Society*. Its presence is also intended as an erratum both to the practice of Cummings and Lewandowska and to the career of Lars Nittve. As with the original paper, my actions lack any endorsement from the named individuals or institutions. It is an act of parasitism that apes the so-called institutional critique of artists such as Cummings and Lewandowska: one that seeks to expose the positions of certain actors in the museum field – be they museum directors, artists or academics.

Keywords: academic writing, parasite, *Museum and Society*, Museum Studies, museum practice, museum theory, Richard Sandell.

King: Let us from point to point this story know,
To make the even truth in pleasure flow.

All's Well That Ends Well (Act 5.3: 325-6)

Academic freedom

On 3 April 2011 the Chinese artist, Ai Weiwei attempted to catch a plane bound for Hong Kong. He was denied boarding and detained by the Chinese authorities. Mindful of international criticism, China's foreign ministry was quick to stress that Ai's treatment was in no way connected to questions of freedom of expression or human rights. Three days after his detainment, the state news agency, Xinhua published a terse one-line report on its website announcing that the police were "investigating Ai Weiwei for suspected economic crimes." This statement was deleted within an hour (Branigan 2011).

Ai Weiwei's arrest has convinced me that I was correct to conclude a recent article about museums by referring to The Basic Law of Hong Kong (1990). This legal document supposedly guarantees freedom of speech in this Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China as well as "freedom to engage in academic research, literary and artistic creation, and other cultural activities" (Article 34). These are things that many Europeans take for granted. As a British-based university lecturer the right to express my ideas and of "speaking truth to power" (Chmielewski 2008) is something that I hold dear. I therefore made the decision to undertake research into what I perceived to be a troubling gap between rhetoric and reality. My subject was a leading European art museum led by a highly respected and successful museum director who has since gone on to take up a prestigious post in Hong Kong. The research spanned a number of years and culminated in a consciously thought provoking paper that I entitled "A Museum Director and His Go-Betweens: Lars Nittve's Patronage of Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska". It was published on 16 May 2011 in the peer reviewed e-journal *Museum and Society* (Burch 2011a). It survived only slightly longer than Xinhua's one-line statement about Ai Weiwei. By 19 May it had been removed.

This article seeks to go "from point to point" to make this story known. It sets out the official reason for my article's removal and reflects on the ramifications of this action. This is intended to serve as a trigger for debate, particularly from those who will surely disagree with much of what I have to say. This is why it is so important that the deleted paper and this explanatory article appear together. I recommend that you turn to page 18 and read the former first. That way you will be able to form your own opinions and compare them with the thoughts of those who removed it from the public domain. My motivations for reissuing it in its original guise will be set out shortly. First I want to begin by introducing the initial context for the article: the University of Leicester's School of Museum Studies and its journal, *Museum and Society*.

Simply the best

No university department in the entire United Kingdom is superior to the University of Leicester's School of Museum Studies. On its homepage it states proudly that the nationwide periodic assessment of research conducted in 2008 determined that it had "the highest proportion of world-leading rated research in any subject in any UK university" (UoL 2011). In 2010 its standing as "a world leader in the museum industry" received further confirmation when it won the Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Award for "Outstanding Departmental Administration" (UoL 2010).

First-rate administration and pioneering research come together in the e-journal *Museum and Society*. This is hosted by the University of Leicester and is accessible via its Museum Studies website. We learn there that it was "launched in March 2003 as an independent peer reviewed journal which brings together new writing by academics and museum professionals on the subject of museums. It is both international in scope and at the cutting edge of empirical and theoretical research on museums" (M+S 2006).

The group of experts on its editorial board is most impressive, as can be seen from the list of individuals who performed this task at the time of my article's publication (see page 14 below). It numbers thirty specialists from a range of countries. One of the members of the board is Eric Gable of the University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, VA. He is also identified as a "managing editor" together with Kate Hill (University of Lincoln), Suzanne MacLeod, (University of Leicester), Kylie Message (The Australian National University), Jim Roberts (University of Leicester), Chris Whitehead (University of Newcastle) and Richard Sandell. Professor Sandell is the current head of the University of Leicester's School of Museum Studies and chair of the board of *Museum and Society*.

Sandell and his editorial team comprise a very significant cross-section of the field of Museum Studies. Their involvement in *Museum and Society* reflects and enhances their stock of capital from which they derive both influence and standing. This use of the terms *field* and *capital* are indebted to the work of Pierre Bourdieu. They were deployed in my *Museum and Society* article to explore the sense in which artists and museum professionals operate as "go-betweens" in the field of art. The academic field also features go-betweens. These include those individuals on the editorial board of a journal such as *Museum and Society*. They function as intermediaries and also gatekeepers, regulating the field by determining who has the right to speak and thus to be heard.

The hallmark of an academic journal is peer review. In the case of *Museum and Society* this is a "blind" process: neither the reviewers nor the prospective writers are identified. This ensures that judgements are based solely on the unattributed manuscripts submitted to the journal. It also enables the reviewers the freedom to criticise, secure in the knowledge that they need have no direct contact with the unidentified writer. This task is given to one of the "managing editors". He or she

serves as a further go-between by liaising with those authors who, in striving to publish in prestigious journals, are seeking to gain capital and a position in the field.

It was on this basis that I dispatched “A Museum Director and His Go-Betweens” to *Museum and Society* on 22 August 2009. A reply was sent to me on 15 December: my article would be accepted so long as I made substantive changes based on the points raised by two anonymous reviewers. Such was the rigour of the review process that my initial resubmission was deemed inadequate. Not until 3 February 2011 was the manuscript finally approved. Following typesetting and formatting it was published in the first issue of *Museum and Society*’s ninth volume where it appeared from pages 34-48. Although this was the March edition of the journal, this issue was not actually uploaded to the website until mid-May of that year.

My article remained accessible for two or possibly three days. After its removal the only trace of it on the website was a sentence in brackets which read: “(Contrary to earlier information, there are 3 papers plus Reviews in this issue)” (M+S 2011a). No further explanation was forthcoming. I was therefore obliged to write to the journal and ask politely what had happened. A swift response informed me “that some concerns have been raised about your paper, not in relation to its quality but in relation to some of its contentions” (Whitehead 2011). This was contradicted shortly afterwards when Richard Sandell wrote in his capacity as chair. He explained that certain “members of the editorial board” had telephoned him “with concerns about the tone and content of the paper” and that, “[i]n the interests of all parties, we took a decision to withdraw the article from the current issue.” He continued:

Our main concern is with the tone and content of the article that calls into question the professionalism and integrity of specific individuals – particularly Lars Nittve – in a manner which, we feel, is inappropriate for a journal that presents empirical and theoretical research on museums. We appreciate that the style you have adopted is not perhaps uncommon within the art press but feel that it is too speculative and personal for *Museum and Society* (Sandell 2011).

Sandell went on to add that I had “not sufficiently addressed” the issues raised by the original reviewers:

In particular, we feel that the specific case study “should be situated within the literature and history of the problem more fully. It should engage with the debates in museum studies and contemporary art about the problem – which have been ‘live’ for 40 years” (report 2).

This, we would argue, would enable you to develop a more even handed, nuanced and ultimately more powerful critique that explores how and why curators, artists and institutions are caught up in ethical dilemmas posed by the use of institutional critique.

We would therefore require more substantial revisions before the article could be considered for the journal (Sandell 2011).

This correspondence has been cited at length in order to fairly represent Sandell’s point of view. It is also important to stress that he was apologetic and acknowledged that the “late withdrawal” of my paper was “not usual practice for

the journal”.

Nevertheless, I consider Sandell’s apology to be unsatisfactory. Furthermore, I do not think that it is appropriate to pass off the removal of my paper as merely a “late withdrawal”. And I decline the offer to resubmit. This is in part because neither Sandell nor any of the editorial board is in a position to offer me a fair hearing. Their action in publishing and then “withdrawing” my paper means that I have lost any hope of anonymity and of being judged on the merits of the article alone. Moreover, the two initial reviewers must be aware of the trenchant criticisms of some of their most influential colleagues. This would surely cloud their judgement. And, anyway, a determination has already been reached by those who have not been involved in the official peer review: the tone and content of my paper are simply not acceptable. Only by changing it beyond all recognition would it have any chance of being published in *Museum and Society*.

Strictly speaking, those unnamed “members of the editorial board” who telephoned Sandell “with concerns about the tone and content of the paper” were in no position to demand its removal. They were not “blind” reviewers of an anonymized paper but rather subjective readers of a text that had already been approved for publication by their peers. They had exploited their capital to exert their influence over the field by seeing to it that my paper be “withdrawn”. There are a variety of potential explanations for this extraordinary behaviour. These might include personal associations and animosities of which I am not aware. Of more interest are those motivations that stem from the functioning of the field.

Under normal circumstances the process of issuing sanctions and securing omissions is carefully managed, shielding the guardians of the field from accusations of bias under the cloak of scholarly objectivity. It needs to be stressed that this policing of borders occurs all the time: it serves “to delimit and protect” a given field (Bourdieu 2004: 50). What makes the *Museum and Society* affair noteworthy is that this procedure has failed. Richard Sandell’s email implies that it is my article that is the cause of this breakdown when in fact the real source of the problem is the editorial process of *Museum and Society*. That a final verdict should have been reached retrospectively, overturning an earlier judgement, exposes this error – and with it the system of peer review in general.

The nature of this evaluative system is such that the identity of the reviewers is never specified, even after publication. Thus an article appearing in *Museum and Society* could have been evaluated by any one of the thirty people on its editorial board. The arrangement of their names on page 14 matches their presentation on the journal’s website: they are listed alphabetically by surname. This conveys the impression that they are equal in rank and influence and that they operate as a single body. It follows therefore that each and every one of them becomes associated with everything that appears in the publication. Moreover, in the case of *Museum and Society*, this endorsement extends to the identity of the host: the University of Leicester’s world-leading Museum Studies department.

This must have been troubling for those editors who objected to my article.

Firstly in terms of sheer embarrassment: “Well really! What *were* you thinking by letting that through?” Secondly, its non-standard tone, content and style threatened to establish a precedent. If my paper was to set a trend, those who currently adhere to the existing norms might find themselves becoming marginalised, with their writings suddenly seeming irrelevant, arcane or distanced from museum practice. Seen in this light my contribution becomes a threat to those already in possession of the type of capital that is recognised by the field. If the latter were to change, so too would the currency, rate of exchange and “chances of profit” (Bourdieu 2004: 62). Those members of the board who contacted the editor were seeking to delegitimize my capital in order to safeguard their own. In so doing they have tightened their monopoly over the field by sending out a clear reprimand to those among them whose actions in accepting my work threatened to lend it legitimacy (Bourdieu 1993: 42-43).

Now, notions of legitimacy are not fixed. The extent to which aberrations can be tolerated and indeed esteemed is determined by an individual’s stock of capital. Synonyms for capital include authority, gravitas, power, recognition, reputation, status and so forth. To “know your place” is to defer to others that the field recognises as having more capital. Capital is also determined in tandem with the organisations for which one works (Bourdieu 2004: 57). A prestigious institution will boost the value, visibility and veracity of the work produced by its personnel. Capital is unevenly distributed across the field as a consequence. This means that all fields are inherently conflictual (Bourdieu 2004: 84). Those with high reserves can stake more, testing the limits of legitimate behaviour. This is precisely what I strove to demonstrate in my analysis of the museum director, Lars Nittve. It was his highly sophisticated negotiation of the museum field that I sought to highlight and critique. Crucially, however, I did not have the capital necessary to realise this ambition. Those “members of the editorial board” who contacted Sandell wished to make this emphatically clear by issuing a “collective censorship” (Bourdieu 2004: 114). They dispensed this chastisement through the auspices of a prolific and well respected professor, journal editor and the head of an academic department with the greatest capital in the field.

Secure in their anonymity they made a calculated decision to force the “withdrawal” of my paper, even if this risked undermining the journal’s credibility. This action casts further light on my status. If I had more capital they might not have dared to resort to this extreme measure: the editor might have refused their solicitations in the knowledge that I would draw on my resources to resist this removal. This rebuff would have diminished the internal standing of my would-be adversaries.

What this boundary dispute has revealed are the unspoken hierarchies within this important subfield of Museum Studies (cf. Bourdieu 2004: 36). Richard Sandell cannot be speaking for *all* the members of the journal given that at least two anonymous reviewers must have agreed to its publication. (If this was *not* the case then the competence and probity of the whole journal is called into question

– surely an impossibility given the pre-eminence of the host department, the proficiency of its administration and the combined capital of its editorial board.) This prompts a series of speculations. Who has the most capital amongst the editorial board members? Whose judgement has been undermined by allowing my tawdry piece of “art press” journalism to masquerade as “proper” academic research? And, looking ahead, what changes might occur as a direct or indirect result of what has happened? A likely corollary is that the journal’s editors will be even more conservative in the future, deferring to their vocal minority. This might lead to all sorts of shifts including subtle retrenchments and reinforcements to the boundaries of acceptability. This could even result in wholesale changes in the editorial line-up to ensure that it is only peopled by those whose ethos matches that of its most influential associates.

Bursting the glass case

We know what “proper” academic writing is *not* thanks to the existence of my de-published paper. But what is the real thing? One answer is to be found in an informative Open University publication entitled *The Arts: Good Study Guide* (2008). This sets out in no uncertain terms the “rules” that I have contravened (Burch 2011a: 38). It avers, for example, that academic writers rarely reach “speedy conclusions” and that their texts are “littered with qualifications... and conditional phrases... [and] conclusion[s] couched in very guarded language” (Chambers & Northedge 2008: 79). My apparently disrespectful, speculative and unguarded critique runs counter to such conventions. Furthermore, by failing to reference four decades of literature I stand accused of not having “acquire[d] academic knowledge” through a proper “engage[ment] with academic discourse” (Chambers & Northedge 2008: 53). And the problem with my tone relates to the fact that academic writing must at all times be expressed in a detached and unemotional manner (Chambers & Northedge 2008: 58).

I knew that in not obeying these principles I risked being excluded from the academic field. Richard Sandell’s move to “withdraw” my paper would therefore seem justified. That I disagree with this decision is hardly surprising. What is perhaps unanticipated is the identity of the person I wish to enlist to support my claims for legitimacy. He is one of the leading figures in the field of Museum Studies; an individual who lists “museums and controversy” as one of his many specialist interests (UoL n.d.). That person is none other than Richard Sandell.

Aware as I am that academics couch their ideas in “guarded language”, I sought out an occasion when Sandell expressed his thoughts about museums in an oral presentation. One such example is the keynote address he delivered to the Institute of Museum Ethics in New Jersey in 2008. That Sandell should have received such an invitation demonstrates the extent to which his capital is recognised.

The title Sandell chose for his paper was “Museums and Moralities: Ethics &

Activism”. His starting point addressed a similar concern as that which prompted my article for *Museum and Society*, namely a growing unease about emerging developments that “are threatening in some cases to undermine ethical practice in our institutions” (Sandell 2008a). Sandell recognised that “a very particular challenge that museums have is that we have such a diversity of stakeholders each with different agendas”. He cautioned that, because these agendas can be articulated using “quite seductive language”, it is necessary “to look more closely at the motivations and thinking that underlie them”.

In my article for *Museum and Society* the principal “stakeholder” (or “go-between”) is Lars Nittve. I analysed his “seductive language” in order to ascertain his motivations. This led me to conclude that his actions belied his words. Left unchecked these might well threaten to undermine ethical practice in the museum. This provoked my intervention. It was this “activism” that some on the editorial board of *Museum and Society* found so objectionable.

That Richard Sandell should have concurred comes as some surprise. In his New Jersey talk he makes clear his “goal... to lend support to that idea of activist practice” for museums. Indeed, Sandell professes himself willing to contemplate circumstances in which museums might “eschew attempts to offer balanced interpretation (which examines and validates a variety of perspectives) in favour of advocating an unequivocal moral standpoint” (Sandell 2008b). Moreover, rather than a marginal activity, Sandell believes that the “activist ambitions” of museums “should really move from the periphery to the core and the centre stage of much of our museum work” (Sandell 2008a).

At one point in his talk Sandell cites the former director of Manchester Museum, Tristram Besterman to the effect that: “Museums are... places of creative interaction, in which traditional values and orthodoxies can and should be challenged. An ethical museum should be free to surprise and to do the unexpected.” Sandell chose to omit the final sentence of Besterman’s quotation: “However, this can lead to public controversy” (Besterman 2008: 436). A desire to avoid precisely that is likely to have played a part in the decision to “withdraw” my article from *Museum and Society*.

In contrast, it was the striking absence of controversy that motivated me to write the paper in the first place. My point was that an institution such as Sweden’s Moderna Museet appears to challenge orthodoxies. However, by focusing on the “seductive language” of its former director I sought to reveal those “surprising and unexpected” facets that lay beneath the museum’s alluring façade. In order to achieve this I turned Lars Nittve’s “seductive language” back onto the museum that he led. In so doing I tried to uncover the museum’s “hidden histories” (Sandell 2008a) by constructing a counter narrative to the official story set out in *The History Book: On Moderna Museet 1958-2008* (Tellgren 2008).

On the face of it this could be seen as a legitimate salvo in the sort of activist practice promoted by Richard Sandell. That this is not the case is down to one crucial distinction: the “activism” Sandell advocates is reserved for museums

alone. Whereas they can “eschew... balanced interpretation”, university academics must be “even handed”. This incongruous position is both untenable and undesirable. In sanctioning one rule for museums and another for Museum Studies academics we are downplaying the fact that the latter are also “stakeholders”. Yet all too often this is hidden under stylistic conventions that forbid “personal” and “speculative” enquiry.

In his talk Sandell illustrates his theoretical position by drawing on a specific empirical example, namely “Rethinking disability representation”. Dating from 2006 to 2008 this was a project that saw Sandell and his colleagues “work with nine partner museums” in order to “develop practice”. This is the academic equivalent of Cummings and Lewandowska’s artistic work: “each project undertaken by them is reliant on a parasitic relationship with an institution, with all of the constraints and benefits that such a relationship entails” (Barley & Coates cited in Burch 2011a: 39). In my research I chose to concentrate on the *constraints* rather than the *benefits* of such interactions. This led to my decision *not* to work with museums but to strive to maintain a critical distance. Again, justification for this approach can be found in Sandell’s talk given his promotion of “museums as places where... competing interests and agendas can and should be challenged”.

The question is: what form should such “challenges” take? If museums are encouraged to “surprise and... do the unexpected” is it not appropriate to match this in our academic investigations? What characterises much of the Museum Studies literature written today is the way it lavishes praise on museums whenever they play with conventions, use different registers, allow others to speak – in short everything that gets away from the old discredited certainties of the single-voice, authoritative museum. This is all part of “the breaking of traditional curatorial moulds and... the birth of a new way of thinking that is called the New Museology” (to cite *Museum and Society*’s “editorial statement” written by, among others, Richard Sandell (Gable et al, n.d.)).

In the light of all this the grounds for “withdrawing” my peer reviewed article become even less stable. The journal’s stance is undermined further given its editor’s assertion that there is “no neutral position” from which to speak (Sandell 2008a). Ought I not to have been congratulated rather than condemned for adopting a “personal” stance? I suspect that my “crime” (cf. Jump 2011) is that I have been too honest about my “agendas” and role as a “stakeholder”. For his part, Sandell has less to say about his own particular stance. This is probably because his agendas are so closely related to projects that he himself has helped initiate. Sandell’s comments about “Rethinking disability representation” are those of a participating “stakeholder”. Rather than “museology from within” (Gustafsson Reinius 2011), my reflections of Moderna Museet are – as I was at pains to emphasize – those of someone from outside the organisation. To paraphrase one of the participants in “Rethinking disability representation”: the “strong feelings” I expressed about Moderna Museet formed but one

interpretation of that museum; an interpretation that sits alongside many others.

When it comes to the vexed question of “tone”, I sought to express my point of view in a manner that would make it hard to ignore, aware as I am that museums are “resistant to change” (Sandell 2003: 58). Again, it is not difficult to portray my endeavour as being true to the spirit of *Museum and Society*. In Sandell’s co-authored “editorial statement” we learn that the journal seeks to lead to be a “forum... [for] dialogue and debate about the museum and its role in the world” (Gable et al, n.d.). We are also told that “museum issues have burst out of the glass case” generating “newsworthy stories” that “are no longer confined to the professional spaces of the gallery, lecture hall or seminar room.” I responded to this and to the journal’s call for “innovative articles” by experimenting with a non-standard way to write “about museums and museum-related matters” (Gable et al, n.d.).

Unlike Sandell I believe that I got the tone and content of my paper about right. It was sufficiently acceptable to be sanctioned for inclusion in *Museum and Society* – and just problematic enough to be removed with all haste. It fulfilled my parasitic aspirations. I am now in a position to bring them to fruition. By reproducing my abortive article here in its original form I have placed “in showing” (Burch 2011a: 44) the functioning of the museum field – both in practice and in theory. I have, furthermore, provided an analogue to Cummings and Lewandowska’s “parasitic” project, *Museum Futures* (2008). Their sanctioned intrusion into Moderna Museet’s *The History Book* does not follow the pagination of the “real” book and is written on different paper using an alternative font. I have mimicked this here by retaining the *Museum and Society* format, complete with headers, footers and page numbers. The list of errata printed on page 15 below features the corrections and amendments I sent to the managing editors of *Museum and Society*. This is necessary because the paper reproduced here is in its pre-publication form. (I was not quick enough to download the finished article before it was removed.) That it should appear in a flawed, still-born state is entirely fitting, bearing as it does the scars of its difficult passage.

Ai Weiwei, where are you?

In my *Museum and Society* article I made the naive, misguided claim that my position in the university field rendered me less encumbered by the “complicities, compromises and censorship” experienced by those working *with* or *for* museums (Fraser cited in Burch 2011a: 39). In making this assertion I underestimated those academic go-betweens that govern what “‘cannot be said’ in the museal field” (Bourdieu cited in Burch 2011a: 39).

As intimated above, I have no way of knowing whether the decision to block my article was just one of those skirmishes in Bourdieu’s “games of culture” (Burch 2011a: 38) or whether it was prompted by more specific conflicts of

interest. Embarking on conspiracy theories would be a fruitless and counter-productive exercise.

One thing is certain: the incident related here is by no means unique. In December 2007, for example, the *International Journal of Speech Language and the Law* published an article about the effectiveness of lie detectors. The publisher later deleted it from the online version of the journal on the grounds that the managing director of a company named in the article had not been invited to “assist” in the preparation of the paper nor had he been given the opportunity “to comment on the content of the article prior to its publication” (Eriksson & Lacerda 2007). In a more recent case, *Applied Mathematics Letters* published an article on intelligent design. This appeared on its website but was omitted from its print version following criticisms that surfaced on a science blog. The publisher, whilst refusing to reinstate the paper, later issued an apology for its retraction together with a payment of \$10,000 to cover legal costs incurred by the author (Jump 2011). In these two instances it would appear that allegations of defamation and a fear of legal action plus anxieties over being seen to endorse non-standard scientific reasoning were decisive.

Questions of academic autonomy and dependency look certain to increase as the funding and management of universities becomes increasingly privatised and open to market forces. An early taste of this came with the problems that London School of Economics encountered following its damaging decision to accept financial donations from Muammer Gaddafi’s regime in Libya (Cook 2011).

This link between a British university and a non-democratic regime raises the question of whether *Museum and Society*’s decision to remove my paper was due in part to its allusion to human rights and democracy in China. After all, the importance of China to the University of Leicester was underscored in 2007 when a Chinese delegation visited the university. Richard Sandell made a return trip in March of that year (UoL 2007).

Thankfully, evidence that academics *are* still free to express themselves on potentially controversial subjects is to be found in a paper published in the very same issue of *Museum and Society* as my own (and is, unlike mine, still accessible). This is Marzia Varutti’s “Miniatures of the Nation: Ethnic Minority Figurines, Mannequins and Dioramas in Chinese Museums”. She identifies how “the widespread use of miniatures in Chinese museum displays of ethnic minorities reveals the tension between the idealised unity of the Chinese nation and the reality of a complex, multilayered, fluid and culturally hybrid citizenry” (Varutti 2011: 13). This publication is the epitome of an academic paper: balanced, scholarly, well argued and careful. Varutti’s work is, in other words, the opposite of my own.

My “journalistic” foray, in contrast, threatened to appeal to a non-academic audience at a very sensitive moment. This is because, as coincidence would have it, the *Museum and Society* issue that carried my article appeared less than a fortnight before *ART HK 11*: the Hong Kong International Art Fair which ran

from 26-29 May 2011. China's decision to intercept Ai Weiwei in early April whilst en route to Hong Kong was no doubt a mere coincidence. So too was his continued detention until late June, which just happened to prevent him from attending the art fair and using it to grandstand his criticisms of the authorities in Beijing. Although I did not know it at the time, my reference to The Basic Law of Hong Kong was peculiarly prescient. It gave my academic (sic) article an unusually "newsworthy" relevance.

Some 260 galleries from 38 countries together with high profile sponsors from the world of finance, industry and culture took part in ART HK 11 (ART HK11). Was this appropriate given the continued incarceration of Ai Weiwei? (Ruiz 2011). Or should the museum world, as Tristram Besterman (2011) has argued, "hold China to account" over its treatment of Ai? Besterman goes on to ask: "When does engagement become appeasement?" A pivotal "stakeholder" in this moral dilemma is Lars Nittve, the executive director of Museum Plus (M+), an institution currently taking shape on the riverfront of the West Kowloon Cultural District of Hong Kong. During the art fair it is reported that Nittve led a boat trip for an "assembled mix of art critics and dealers who flooded the city" (Tully 2011). He used this opportunity to promote M+; unveil the site of the new development; and inform his illustrious guests that funding was already in place for the scheme, including a reported HK\$22 billion grant from the local government. That Nittve is the key personality in this endeavour reaffirms his capital and shows that it was absolutely legitimate for me to have singled him out for investigation. He has become as synonymous with M+ as he was with Moderna Museet (Burch 2011a: 41). My paper might therefore have enabled people to look beyond Nittve's "seductive" presentation of M+ to consider the ramifications of doing business with China.

Of course, the "withdrawal" of my article might have had no overt connection with ART HK 11 and the nascent M+. Yet there need be no direct or verifiable link. Tristram Besterman (2008: 439), in the very same text as that cited by Sandell in address to the Institute of Museum Ethics, avers that "the ethical standards of the museum and its staff must be *seen* to be above suspicion." *Museum and Society's* decision to remove my paper places it under just such suspicion by raising doubts (however unmerited) over the motivations of its editors. Is this, to recall Richard Sandell, one of those emerging developments that "are threatening in some cases to undermine ethical practice in our institutions"?

This is by no means the only disturbing conjunction. In publishing and then "withdrawing" the article, Richard Sandell stands accused of carrying out the academic equivalent of Moderna Museet's decision to remove Dick Bengtsson's "swastika" paintings prior to a meeting of European foreign ministers. The leadership of Moderna Museet explained that this was done "out of respect for Dick Bengtsson" (cited in Burch 2011a: 43). This is the same sort of "seductive language" resorted to by Sandell when he described the "withdrawal" of my article as being "in the interests of all parties".

That there is such a clear connection between go-betweens in the field of museum practice and museum theory was not something I had previously understood. I now have a far greater insight into the workings of capital and the field of Museum Studies following my dealings with *Museum and Society*. In the final analysis Richard Sandell's email setting out the reasons for his actions reveals more about his position than it does the shortcomings of my paper. In it he urged me to mollify my tone, qualify my arguments and seek to appreciate how Lars Nittve has been "caught up in ethical dilemmas". This plea is perfectly understandable because this is exactly the scenario faced by Sandell. In his role as guardian of academic standards he has found himself "caught up" in the logics of the field. This accounts for the intriguing contradictions between his New Jersey talk on ethics and his actions in censoring my paper. I have some sympathy for Sandell's difficulties. But it should be noted that, whilst Professor Sandell might well be constrained, he is not a slave to the system. Nor, for that matter, am I. So, rather than yielding to those with authority or baulking at the idea of daring to question individuals imbued with capital, I have persevered. Indeed, I have redoubled my efforts at comprehending and critiquing the field of Museum Studies and my own small role. This tenacity means that I run the risk of being viewed as a despicable hanger-on – the Museum Studies equivalent of Shakespeare's Paroles. We two parasites differ in at least one respect though: I *will* speak what I know. Let us hope that others involved in this story opt to do the same. Our understanding of museums and society have much to gain if they do.

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Errata to “A Museum Director and His Go-Betweens: Lars Nittve’s patronage of Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska”

Page 34

Move the first endnote to after <Paroles> e.g. <Paroles¹: I will not speak what I know.>

Page 34

Remove line space between the two Shakespeare quotations and indent the text:

Paroles¹: I will not speak what I know.
King: Thou hast spoken all already... But thou art too fine in thy evidence.
Therefore stand aside.

Page 35

Insert paragraph indent at start of the last paragraph, i.e. the one that begins: <Capital achieved this by...>

Page 41

Change <beneath> to <above>, e.g. <Both he and Nolde’s artwork appear above the title>

Page 44

In the second paragraph the reference (Burch 2010a) needs to change to (Burch 2010)

Page 44

In the third paragraph the reference (2.3, l.21) needs to change to (2.3: 21)

Page 45

The reference (Burch 2010b) needs to change to (Burch 2011)

Page 45

Insert a line space between endnotes 2 & 3

Page 45

Indent the text of endnote 10 so that it is in line with the others

Page 45

Indent the text of endnote 11 so that it is in line with the others

Page 47

Change <Burch, S. (2010a)> to <Burch, S. (2010)>

Page 47

In the same reference, remove the line break after <The History Book: On Moderna>

Page 47

Change <Burch, S. (2010b)> to <Burch, S. (2011)>

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A museum director and his go-betweens: Lars Nittve's patronage of Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska

Stuart Burch*

Abstract:

This paper focuses on the collaborative work of Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska; specifically three 'parasitic' projects undertaken at museums in Denmark, England and Sweden. Their common denominator is the identity of their host: the Swedish museum director, Lars Nittve. The article highlights the laudable goals of the works in question but concludes that the official invitation accorded to the artists restricts their institutional critique. A radical extension of the issues raised by Cummings and Lewandowska leads to an unsolicited appraisal of Moderna Museet. This supplemental parasitic act is intended to stand alongside an official account of the museum published to mark its fiftieth anniversary in 2008.

Key Words: institutional critique, Lars Nittve, Marysia Lewandowska, Moderna Museet, Neil Cummings, parasite, Pierre Bourdieu

Paroles: 'I will not speak what I know.'

King: Thou hast spoken all already... But thou art too fine in thy evidence. Therefore stand aside.

All's Well That Ends Well (Act 5.3: 265-8)

Go-betweens have been around for an awfully long time. Shakespeare uses the term as a synonym for 'assistant' in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* first published in 1602. This corresponds with its current usage as 'intermediary', 'one who passes to and fro between parties, with messages, proposals etc' (OED 1989a). Such brokers are deployed to dramatic effect in Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well*. The most interesting and complex of them all is the 'ring-carrier', Paroles – a companion to Bertram, Count of Roussillon. In the final scene of the play he confesses to being complicit in his master's wanton exploits. Yet, despite being exposed as 'a knave' and 'an equivocal companion', Paroles still refuses to reveal all he knows. It is emblematic of this 'naughty orator', however, that his verbose rebuttal is in vain: the unwitting Paroles has 'spoken all already'.

In Shakespeare's day the word 'naughty' tended to mean worthless, morally bad or wicked (OED 2010). This is considerably more disparaging than its current connotations with mischievousness, disobedience and mildly improper behaviour. Paroles is a potent mixture of all these things. He plays a central role in mediating and transmitting oftentimes unpalatable truths, all of which are conveyed directly to the audience (Gay 2008: 110).

As 'a double-meaning prophesier' (AWTEW 4.3: 99-100), the loquacious, flamboyantly-attired Paroles represents something of a dramatic precursor to a modern-day go-between such as Andrea Fraser (born 1965 in Billings, Montana, USA). Take, for example, Fraser's 1989 performance piece *Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk*. At first glance it appears to be a recording of a conventional guided tour of Philadelphia Museum of Art conducted by the artist in the fictional guise of the primly dressed docent, Jane Castleton. That all is not what it seems becomes apparent from her misplaced enthusiasm for the museum's humdrum canteen and her exaltations over a mundane drinking fountain. By using the sorts of extravagant gestures and overblown language only ever reserved for 'Art', Fraser/Castleton succeeds in problematising

and parodying the museum's founding principle: to teach the people of Philadelphia to differentiate 'quality from mediocrity' (Fraser 2005: 104).

By basing her script on a collage of extracts from a variety of authorised publications and official reports into the museum and other public institutions involved in education and reformation, Fraser shows how the value distinctions applied to objects mirror those used to rank and classify citizens. Jane Castleton embodies this relationship when she declares longingly: 'I'd like to live like an art object' (Fraser 2005: 107). Rather than simply living like an art object, Fraser fucked like one in her more recent piece *Untitled* (2003), an hour-long film in which she has sex with an anonymous art collector who paid a reported \$20,000 for the pleasure (Cahan 2006).² This 'bed-trick' is on a par with that perpetrated by Bertram's wife, Helen in *All's Well That Ends Well*. In order to win over her 'dangerous and lascivious' husband, she deceives Bertram into believing that he is having sex with the very woman he is trying to seduce (Snyder 2008: 10). Fraser's own particular brand of trickery consummated *Little Frank and His Carp* (2001), a clandestine recording of the artist writhing erotically against the architecture of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao whilst listening to the museum's self-congratulatory audio guide (Pollack 2002: 87).

Performances such as these are examples of 'institutional critique'. Pioneered in the late 1960s by such artists as Michael Asher and Hans Haacke, this is generally understood as entailing 'the critical analysis or ironization of the structures and logic of museums and art galleries' (Welchman 2006: 11). The continuing ramifications of this approach were addressed at a recent conference exploring 'the role of the artist in mediating between collections and audiences'.³ Its title – The Go Between – prompted the text you are now reading.

In the following I focus on two artists that fall into the category of institutional critique. They are Neil Cummings (born 1958 in Aberdare, Wales) and Marysia Lewandowska (born 1958 in Szczecin, Poland). During the years 1995-2008 this duo – hereafter referred to as C+L – developed a 'collaborative, or research-driven way of practising', one which addressed the 'exhibitionary technologies of art' (C+L 2007). Like Fraser, C+L sought to make 'the largely abstract and invisible forces and relations that traverse [museums]... visible' (Fraser 2006b: 129).

The works by C+L that I have opted to examine have a common denominator: the involvement of the Swedish museum director, Lars Nittve. Born in 1953, Nittve has been described as 'perhaps the most influential Scandinavian curator of his generation' (Birnbau 1996). C+L have contributed works at each of the last three art institutions led by Nittve in Denmark, England and Sweden. They are as follows: *Errata* (1996, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art); *Capital* (2001, Tate Modern); and *Museum Futures: Live, Recorded, Distributed* (2008, Moderna Museet).

Focusing on the last of these, this article seeks to explore the relationship between C+L and Lars Nittve, leading to the implementation of a sort of institutional critique of my own devising; one that builds on but ultimately transgresses C+L's practice. This undertaking reflects my ambivalent attitude towards C+L. Yes, their intelligent and inventive artistic interventions bring important light to bear on a range of museological issues. Yet they have a slight touch of the Paroles about them. To paraphrase the King of France: they are equivocal companions; too artful (i.e. fine) in their evidence they must therefore stand aside when it comes to an emphatically *naughty* critique of both their role and that of their patron.

Museum: Cut, Exposed, Pierced

It is instructive to begin *in medias res* with the book *Capital*, published as part of C+L's Tate Modern commission of 2001. In his foreword to this volume Lars Nittve (2001: 1) lauds C+L for being at the vanguard of those artists that have recognized and understood the 'systems of value, production and exchange' inherent in both art and museums. Nittve applauded C+L for having 'cut through and laid bare' the operations of the organisation that he himself led. *Capital* achieved this by adopting a similar strategy to that deployed in C+L's book *The Value of Things* (2000). Both are founded upon a comparison between a museum and one other analogous organisation: the British Museum and the department store Selfridges in the case of *The Value of Things*; Tate and the Bank of England in *Capital*.

In the latter the two bodies are likened to 'underwriters'. They both demonstrate that a discourse of value is there, and guarantee its continuance' (Thrift 2001: 105). The Bank of England 'underwrites... commodity and money markets'; while Tate 'can be seen as the principal agent in a parallel "symbolic economy", underwriting the integrity and value of the artworks in which it deals' (Morris 2001: 12).

Notions of value-creation were explored further in a series of seminars and essays, some of which appeared in the above-mentioned book with its foreword by Lars Nittve. A final component of this 'exhibition' centred on a limited-edition print made by the artists and distributed at random to visitors to Tate Modern. This action served as a reminder that the museum itself originated in a gift from Sir Henry Tate in 1897. It also drew attention to the fact that 'most public collections are the result of endless private gifts', even if these 'economic networks of obligation and indebtedness [are often] obscured from public scrutiny' (C+L 2005: 81-2).

That *Capital* constituted a similar network of obligations was something that Nittve was keen to acknowledge. In the accompanying book he thanked all those involved in what had 'been an intensely collaborative project' that had taken 'several years' to implement (Nittve 2001: 1). As such it must have started in the wake of another undertaking that Nittve had overseen as director of Denmark's Louisiana Museum of Modern Art. This was the institution that Nittve led before taking up his post at Tate Modern in 1998.

Nittve's 1996 debut at Louisiana was the large group show *NowHere*. Louisiana's permanent collection was moved out and replaced by five 'mini exhibitions' that were put together by six curators, two of whom were drawn from the staff of the museum whilst the other four came from abroad. This multiple approach and partial devolving of power reflected an overtly postmodernist stance. This was articulated in Nittve's preface to the catalogue in which he stated that *NowHere* sought to question the certainties and traditional hierarchies of art (Nittve 1996). That this represented a longstanding development in Nittve's curatorial career is clear from an interview he gave at the time with Daniel Birnbaum. Nittve recalled, for example, that *Implosion: A Post-Modern Perspective* (an exhibition he curated for Moderna Museet in 1987) 'didn't really create a structure... [but rather] dismantled one, and looked at the space that its breakdown opened up'. Four years later, as director of Rooseum in Malmö, he curated *Trans/Mission: Art In Intercultural Limbo* which embraced 'the increasing awareness of the pluralism of culture'. Five years later came *NowHere* – 'a polyphonous show for an era characterized by difference' (cited in Birnbaum 1996).

C+L's contribution to *NowHere* was well-suited to a mind-set. It took the form of a pamphlet slotted in-between the two volume exhibition catalogue. Its title read: *Errata to the Catalogue of the Collections and Buildings, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art*. 'Errata' are 'error[s] in writing or printing' that often appear as 'a list of corrections attached to a printed book' (OED 1989b). In their introduction C+L (1996: 3) state:

This *Errata* attempts to pierce the Louisiana collection with its material context, by attending to those objects and pleasures whose trace is not found in the catalogue proper... While engaging the momentarily overlooked, without valorization, we would like to expose those apparently seamless transitions of attention, implicit in existing museum behaviour.

What followed was a series of photographs showing an eclectic array of anything *but* Louisiana's art: a hose pipe, bicycle racks, chairs and stools, a hat stand and bird house. Where paintings and sculptures *did* appear it was indirectly, such as Alexander Calder's *Slender Ribs* (1963) reproduced on salt and pepper sachets. C+L provided a map on the back of their pamphlet to indicate the location of those things whose 'trace' was absent from 'the catalogue proper'. *Errata* therefore equated to an alternative guided tour *à la* Jane Castleton. This dislocation matched the liminal status of the pamphlet itself. Whilst it stood at one remove from the exhibition catalogue proper, it only carried meaning in the context of both it and the museum as a whole. This sort of action has rightly led some to praise C+L for fostering a series of 'parasitic relationship[s] with an institution' (Barley & Coates 2000: 13). This description could equally be applied to one of their final collaborations: *Museum Futures: Live, Recorded, Distributed* (2008).

Museum Futures

Museum Futures, as the title suggests, pondered what might be in store for tomorrow's museums. It took as its focus Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Sweden's national collection of modern and contemporary art. To mark its fiftieth anniversary in 2008 the museum published *The History Book: On Moderna Museet 1958-2008*. This is in effect an endorsed biography of the institution largely written by its staff, both past and present. Its then director, Lars Nittve, invited C+L to contribute to this work (Tellgren 2008: 7-8, 471).

C+L chose to revisit the approach taken at Louisiana by again parasitizing themselves in a museum publication. They imagined that *The History Book* had in fact been 'discovered' fifty years hence and was actually being published as a 'heritage' edition to mark the *centenary* of the museum.⁴ Their contributions are unpaginated and printed on coloured paper of a different consistency and in an alternative font than the numbered pages of the 'proper' book. It begins with a timeline situating the real and imagined Moderna Museet within a temporal axis running backwards from 2058 to 1838. C+L also provide succinct introductions for each chapter, giving a reading of them (as it were) after the fact and with future hindsight. Each text is accompanied by a photograph. Typically, C+L chose to capture images of the museum's shop, kitchen, restaurant, workshop and store. Only one picture shows a (sort of) gallery: namely the main corridor running along the *enfilade* of display spaces (C+L 2008: §8).

The final component of *Museum Futures* involved an interview with one Ayan Lindquist, the imaginary director of Moderna Museet in 2058. This was filmed by C+L with a transcript appearing in *The History Book*. Her prophetic words were based upon a series of interviews conducted with the current staff at the museum.⁵ These are coupled with Neil Cummings' hopes and expectations for the future of both art and society (Cummings wrote the script for the 'interview'). He envisages a world in which national boundaries have been superseded by networks and regions such as 'the Asian Multitude network'. This is mirrored in the 'hybridization' of museums: they will become 'more mobile and experimental' through the progressive establishment of a 'local cluster structure' and then, later, more far-afield 'nodes'. In the case of Moderna Museet this would see the creation in 2015 of a regional constellation linking Stockholm with Tallinn, Helsinki and St Petersburg; followed by a series of 'nodes' in Qatar, Shanghai and Mumbai between then and 2024.

Allied with this, Cummings foresees a profound shift from private domains to 'open content'. No longer will museums compete for scarce resources in the pursuit of auction-house-inflated art works. The world in which Ayan Lindquist lives and works is all about 'creative co-production'. For her it is self-evident that -

to source, participate, co-produce and share, to generate non-rivalous resources, are vital to the constitution of a Public Domain. And indeed, a civil society (C+L 2008).

The origins of this are rooted in real events, some of which have taken place in the history of Moderna Museet. For instance, the museum's 'first experiment with [a] devolved structure' came during the renovation of the building (2002-2004). This necessitated the creation of 'Moderna Museet c/o' with the help of various host partners (Tellgren 2008: 370). Meanwhile, the establishment of the satellite institution 'Moderna Museet Malmö' in December 2009 can be seen as the first tentative step towards the predicted clusters and nodes of the future.

C+L's temporal dislocation means that the museum will be obliged to reflect on their predictions when it comes to the actual centenary. This projects the book into the future ensuring that the Moderna Museet of 2058 will map onto the Moderna Museet of 2008, celebrating C+L's perspicacity or musing on their quaintly archaic predictions. *The History Book* is therefore 'The Future Book': an officially sanctioned reading of Moderna Museet's past *and* a legacy that is bequeathed to its imminent self. It therefore seeks to establish a series of parameters based on a carefully selected and filtered picture of both the past and present.

What I intend to do in the remaining sections of this paper is to challenge this 'apparently seamless' museal image by offering an alternative reading that aims to complement and counter the official version. Responding to the sorts of methods and enquiries advocated by C+L, I will seek to insinuate myself naughtily between them and their patron.

Museum: Cut, Exposed, Pierced – Reprise

To study C+L's work is to appreciate that value is perceived, never inherent (C+L 2001: 31). They remind us that -

art – and the knowledge that coalesces around it – always exists in a context or “field”... A “field” that is contingent upon and interacts with others: the political, the pedagogical, the financial, the artistic, the social, etcetera (C+L 2008: §9).

This term – *field* – can be usefully applied to C+L's project, *Capital*. It confirmed the likes of Tate and the British Museum to be semi-autonomous ‘fields’ involved in ‘an immense enterprise of symbolic alchemy’ (Bourdieu 1996: 170). This matches Pierre Bourdieu's characterisation of the artistic field as the domain ‘in which the value of works of art and belief in that value are continuously generated’, resulting in an ongoing struggle ‘for the monopoly of the power to consecrate’ (Bourdieu 1993: 78).

Fields are populated by individuals and institutions. Bourdieu chose to call these actors ‘social agents’, but they might equally well be labelled ‘go-betweens’ (cf. Bourdieu 1993: 280, n.6). They occupy positions within the field and participate in ‘games of culture’ (Bourdieu 1984: 12). Each player's ability to ‘consecrate’ is determined by the extent of their resources – what Bourdieu terms ‘capital’. Capital – and with it power – are unequally distributed across any given field, including the field of art (Bourdieu 1986: 246).

When we think of capital it is normally in association with economism. Bourdieu, however, notes that capital, in addition to the economic, takes other forms. An artefact or work of art, for instance, can be ‘appropriated both materially – which presupposes economic capital – and symbolically – which presupposes cultural capital’ (Bourdieu 1986: 247). Even so, the various types of capital can be rather difficult to discern. For example, in museums, there is a ‘denial of the economy’: economic capital is ‘disguised’ due to the fact that such institutions are supposed to be ‘realms of disinterestedness’ (Bourdieu 1986: 245). Cultural capital is even more elusive in that it is accumulated over time and embodied, objectified and institutionalized (Bourdieu 1986: 241-3). And symbolic capital is frequently not seen as a form of capital at all but is instead more usually ‘recognized as legitimate competence’ (Bourdieu 1986: 245).

For Bourdieu (1986: 246) one of ‘the specific effects of capital... [is] the appropriation of profits and the power to impose the laws of functioning of the field most favorable to capital and its reproduction’. This ability to impose laws is paramount because ‘games of culture’ lack codified rules and instead operate within a ‘set of constraints’ which transcend the wills of individuals and limit the actions of the participating group (Bourdieu 1986: 242-250). It follows, therefore, that a mastery of these restrictions can have a number of very desirable consequences. Not only is it an indicator of capital and with it power, it can also function as a means to accrue more capital; trade one form of capital for another; and ensure its longevity through transmission and reproduction (Bourdieu 1986: 242, 246).

It is this, I argue, that explains the ‘system of objective relations’ that link C+L with Lars Nittve. Extending C+L an invitation testifies that Nittve is wedded to the idea of openness and is eager for the workings of the museums in his charge to be exposed and critiqued. These are *trump cards* (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2005: 98) in the modern art museum game – as Nittve himself acknowledged when he averred: ‘What is the role of a modern museum if not to question its own premises on an ongoing basis?’ (Nittve 1996: 11).

Nittve likes to stress how he hunts for ‘in-between’ spaces and seeks to remove or diminish physical and intellectual ‘barriers’ in an on-going pursuit of both ‘excellence and access’ (Burch 2007: 55). In truth, Nittve deploys the likes of C+L not to break boundaries but to cement and control them. Why? Because ‘[to] define boundaries, defend them and control entries is to defend the established order of the field’ (Bourdieu 1996: 225).

Nittve and the institutions he has represented stand to gain capital from an aura of restrained radicalism. Its presence generates an impression of dynamism, of improvement and an ever widening sense of participation. Moderna Museet's heritage is one of social engagement and risk taking. Thus Nittve proclaimed *Implosion* to be part of Moderna Museet's legacy of ‘radical exhibitions’ that can be traced back to the 1960s and the leadership of the renowned director, Pontus Hultén (Nittve & Helleberg 1987: 9). This converges perfectly with the trajectory

mapped out in *Museum Futures*, in which the old-fashioned idea of the 'passive audience' is succeeded by the notion of the visitor as an 'active subject', which (one day) will in turn be supplanted by a genuinely egalitarian future of 'embedded co-production' (C+L 2008: §9).

This explains why those who, like Nittve, work in and for today's museums tend to respond with alacrity to artists such as C+L (Allen 2009). Their brand of institutional critique functions as a token that the commissioning director, and the institution he or she represents, know the rules of the game so well that they can play with them in a risky manner.

Talk of 'co-production' has another, equally important ramification. It again draws attention to the fact that meaning and value are not innate: a work of art is produced by the field and its various go-betweens/agents. C+L might be the 'apparent producers' (Bourdieu 1993: 76) of the three projects under discussion, but value production is an extended process. Nittve is fully aware that art 'is *always* a collective endeavour' thanks to his reading of Andrea Fraser's work (cited in Nittve & Helleberg 1987: 34 & 36). Nittve is therefore also a producer. When he commissions, writes about and promotes C+L it is *he* who is the go-between, he who 'creates the creators' (Bourdieu 1993: 76-7; Bourdieu 1996: 290). This is one of the reasons why a 'cultural object' is 'a living social institution' (Bourdieu 1986: 256, n.8).

This is not to say that C+L have prostituted themselves for the sake of their art; but it *is* the case that their relationship with Lars Nittve is as intimate as that between Andrea Fraser and her passionately enthusiastic collector. This interpenetration of patron and client helps partially explain the otherwise perplexing welcome accorded to a couple of 'parasites'. For, as we have seen, 'each project undertaken by them [i.e. C+L] is reliant on a parasitic relationship with an institution, *with all of the constraints and benefits that such a relationship entails*' (Barley & Coates 2000: 13, emphasis added). The rider at the end of this quotation was consciously omitted from the extract cited earlier. It is included here to draw attention to an important point: C+L are invited into museums. They are, as it were, the museum's guests. They become part of its system – players in its 'social networks' (C+L 2008: §8) – with all the associated protocols of 'obligation and indebtedness' that come with any such invitation.

It is precisely because he does *not* observe such limits that makes Paroles, that 'parasitical follower of Bertram', such a dangerous and unwelcome hanger-on in *All's Well that Ends Well* (Schork 1997: 263). C+L represent precisely the opposite sort of parasite. Even if their actions occasionally challenge some of the staple aspects of the museum – such as by giving away a work of art at Tate Modern – they only ever resort to 'gentle violence' (Bourdieu 1984: 163). They are *naughty* in the modern sense of the word. This is hardly surprising. C+L's projects develop over time and are inherently collaborative. Moreover, as the link with Lars Nittve shows, they are often the outcome of sustained relationships that must inevitably be built on trust and probably friendship. So, where they cut, expose or pierce, it is done with the knowledge that the boundaries of museums are always 'policed' (C+L 2000: 47). C+L are careful not to apply too many cuts. As intelligent parasites they know not to kill the host on which they rely for survival. They are part of the field to which they are professionally dependent. Or, as a fellow critic of institutions put it: 'We are the institutions of art: the object of our critiques, our attacks, is always also inside ourselves' (Fraser 2006a: 307).

This has important ramifications for the methodology that led to this paper. Notions of inside and outside institutions are complex (Fraser 2005: 14; Fraser 2006b: 130-1). I am part of a field that intersects with that occupied by C+L and Lars Nittve: namely 'the university field' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2005: 257-8). Even so, I am acting like C+L: a parasite – 'one who frequents another's table'.⁶ Yet my role differs in that I am not reliant on the sorts of institutional permissions that C+L require in order to feed off museums. This means that my account does not have the official stamp of a project such as *Museum Futures*. Instead, the text you are reading is an erratum to C+L's *Errata*; a leeching of a parasite but with fewer of the 'complicities, compromises and censorship' (Fraser 2006b: 133) inherent in producing work *for* or *with* a museum.

A conscious decision was made therefore *not* to seek the endorsement of the named institutions or to validate my ideas through the method of interview (the technique deployed by C+L in *Museum Futures*). Instead I wanted to identify and articulate '*what cannot be said*' in the museal field (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2005: 257). The *naughty* argument set out below is therefore intended as a 'critique of institutional critique'. This has echoes of Bourdieu's call for

a 'sociology of sociology' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2005: 254-9). This can best be achieved through what Bourdieu terms 'participant objectivation'. He cautioned, however, that an 'all-encompassing view' of a game of culture can only be reached when 'one has retired from it' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2005: 259). In requisitioning C+L's 'strategies... in order to tell the truth of the game', I have taken the diametrically opposite approach. This, as I hope to now demonstrate, is a worthwhile tactic, even if it leads to 'blind spots indicative of... [my] own vested interests' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2005: 259).

Museum Presents

In *Errata*, C+L sought out 'objects and pleasures whose trace' was absent from 'the catalogue proper'. Yet it remains the case that even when an entity *does* register a presence, its 'pleasures' might be obscured or muted. Catalogues are, after all, one of the means by which museums 'police' their boundaries. Such indices exude an aura of authority and comprehensiveness. As seemingly straightforward conveyors of factual information they are part of those 'apparently seamless transitions of attention' which C+L are so keen to 'expose'.

The importance of such an endeavour is clear from Moderna Museet's recent treatment of the painting *Garden (Utenwarf)* (1917, oil on canvas, 73 x 99 cm) by Emil Nolde (1867-1956). At the time of writing it hangs unobtrusively in the corner of one of the museum's main galleries. The accompanying text label makes some seemingly unremarkable comments about the thick application of paint, the absence of underdrawing, and the fact that Nolde retreated to the haven of his garden during the chaos and violence of the First World War. Its concluding sentence reads: 'For a short period he [Nolde] was a member of the expressionist artist group Die Brücke.'

Similar details are listed in Moderna Museet's catalogue published in 2004. It indicates that the work was in the possession of one Otto N. Deutsch of Frankfurt am Main prior to 1923 and that the museum purchased it at auction in 1967. The catalogue supplies one additional piece of information: namely that Nolde was viewed as a so-called 'degenerate' artist by the Nazi regime and that over one thousand of his works were confiscated from museums. Twenty-nine of them appeared in the infamous *Entartete Kunst* exhibition held in Munich in 1937 (Müller-Westermann 2004, n.p.).

Moderna Museet's former director Lars Nittve is fond of the saying 'the more you know, the more you see' (Nittve 2005: 5). A variation on this theme might be: 'the less you are told, the less you realise'. And visitors to the museum have at no time been informed that *Garden (Utenwarf)* has in fact been the focus of an intense debate that commenced in 2002. In that year the heirs of the German-Jewish businessman Otto Nathan Deutsch contacted the museum to notify them that their forebear had been forced to part with the painting during the Nazi period. They laid claim to the work in the following year. This led to protracted negotiations. Matters came to a head in the summer of 2008 when a sponsor was sought who might be willing to purchase Nolde's *Garden (Utenwarf)* but let it remain at Moderna Museet. The lawyer acting on behalf of the heirs agreed in principle but wanted to place a time limit on this 'loan'. The museum was willing to accede to this demand, so long as they could retain the Nolde for between 10 and 20 years. This was rejected by the other party.

This network of unidentified sponsors and purchasers form part of that complex web of 'economic networks of obligation and indebtedness' that are, as C+L rightly aver, all too often 'obscured from public scrutiny'. The course of action pursued by Moderna Museet in regard to the Nolde painting confirmed this to be the case. The focus remained on its aesthetic values and nothing more:

The aesthetic disposition... tends to bracket off the nature and function of the object represented and to exclude any "naive" reaction... along with all purely ethical responses, in order to concentrate solely upon the mode of representation, the style, perceived and appreciated by comparison with other styles (Bourdieu 1984: 54).

And so it was that the Nolde affair unfolded in the shadows. The work disappeared from display for a while, only to return to its previous spot, seemingly unchanged. The text label looked identical too. But a closer examination revealed one tiny alteration: instead of being *owned* by

the museum, it was now described as being on *loan* to it. An explanation of sorts was eventually forthcoming thanks to a belated press release posted on the museum website in September 2009. This indicated that the painting had been purchased by an unnamed European collector. S/he had agreed to loan the painting to Moderna Museet 'for up to five years', after which 'other seminal expressionist paintings from the early 20th century will be lent to the museum for another five years'.¹⁷

This deal was acceptable to both the museum leadership and the heirs of the original owner. But the form the deal took and the manner in which it was reached was surely *not* acceptable when looked at in the context of C+L's practice. For it is the conspicuous lack of openness that is the most striking feature of Moderna Museet's behaviour. The Nolde affair does not feature at all in the five-hundred page *History Book* published six years after the heirs first approached the museum. Why not? I once had the opportunity to question a high-ranking member of the Moderna Museet staff why the museum made no mention of the Nolde affair at the museum. The reply was: 'It's an on-going matter. We haven't yet made a decision'.⁸ Even when a decision was reached the only trace discernable in the gallery was the most minor of changes to the existing text label.

But wait a moment! Is it not the case that yesterday's 'passive audiences' are today's 'active subjects'? And does not *Museum Futures* teach us that Moderna Museet is moving inexorably towards the ultimate goal of 'embedded co-production'? An indication of just how much needs to change for this to be true was evident from a news feature that appeared in the Swedish periodical *Fokus* less than six months before the museum announced its decision to (eventually) part with Nolde's work.⁹ In it a defiant Nittve allowed himself to be photographed

standing to the side and just in front of the painting such that his shoulder and arm obscured the bottom left-hand corner of the canvas. He thus stands between the reader and the artwork: a literal go-between. He faces the camera head-on with an expression that is as impassive as it is resolute. Both he and Nolde's artwork appear beneath the title: 'Nittve keeps painting worth millions' (*Nittve behåller miljonmålningen*).

This characterisation contrasts markedly with the 'aesthetic disposition' maintained in the galleries of the museum. Its framing in *Fokus* is a conjunction of the material *and* the symbolic (and is thus an affirmation of Bourdieu's point that objects encompass both economic and cultural capital). The former is evident in the end part of the title of the article ('painting worth millions') whilst the latter is expressed in the phrase 'Nittve keeps'. This represents a literal instance of capital in its 'embodied state' (Bourdieu 1986: 244). The director has become synonymous with the institution he leads, the very personification of Moderna Museet: its 'spokesperson endowed with full power to speak and act in... [its] name' (Bourdieu 1985: 740).

Nyheter | Konst

Målar smed Lars Nittve har spridit en uppgift att han beställt en affärskonst.



Nittve behåller miljonmålningen

Omstridd tavla. Svensk ovilja att återlämna ett konstverk som stals under nazitiden diskuteras på EU-konferens i juni.

AV THORBJÖRN EKSSON

Vintern 1990 arrangerade USA:s utrikesdepartement en konferens där 44 länder skrev under de så kallade Washington-principerna, som har konst stulen under nazitiden ska återvända till sina rättmätiga ägare. I sommar följer EU:s ordförande, land Tjeckien upp konferensen. Programmet är ännu inte offentliggjort, men halk säkert kommer många diskussioner att handla om Sverige.

På Moderna museets Stockholm-bilager nittveigen tavlan 'Miljonmålningen'. Tvåten som den är en senpolitisk historia som enligt

kritiker svärta Sveriges riksbank. Arvingarna till den tysk-judiska affären som återlämnades tavlan 1938 trodde att de skulle få gebyr för sina angräk till de tidigare ägarna. I våren 2001, Sverige är ju en av de stater som skrivit under Washington-principerna.

Men sex år senare är lågt låst mellan museet och arvingarna avbrutet. Arvingarna anser att tavlan villkorlös ska lämnas till dem.

Men vi har naturligtvis erbjudit museet att få tillstå det belopp som betalas för tavlan på 60-talet, säger arvingarnas advokat David Rowland.

Museet har i stället bland annat föredragit att 'Miljonmålningen', som är värd runt 30 miljoner kronor, doneras och att vinsten delas mellan museet och arvingarna. Eller att den försvinnande ägandes ärvs över på arvingarnas, på villkor att tavlan stannar i Stockholm.

STANNAR I SVERIGE Museet vill att förvärfvaren av en sponsor som köper tavlan är arvingarna, men låter den hänga kvar på museet. Moderna museets chef Lars Nittve har angett att tavlan ska gå till en sponsor som vill att tavlan ska gå till en sponsor. Men David Rowland, som föres väckas träffa Nittve och advokaten Jan Widlund i New York, säger att museet inte har lyckats hitta någon sponsor. Museet har arvingarnas presentkort en köpare som är beredd att låta tavlan hänga kvar i tre till fem år. Men

This was entirely fitting given that Nittve had at the time, and as he readily admitted, 'an enormous freedom' to act.¹⁰ Moderna Museet no longer has a board of directors ('*styrelse*'). Decision-making is instead vested in the director. This is also true when it comes to the obverse of deaccessioning – acquisition. For it is not just the divesting of the Nolde painting that is of interest here. The way that it entered the collection and its status there places a spotlight on how works are acquired for the museum, both now and in the past.

Artworks newly acquired by Moderna Museet are often shown in the long corridor that runs down one side of the museum. This, it may be recalled, was the one 'gallery' space depicted by C+L in *Museum Futures* (C+L 2008: §8). In addition, during the period when the Nolde affair was rumbling along, a whole room was devoted to works that had been either recently donated to the museum or purchased out of its acquisition budget. Their presence was not explained, justified or contextualised. They were simply presented to the public in accordance with Bourdieu's 'aesthetic disposition'.

This had the effect of naturalising their inclusion in the museum. It concealed the fact that the nature of collecting in general – and collecting contemporary art in particular – is a deeply contested and contingent business (Altshuler 2005). Patterns and practices of collecting at Moderna Museet, like all such institutions, have inevitably changed over time. Acquisitions of Swedish art, for instance, were once determined by committee (Schneider 1985: 153). The current acquisition process is far less formally constituted.¹¹ As noted above, the lack of a board of directors bestowed on Nittve 'enormous freedom' – something that presumably extends to the sphere of acquisition-making.

This being so, Nittve's personal likes and dislikes must have strongly influenced the make-up of what was both acquired and chosen for display during the last decade. A major exhibition on the British artist Damien Hirst, for example, was never going to take place at Moderna Museet whilst Nittve was its director. He once dismissed a high-profile exhibition of works by Hirst at London's White Cube gallery as 'wretched' (*erbarmlig*) and went on to contend that 'no reasonably art-aware person can say that these works by Damien Hirst constitute good art'.¹²

One artist about whom Nittve has no such doubts is Karin Mamma Andersson (born 1962 in Luleå, Sweden). In 2007 Moderna Museet mounted a large exhibition devoted solely to the work of this mid-career Swedish painter. In so doing it accorded it 'museum' status, conferring the aura of Moderna Museet onto it in the process (cf. Altshuler 2005: 25, 46). This was cemented by Nittve's emphatic endorsement in the foreword to the exhibition catalogue: 'Her work holds everything you could ask of painting' (cited in Noring 2007, n.p.).

One of the central works included in Moderna Museet's Mamma Andersson show was *Heimat Land* (2004), a large landscape painting that for some time was used as the banner image for the museum's web page about the exhibition.¹³ Less than a year after its display at Moderna Museet it sold at auction in London for £517,000. This was at the time the highest price ever paid for a painting by a living Swedish artist.

This event is remarked on here for two reasons. Firstly because it is a paradigmatic example of the close interrelationship between the auction-house and the museum (that matrix of 'economic networks' identified by C+L). Nevertheless, museums and the wider artistic field are still subject to 'a collective disavowal of commercial interests and profits' (Bourdieu 1993: 74). It is precisely this veneer of disinterestedness that remains to be cut, exposed and pierced. Secondly, Mamma Andersson's work is alluded to because of its link back to another artist in the canon of Swedish art history: Dick Bengtsson (1936-1989). In 2005 Mamma Andersson was invited to contribute to a catalogue published to mark Moderna Museet's retrospective of this painter. Andersson writes how she was both 'captivated' and 'inspired' by the work of a man whose style 'helped legitimise... [her] own' (Andersson 2005: 167). She goes on to ponder one of the most intriguing questions about Bengtsson's work: why did he include swastikas in his paintings?

In recent years visitors to Moderna Museet have had the opportunity to see Emil Nolde's *Garden (Utenwarf)* in one gallery and Bengtsson's diptych *The Hat and Cap Factory* (1969, oil on two panels both 122 x 91) in another. The mirror-images of the latter feature mysterious swastikas in their lower left and right-hand corners. Whereas Nolde's work is discussed in terms of colour and harmony, Bengtsson is celebrated for the way 'he leads our gaze to the cracks

in the modern project, the ideologically dark sides of rationalist society'.¹⁴ Where the cracks are smoothed over in the case of Nolde, they are acclaimed in that of Bengtsson. We are told that, in the face of Bengtsson's 'deeply disconcerting' swastikas, 'ideologies are revealed and innocent façades crumble' (Andersson 2005).¹⁵

Moderna Museet therefore had the means but not the will to bring this to bear on its own ideologies and seemingly innocent façades. Indeed, every care was taken to avoid this happening – as became apparent after Sweden assumed the presidency of the European Union in June 2009. Moderna Museet was utilised as a venue to host what the then Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Carl Bildt described as an 'informal' meeting of foreign ministers. As well as 'showing off the modern Sweden', Bildt was of the opinion that 'meeting among all this beautiful and interesting art is, in itself, inspiring'.¹⁶ However, before the assembled dignitaries were invited to peruse Moderna Museet's inspirational galleries, Dick Bengtsson's 'deeply disconcerting' swastikas were removed from display, apparently at the behest of the EU secretariat. Bizarrely enough the museum leadership claimed that this act of blatant censorship was enacted 'out of respect for Dick Bengtsson'.¹⁷

For Moderna Museet to have implemented the promise of C+L's practice it would have been necessary to fill the void left by Bengtsson's *The Hat and Cap Factory* with Karin Mamma Andersson's prophetically titled painting *Dick Bengtsson, Where Are You?* (1995, oil on panel, 157 x 120, private collection). If that question had been posed at Moderna Museet in early September 2009 the answer would have been: Dick is dead and his paintings are 'respectfully' packed away in the storeroom.

The Nolde-Bengtsson affair demonstrates that, whilst C+L might have 'exposed' the museum and parasited themselves in its anniversary catalogue, their work might, in the final analysis, represent something of a dubious distraction. Their presence threatens to lull us into thinking that the museum that extended them an invitation is committed to participation and collaboration, prepared to reveal its inner workings and willing both to intellectually challenge its audience and accord it a share in its decision-making processes. None of this was true.

Museum Futures – Reprise

So, what *would* need to happen for Moderna Museet to be genuinely cut, exposed and pierced? C+L might have provided us with a starting point, but their work alone is clearly insufficient 'in matter[s] of heavy consequence' (AWTEW 2.5: 46). For Bourdieu's 'symbolic alchemy' to occur these fine go-betweens need to stand aside. In their place one could ask a technician to pop down to the museum storeroom, collect Bengtsson's *The Hat and Cap Factory*, bring it up to the gallery and then hang the two halves of the diptych on either side of *Garden (Utenwarf)*. This would provide a thought-provoking frame for Nolde's painting: superficially adopting the 'aesthetic disposition' it would serve to disturb it by creating a disconcerting diorama with two swastikas.

This course of action would begin to provide much-needed confirmation that Bengtsson 'is still infecting the museum'.¹⁸ Of course, for Nittve and C+L's rhetoric to be taken *literally* one would need to cut out one of those 'deeply disconcerting' swastika from Bengtsson's painting and append it to Nolde's canvas.

These steps would be the iconoclastic equivalent of hanging price tags from Karin Mamma Andersson's paintings to demonstrate the steep rise in auction sales before and after her solo show at Moderna Museet. This would find a precedent in the work of C+L who made similar use of financial valuations in their exhibition *Free Trade* (Manchester Art Gallery, 2002-2003). Moreover, such measures would be true to the spirit of dismantling the museum structure, opening it up 'for an era characterized by difference'. A Nittvean 'implosion' in other words which, like *Errata*, would highlight those 'traces' missing from 'the catalogue proper'.

Or a more subtle approach might be favoured, one that harmonises with the delicate change in ownership indicated by the Nolde painting's reworded text label. This could be altered again. Rather than mentioning Nolde's fleeting membership of Die Brücke, it could instead read: 'For a short period he was a member of a Danish faction of the Nazi party' (cf. Lloyd 1996). This substitution of one 'fact' with another would provide a neat demonstration of something that Lars Nittve is all too aware, namely that 'nothing surrounding a work of art is neutral' (cited in Burch

2007: 52). This has been confirmed in the most emphatic manner by the restitution claim lodged by Otto Nathan Deutsch's descendents. Our public institutions ought to hone in on the issues that such incidents provoke and use them as catalysts for debate rather than shy away from their complexity and balk at their refusal to supply simple right and wrong answers. Ethical dilemmas should be seized upon as confirmation of something that is as true now as it was in Shakespeare's day: 'The web of our life is a mingled yarn, good and ill together' (AWTEW 4.3: 71-2).

Of course, the very idea of cutting up paintings or pointing out a 'sinful fact' (AWTEW 4.1: 47) about an artist's Nazi sympathies are likely to be dismissed as outlandishness or mere childishness on my part. But in dismissing such *naughty* behaviour one is also obliged to sweep aside Nittve's rhetoric and C+L's radicalism. The space that this breakdown opens up (to recall Lars Nittve) will enable us to view a publication such as Moderna Museet's *The History Book* in the same vein as *All's Well That Ends Well*. Both their titles are disingenuous. The former is just a history of the institution; a history that needs to be set alongside other, more critical readings (Burch 2010a). And the apparently reassuring title given to Shakespeare's play masks the fact that it is a tale of unresolved dilemmas that are open to multiple interpretations. However, rather than 'patch over its clashes of tone and mode with ingenious or defensive explanations' we should 'take those very dislocations and deferrals as the point of entry' (Snyder 2008: 52). This should be precisely our approach to Moderna Museet. Such a course of action is imperative because otherwise by the time its future director, Ayan Lindquist 'discovers' *The History Book* decades from now, the 'seamless' veneer of naturalism that cover its policed history will be all but impenetrable.

It was this anxiety that provided the motivation for the article you have been reading. My textual contribution to the 'games of culture' represents an attempt to place an institutionally critical account of Moderna Museet 'in showing' – a phrase used by Paroles in *All's Well* to mean 'visible, in print' (2.3, l.21). It is vital to stress, however, that 'in showing' what I have, I have not been particularly interested in Nittve and his go-betweens as individuals. It is their role in the artistic field that is of concern. Now that Nittve's successor, Daniel Birnbaum has taken charge it will be fascinating to see how the field of Moderna Museet changes. This transition of leadership will trigger all sorts of shifts of personnel and 'position-taking' (Bourdieu 1993: 58). It will also have ramifications for each and every piece of art in the collection: 'The meaning of a work... changes automatically with each change in the field within which it is situated for the spectator or reader' (Bourdieu 1993: 30-1). How will Birnbaum handle the transfer of Nolde's painting once its five-year 'loan' comes to an end? Will he be so willing to hide away the works of Dick Bengtsson at the first sign of trouble?

And what of Lars Nittve? Andrea Fraser was once asked why, if her practice is so critical, museums and their agents keep on inviting her in. She felt that she was 'often invited by one sector of an institution to produce a critique of the other' (Fraser 2005: 158). Nittve provides a more sophisticated slant on this. The repeated invitations he has extended to C+L enhances his reputation for radicalism whilst simultaneously consolidating his position and defending the status quo. He has used this to build up his stock of cultural and social capital (Bourdieu 1986). This has been cashed in now that his decade-long reign at Moderna Museet has come to an end. For all's well that ends well: in January 2011 he moved to Hong Kong to take up the desirable and presumably lucrative post of chief executive for the new exhibition centre, Museum Plus (M+). And what better man to please the art world and appease the politicians in Beijing? Nittve is the ideal person to flirt with the rules but not offend the authorities.

And what of C+L? They seem to have ended their professional partnership in 2008.¹⁹ Perhaps they could be tempted to get back together if Nittve should invite them to Hong Kong. They could set up Moderna Museet's first 'node' in its 'Asian Multitude network' or help Nittve pull off a similar trick as that carried out in Stockholm.

If this reunion *does* occur then we need as many go-betweens as possible to expose it to scrutiny. This will benefit not only the visitors to M+, but all the residents of Hong Kong. The keen eyes of these go-betweens will help ascertain whether the freedom of speech (Article 27) and 'freedom to engage in academic research, literary and artistic creation, and other cultural activities' (Article 34) enshrined in The Basic Law of Hong Kong (1990) are being observed.²⁰ This can in turn be used to check how much progress is being made towards the promise of

'universal suffrage' for Hong Kong's Legislative Council by 2020²¹ – something that Britain singularly failed to achieve during 156 years of colonial rule. And who knows, maybe Nittve and his go-betweens will be able to capitalise on the expansive promise of a 'museum plus'? If so, let us hope they use their positions in the semi-autonomous artistic field to make a positive contribution to the furtherance of democracy not just in Hong Kong but throughout mainland China. Now that surely would be a form of institutional critique worthy of the name – one that would help provide convincing evidence to support the repeated claim that museums are participatory (Burch 2010b), that museums matter and that museums are open to being criticised in a manner that they may find troubling – of embracing the information age by 'looking the truth in the eye... whether we like it or not' (Nittve & Helleberg 1987: 9).

Received: 22 August 2009

Finally accepted: 15 March 2010

Notes

- 1 This case study forms part of 'Nordic Spaces', a four-year multinational project funded by a consortium led by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond <<http://www.nordicspaces.com>>.
- 2 G. Trebay, 'Encounter: Sex, Art and Videotape', *The New York Times*, 13 June 2004 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/13/magazine/13ENCOUNTER.html>>.
- 3 *The Go Between: Methodologies and Taxonomies Between Museums, Galleries, Creative Practice and Learning*, ATRiuM, Cardiff School of Creative and Cultural Industries, University of Glamorgan & Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales, 9-11 September 2009.
- 4 N. Cummings & M. Lewandowska, *Museum Futures: Live, Recorded, Distributed* <<http://www.chanceprojects.com/node/406>>.
- 5 Cummings & Lewandowska, *Museum Futures* (as preceding note).
- 6 C+L use the term 'Parasite' to designate 'a group of artists' that includes Julie Ault, Mark Dion, Fred Wilson and Andrea Fraser. See C+L's *Pour Les Curieux: A Pocket Companion*, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Genève. 6th June - 20th September 1998 <<http://www.chanceprojects.com/node/260>>.
- 7 L. Nittve & D.J. Rowland, 'Blumengarten settlement', 9 September 2009 <<http://www.modernamuseet.se/v4/templates/template3.asp?lang=Eng&id=4300>>.
- 8 A.-S. Noring, 'Konst och pengar', unpublished talk and discussion, Finlandsinstitutet, Stockholm, 23 September 2008.
- 9 T. Eriksson (text) and L. Epstein (image), 'Nittve behåller miljonmålningen', *Fokus*, 13-20 March 2009, 18-9 <<http://www.fokus.se/2009/03/nittve-behaller-miljonmalningen>>. Used with the permission of Martin Ahlquist (Chefredaktör och ansvarig utgivare, *Fokus - Sveriges nyhetsmagasin*).
- 10 Cited in I. Lind, 'Museer möter myten', *Dagens Nyheter*, 18 October 2008, C14-15.
- 11 A.-S. Noring, 'Konst och pengar' (as note 8 above).
- 12 L. Nittve with S. Slöör, 'Konstens förskjutna position', *Omkonst*, December 2007 <<http://www.omkonst.com/07-tillstandet-nittve-lars.shtml>>.
- 13 Mamma Andersson exhibition, 5 May – 5 August 2007, Moderna Museet <<http://www.modernamuseet.se/v4/templates/template4.asp?id=3448>>.

- ¹⁴ C. Widenheim, 'Why did Dick Bengtsson paint swastikas?' (2006) <<http://www.modernamuseet.se/v4/templates/template3.asp?lang=Eng&id=2207>>.
- ¹⁵ Widenheim, 'Why did Dick Bengtsson paint swastikas?' (as preceding note).
- ¹⁶ 'Five questions to Carl Bildt', *Swedish Presidency of the European Union* <http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/9/4/five_questions_to_carl_bildt>.
- ¹⁷ K. Nilsson, 'EU-besök – då tar Moderna ner taylor', *Aftonbladet*, 8 September 2009 <<http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/article5756187.ab>>.
- ¹⁸ A. Searle, 'Hitler's home improvement', *The Guardian*, 17 February 2004 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2004/feb/17/1>>.
- ¹⁹ *Chanceprojects: An archive of the collaborative work of artists Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska 1995-2008* <<http://www.chanceprojects.com>>.
- ²⁰ *The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* (1990) <http://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/basiclawtext/images/Basic_Law.pdf>.
- ²¹ Anon, 'Functionally democratic. For once, a Chinese political concession', *The Economist*, 24 June 2010 <http://www.economist.com/node/16439175?story_id=16439175>.

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