



SAIC

School of the Art Institute
of Chicago

Is there a “new institutionalism” being manifested in the academic and public programs of art schools and universities, places where increasingly students, artists, and curators meet?

This symposium considers the manifestation of a “new institutionalism” in the academic and public programs of art schools. Locating their remarks within their present institutional contexts, the panelists discuss their practice—making exhibitions, commissioning artists’ work, creating new art projects and academic initiatives, and undertaking disciplinary art research within the academic environment. They will also reflect upon the terrain shared between art making and pedagogy, artists’ practice and curatorial methods, and the art school and the public realm.



Agenda

9:10

Welcome

Mary Jane Jacob

9:15-9:45

Framing the Issues

Lisa Wainwright

Dean of Graduate Studies, SAIC

9:45-10:45

Framing the Issues: Conversations over coffee

Roundtable discussions

10:45-11:00

Break

11:00-12:00

Presenting a personal philosophy

Ute Meta Bauer, Director, Visual Arts Program/
Dept. of Architecture, MIT, Cambridge

Larry Rinder, Dean of the College, California College
of the Arts, San Francisco/Oakland

Eungie Joo, Director/Curator, Gallery at REDCAT,
Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater, Los Angeles

Michael Brenson, Independent Curator/Faculty, Avery
Graduate School of the Arts, Bard College, NY

12:00-12:30

Questions and Comments from the Roundtables

12:30-12:45

Closing Reflections

David Getsy, Assistant Professor, Art History,
Theory and Criticism, SAIC

Bruce Jenkins, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, SAIC

My expectations as an artist and a viewer are generally devastatingly low when it comes to the exhibition. **Nearly all exhibitions fall short of anything good.**

We find ourselves suffering through 95 terrible gallery shows for those 5 great ones. But that's the nature of life; it is what makes that rare moment rare. **It is those exhibitions that have a willingness to fail by testing the limits of what an exhibition can be that usually affect me the most.**

The occasional fantastic show makes us remember why we, as artists, have to keep on doing, and enjoy doing, what we do: art. **I expect to leave a great exhibition with a renewed excitement for my own work.**

It is only natural that we relate the works we see to our own practice.

Artists seek the motivation to sustain their practice from exhibitions. **Artists need exhibitions: it is the middle space.**

Student Observations

People optimally desire the private experience—viewing an exhibition with ritualized individual intimacy. As an artist, I hope to create an opening with my viewer, a pause for appreciation of a momentary relationship.

The most exciting things I see in the contemporary museum and galleries are: the role of artist/curator emerging, institutions being built within institutions, and a growing emphasis on a viewer's experience.

Maybe artists and curators and directors should start contemplating what makes the biggest impact on a viewer and invest in that.

I have always felt that exhibitions and artists' talks are necessary bedfellows.

As an artist, when I go to exhibitions, I expect to see a new idea, a different view of thinking. **As a viewer, I expect exhibitions to challenge even the most seasoned exhibition-goer.**

Exhibitions represent narrow definitions of what art is and has the potential to be. Art institutions and exhibitions are public spaces that alienate the public. There is a lack of exchange that happens between the viewer and the artist. **In some cases I want the work to erase the division between viewer and artist.**

As an artist, my primary concern is the interpretations of my works by my audience—from my fellow contemporaries to the man in the street. Do my works reinforce the latter's perception that art is elitist or will they be enticed into reading more into my work? Will they return home with a work that remains deeply etched, if not scarred, in memory?

When I show my work in an exhibition, I hope to get the feedback from the audiences—that feedback is the most valuable. It is different from the advice from professors or suggestions from peers; I always it is the most objective and direct.

A good exhibition has to blow my mind. It can do this in any number of ways, but at the core is an extended moment of engagement. This engagement has to instantly take me out of whatever moment I was in, then hold me there past the first or second or third conclusion I make. It has to hold me to the point where there is nothing but the artwork and me battling to find out who knows themselves better, who makes more sense—and in this battle I would rather lose.

As an artist, I want to own the audience with my work. **A good exhibition tries to sink the artwork into the viewer without pushing.**

Successful exhibitions blur the boundary between viewer and artist and embody notions of participation, community, social exchange, and art as life.

An exhibition should be an experience that anyone can enter with his or her own understanding and come out with a completely different view than someone else.

The most memorable people, things, experiences—and exhibitions—are those which own you for a moment in their difference and which drop you off in a more complicated place, even if the complication doesn't make sense at the time or makes itself known until later. **A good exhibition educates you while exposing you to it.**

If I can suspend my own reality, perhaps take a moment and actually forget my own problems—that is something I want from an exhibition.

As a viewer I hope to be astounded. I wish to be slightly or wholly, bodily, intellectually, or spiritually displaced by an exhibition. The most powerful exhibitions hijack and take control of all of my senses...make me feel like I am walking through the artist's mind. And in doing so, make me examine myself.

I don't think art has to change the world but I do think that the art world could represent an inclusive agenda that values people outside of the art world. Art will always be subjective, but making it more accessible is a goal often overlooked.

I think art exhibitions should transcend galleries and museums. Exhibitions need to coincide with society's social spaces because they have the potential to change how art is received and experienced. I want to feel the realm of the artwork in my space, as part of my everyday world.

I want to engage with an exhibition as a whole. I want it to be an experience I will not forget.

I believe a successful exhibition can open up a viewer's mind to a part of the artist's or curator's world and give them something new to think about.

An exhibition can be many things—inspirational, insightful, educational, or experimental; perhaps the best exhibitions are all of these things. As a viewer, I expect an exhibition to inspire, not just educate the viewer.

An exhibition should never be about finalities or conclusions; not the culmination of an idea, but rather an argument for its viability; a point from which to disclose or uncover certain truths or fictions particular to a time, place, or point of view. The beauty of an amazing exhibition is that it can be anything, as long as it is affecting you and influencing you.

Like a good garden, a good exhibition silently, cleverly, and purposefully guides one through its paths of assembly. **The contemplation, exploration, awe, and release I have experienced outside in a garden and inside at shows happens when the space is thoughtfully organized.**

I think the question is not what the exhibition looks like but what it feels like. We need to encourage the experience—er not the view—er. **My understanding of what an exhibition should be is basically a feeling.**

The best part of a good show is when the moments come together and slight relations, comparisons and contrasts elicit another question, answer, new perspective, push to just know, an ah-ha or a ha-ha. **I want to look at things that are interesting; things that make me ask questions.**

Being artists, we carry a certain baggage (if not theories) in terms of what we expect from artworks and exhibitions, waiting to be inspired or even influenced by works, while being more dismissive and critical of things we do not subscribe to or which differ from our own. **The exhibition is the most difficult hurdle for the reason of expectation linked to the authority.**

Exhibitions compete with advertising, movies, television, the internet, just to name a few obvious examples, but most exhibitions still operate on a pre-television conception of display.

Our culture thrives with the creation and exhibition of artwork. That is where the power of the exhibition comes in: to curate, to present, to encompass, to seduce, or to educate the viewer.















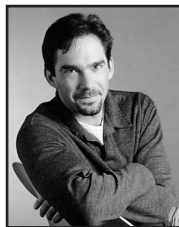
Ute Meta Bauer is currently Associate Professor and Director of the Visual Arts Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge), having served as Professor of Theory, Practice and Mediation of Contemporary Art at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (1996 – 2006) and as Founding Director of the Office for Contemporary Art Norway in Oslo (2002 - 2005). She was Artistic Director for the “3rd Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art” (2003-2004) and was Co-Curator of “Documenta 11” (2000 - 2002) in the team of Okwui Enwezor. She curated “Architectures of Discourse,” Fundacio Antoni Tapies, Barcelona (2001) and “First Story—Women Building/New Narratives for the 21st Century” for the European Cultural Capital Porto (2001). She is Chairwomen of the Art Advisory Board of the Goethe Institute, and a member of the International Board of the Bauhaus Foundation in Dessau, as well as the Curatorial Advisory Team of the 3rd Yokohama Triennale 2008.

Panelists

Michael Brenson is an art critic and an art historian who has written and lectured extensively on arts policy, arts institutions, art criticism, and modern and contemporary art. He received a Ph.D. in art history from Johns Hopkins University in 1975. He was an art critic at *The New York Times* from 1982 to 1991 and a Getty scholar in 1999. He has curated several exhibitions, including “Magdalena Abakanowicz: ‘War Games,’” at P.S. 1 Museum in Long Island City, Queens, served as a consultant for Harry N. Abrams, Inc., and for the Rockefeller Foundation, and taught at Bard College’s Center for Curatorial Studies. He is the author of *Visionaries and Outcasts: The NEA, Congress, and the Place of the Visual Artist in America* (2001) and *Acts of Engagement: Writings on Art, Criticism, and Institutions, 1993-2002* (2004). Brenson teaches in Bard’s Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts and is working on a biography of David Smith.



Eungie Joo is director and curator at the Gallery at REDCAT (the Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater), Los Angeles. Her recent projects include “Eternal Flame: Imagining a Future at the End of the World” (2007); “Damián Ortega: The Beetle Trilogy and Other Works” (2005-6); “Kara E. Walker’s Song of the South” (2005); and “Margaret Kilgallen: In the Sweet Bye & Bye” (2005). Joo is co-founder of Six Months: Crenshaw (2003) a temporary site for conversation, exhibition, performance, and collectivity through dialogue and critique. She has contributed to exhibition catalogues on Edgar Arceneaux, Mark Bradford, Barry McGee, Rigo 23, Taro Shinoda, and Lorna Simpson, among others. Joo is a recipient of the Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement.



Lawrence Rinder is Dean of the College at the California College of the Arts. He was formerly curator of contemporary art at the Whitney Museum of American Art, where he organized exhibitions including the 2002 Biennial, "BitStreams," "Tim Hawkinson," and "The American Effect." He was founding director of the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts and curator of 20th-century art at

the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, where he organized nearly 100 solo exhibitions with artists including Richard Tuttle, Kiki Smith, Charles Ray, Andrea Fraser, Louise Bourgeois, Agnes Martin, Adrian Piper, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Dieter Roth, and Cindy Sherman. Rinder has taught at UC Berkeley, Deep Springs College, and Columbia University. His writing has been published in *Artforum*, *Nest*, *The Village Voice*, and *Flash Art*. A book of his essays on art, *Art Life: Selected Writings 1991–2005*, was published by Gregory R. Miller & Co. in fall 2005. Rinder received a BA in art from Reed College and an MA in art history from Hunter College, New York.

Lisa Wainwright is Dean of Graduate Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Professor in the Art History, Theory and Criticism Department. She publishes and lectures widely on modern, contemporary and Chicago art. Her exhibition catalogue on John Wilde, *Things of Nature/The Nature of Things*, was recently published by the University of Wisconsin Press. Wainwright also curates exhibitions for the School of the Art Institute and for other venues around the Midwest. She is currently completing a book on Found Object Art entitled *The Readymade Century*. Wainwright received a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois with scholarly work on Robert Rauschenberg.

