

Jean-Paul Martinon, Introduction, in *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 1-13. © Jean-Paul Martinon, 2013.

On the eve of the 26 July 1866, in his flat, 89 Rue de Rome in Paris, the symbolist poet, English teacher, theatre and fashion critic, Stéphane Mallarmé starts to jot down on paper plans for a series of two-hour multi-sensory events that, he hopes, will bring the final Orphic explanation of life on earth.¹

In his mind, the events will bring magic, a small parade, some ballet, a recital, the execution of an alchemical ritual, the calculation of a mathematical formula, the reading of sacred texts, some mime, the contemplation of a crystal chandelier, and a carefully planned firework. The events will take place on a giant site that would resemble a stage, but will also look like a chancel with an altar installed in the middle of a nineteenth Century Salon with cozy fireplaces and some gas lamps. An 'Operator' (half-priest half-comedian) will orchestrate the shows from behind the scenes with the help of twenty-four 'Assistants.'

Contrary to what one might think when the name of Mallarmé is mentioned (refined carefully written abstract poetry), these events are very much conceived as an unscripted popular melodrama 'without heroes' to be performed by the general public itself ('the Crowd') as if a mass communal liturgy bringing all the arts together. Overall, Mallarmé's aim is to expose 'thought thinking itself' and to synchronize poetry and art with the movement of the universe, and in the process allow the Absolute to expose and perform itself everywhere, once and for all. Not a small undertaking then, but then again, Mallarmé plans the project as a life-long undertaking, hoping to accomplish it before dying.

Twenty-two years later, on the 21 November 1888, the project remains unfinished. Slightly disgruntled at the complexity of the undertaking, Mallarmé finally agrees to give his project a title: he will call his final Orphic event, *This Is [C'est]*. Unfortunately, despite endless hours of work, hesitations, doubts and periods of anxiety, Mallarmé's quasi-eschatological project never saw the light of day. The poet died in 1898 leaving behind a half-scribbled note urging his family to burn all the documents relating to his thirty-year-in-the-making unfinished masterpiece.

With some distance, Mallarmé's phantasmagorical plans can now, obviously, be seen as a typical example of an artistic attempt to come up yet again with a 'Total Work of Art' in the same vein as Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* or Scriabine's *Mysterium*. However, it can also be understood in a different way: as the ultimate curatorial event. How is one indeed not to see in this aborted project or series of events an

¹ The few scribbled notes that Mallarmé's family rescued for posterity are inevitably, eminently open to interpretation. The account provided in this introduction is therefore only indicative of the general gist of the project. For the most comprehensive introductions and analyses to Mallarmé's unrealized masterpiece, see: Jacques Scherer, *Le "Livre" de Mallarmé* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957) and Eric Benoit, *Mallarmé et le mystère du "Livre"* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998).

attempt to think 'the curatorial' a century or so before the very word began to acquire meaning? The whole gamut of issues facing curators today is all laid out in the few cryptic notes Mallarmé's family saved from the fire and which can perhaps be summarized in the following way (in no particular order):

- *This is* displays the work of others (mimes, dancers, pyrotechnists, priests, etc): it is *essentially expository*: it both shows and explains.
- *This is* brings the past and the present together (old alchemy and the live contemplation of a chandelier, for example): it is *a multi-temporal event*.
- By bringing several arts and spaces together, *This is* puts forward *a constellation of meaning* that no single art form could have accomplished.
- *This is* has a message: *it actually says something: This is* the final Orphic explanation of life on earth.
- *This is* has no hero. The curator is a simple operator working behind the scenes. No artist predominates over the others. *It is seemingly egalitarian*.
- *This is* exposes the way artifice (the arts) exposes nature (the universe). It is a planned victory of *techne over phusis: a victory over entropy*.
- *This is* brings human agency and the Absolute together. It is therefore not religious, but *secular and yet transcendental*.
- *This is* does not pitch an object (artwork) against a subject (viewer), but is viewer-centered: the crowd make it *experiential and participatory*.
- *This is* resembles a manifestation and not an exhibition. It exposes, but does not exhibit; *it manifests a coming together of talents and artefacts*.
- *This is* has no center of significance: it takes place at once on a stage, salon and chancel, thus creating several centers of significance: *it is multi-sited*.
- *This is* has no pre-determined rules, grammar or syntax. *It needs to invent its own language* then and there as the events take place.
- *This is* does not put forward a prescribed plot or pattern: it offers instead a deal to the audience to determine the event. *It is contingent, open to the unpredictable*.
- *This is* is all at once performative (it performs the Absolute), constative (it is an explanation), and it has truth-value (it will succeed or not). As such, *This is exposes language* as it exposes itself.
- *This is* has no single point of view or perspective: the participants make the perspective. *It is formative, educational, and potentially political*.

This is might perhaps resemble a failed attempt at a 'Total Work of Art,' it might also be delusory and grandiose beyond reckoning, but it is also, a contemporary curatorial project *before* its time: the author is dead, disciplines are blurred, it is performative, open-ended, synaesthetic, potentially politically transformative, and above all, as Mallarmé's notes testify with its endless numerical figures, regulated by financial concerns for its realization.

The idea of bringing this odd imagined project at the start of a collection of texts on contemporary curatorial practices is not intended to attribute this practice with a cliché point of origin or reference, but to highlight some of the issues that are at stake when addressing this multifaceted and controversial practice. I say 'some' because, as is well known, the curatorial can never be constricted. As one can already intimate by looking both at the long list drawn on the basis of Mallarmé's imaginary project and at the contents of this book, the curatorial seeps into and bleeds over many different fields and practices. Some complain that this is a problem. I would argue that, on the contrary, the protean guises of 'the curatorial' are precisely what give it its power and potential. It is also what makes it quintessentially of our time and, inevitably, a difficult thing to define.

So what is the book you are currently holding in your hands telling us about it that the old Mallarmé wrapped in his shawl could never have imagined, let alone formulated on his own all these years ago?

The enclosed anthology of specifically commissioned texts provides an overview of a number of approaches to understand 'the curatorial.' Again, I say a 'number of approaches' because its protean guises do not allow for the possibility of providing a comprehensive or exhaustive overview of the curatorial as such. The lengthy, but non-exhaustive bibliography provided at the end of this book clearly shows the many publications that have already attempted—well or badly—to do this job.

This book also does not contextualize the curatorial within a specific history (a totalizing and therefore hegemonic narrative of key events that tells us what art is and how it has been 'best' exhibited, for example) or framework (in relation to a ill-defined zeitgeist abstraction, 'the contemporary,' for example). Two recent books, Terry Smith's *Thinking Contemporary Curating* and Paul O'Neill's *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*, provide new and reinvigorating contextualizations (historical and otherwise) of what the word 'curatorial' means and so their work cannot therefore be repeated here.

The following essays only attempt to think what the word 'curatorial' actually means without necessarily entrenching it within a particular discourse (art history, art criticism, etc), discipline (anthropology, philosophy, etc), field of knowledge (art practice, visual culture, etc) or ideology (a social ideal, a set of beliefs, a political agenda, etc). The aim of the following attempts is to simply reveal that the curatorial is an embattled term that cannot be singularized or totalized and that it is perfectly OK to live and work with such a warring term. Allow me to roughly summarize how this comes across (a summary that curiously echoes some of the remarks made about Mallarmé's fantasy project):

The curatorial is an act of jail breaking from pre-existing frames, a gift to see the world differently, a strategy to invent new points of departure, a practice of creating allegiances against social ills, a way of caring for mankind, a process of renewing one's own subjectivity, a tactical move for reinventing life, a sensual practice of creating signification, a political tool outside of politics, a procedure to maintain a community together, a conspiracy against policies, the act of retaining a question alive, the energy of retaining a sense of fun, the device that helps to revisit history, the measures to create affects, the work of revealing ghosts, a plan to remain out-of-joint with time, an evolving method of keeping bodies and objects together, a sharing of understanding, an invitation for reflexivity, a choreographic mode of operation, a way of fighting against corporate culture, etc.

Although these answers vary greatly, six different themes can perhaps be discerned. These six themes structure the book in order to provide the reader not so much with an already fixed model of interpretation, but with a suggestive structure to articulate the various platforms from which one can depart when thinking the curatorial. These themes are as follow:

The first section is called *Send-Offs* and is inspired by the way Jacques Derrida understand the metaphysical shift that has taken place in academia between the old disciplines of the humanities and the ones put forward today. These no longer posit a limitation to their fields of inquiry, but offer instead a new set of platforms from which to start thinking again. This can be understood both at the level of ontology and that of the ontic 'sciences,' including the fields of art history and curatorial activities. With this shift in mind, this first section puts forward the spirit of the whole book: to provoke shifts in thought in order to redistribute the parameters of what is understood by the curatorial. The aim of this first section is therefore to ensure that right at the start of this publication what is understood by the curatorial is put into question. In a way, this first section says: the curatorial is not necessarily what you think, so let's shift focus and think again: on your marks, get set, go! These send-offs take different shapes:

-In a poetic and evocative verbal acrobatics, Raqs Media Collective begin the proceedings with a thought-provoking allegorical text that offers a new cluster of tasks, expectations and possibilities to make sense of the curatorial today. Their aim is to expand the orbit and charge of the game in order to offer news ways of using the vocabulary of the curatorial. Self-declared 'jail-breakers,' they call upon us to reach out to each other.

-I follow suit with a series of compact short theses that tries to evaluate what goes on when the curatorial is understood together with thought. The aim of these short theses is to demonstrate that the curatorial is not necessarily tied to a history or a time (modern or contemporary art, for ex), but a way of organizing thought in the encounter with the other and/or with objects (on display, for example).

-Alfredo Cramerotti asks us to abandon our androids, tablets, and computers in order to re-think how the future comes. His reply is that it comes from this

immemorial past that old stories (in newspapers) always seem to hold ready for us to discover. Once opened, the work then consists in curating for ourselves our own future. With Cramerotti, the curatorial becomes the way in which the future is articulated.

-In a personal and engaging text, Irit Rogoff gives us a stern reminder that our cherished infrastructures (museological, exhibitionary, academic, architectural, etc) are effectively forms of containment and that we need to free ourselves from them by shifting knowledges, sensitivities and imaginaries. Rogoff's essay is a call to arms not to destroy infrastructures, but to engage ourselves with our own contemporaneity in order to invent new points of departure.

-Finally, Natasa Ilic takes up the challenge to ask the brazen question: why do we still need art today? Ilic addresses this issue by contextualizing the way this question has been addressed over the years in the former Yugoslavian Republics and by reassessing the role of her curatorial collective (WHW) in the past decade. In a bid to continue avoiding normalization, institutionalization, and spectacularization, Ilic's frank answer is simply to wait, renew allegiances, and ask the question again, all in order to set off afresh in a new direction.

The second section, *Praxeologies*, explores the intricate relationship between the body and exhibitions. As is well known, it is no longer possible to talk of self-contained subjectivities experiencing exhibitions in a disinterested manner. Our relationship to exhibitions is a complex and ambivalent event, in which what is exhibited is not necessarily the center of attention. However, even if we know this, the question always comes back: how do our (artists', curators', viewers') bodies interact with what does not belong to our bodies? The four attempts to answer this question in this section all start from the premise that the representational model to think this relationship is no longer valid, that a new approach is necessary if we want to avoid the narcissism, autism, and self-absorption that this old model implies. With this premise in tow, the following four authors take us on a journey using a treacherous path that knows neither respite nor end-result. In doing so, they open up the possibility of new forms of practices (*praxis*) and language (*logos*).

-Stefan Notwotny takes us back to the mythological origin of the word 'curatorial' with Gaius Julius Hyginus's fable of Cura. His aim is not to emphasize once again that the origin of this concept relates to the activity of caring (for objects, for example), but to a moment of suspension or questioning in the middle of a whirlpool of uncertainties and dangerous currents. With this focus, Notwotny uncovers a new potential for curators, one which suddenly directs us right at the heart of what it means to be human.

-Drawing a distinction between the professional decision to become a curator and the on-going act of becoming-curator, Suzana Milevska invigorates the way current curatorial strategies operate today. Her aim is to explore not only what it means to sustain the activity of curating, but also how it can be used productively to question

hegemonic power structures and defend lesser known art forms and cultural productions.

-Leire Vergara challenges us by considering the idea of exhausting as much as possible all institutional apparatus—including the white cube—not in order to propose a new model, but in order to re-invent new conditions of practices and subjectivity. Vergara's essay draws a parallel between choreography and curating and in the process proposes to practice an 'exhausted curating.' This is not an invitation to take a break amidst the ruins of institutions, but to create new forms of engagement with reality.

-Finally, Jenny Doussan puts forward the idea that there can be a corporeal experience that is not dependent on spectacle and therefore on the instrumentality of language and its appendant institutional or exhibitionary apparatuses. In order to address this issue, Doussan puts forward three approaches: the self-renewing vitality of the body; the gratuitousness of collective embodied experiences, and the embodied cognitive experience provided by senses. Through these, Doussan strikes a serious blow to the autism that Agamben confined us to.

The third section is called *Moves*. This could give the impression that, once again, the focus will be on the fact that everything is transient, there are no subjects, no objects, no fixed knowledge, no finite bodies, no clear marks or demarcations, and that we all live endless performances over constantly shifting grounds. Nothing is further away from this cliché than this section. *Moves* implies not simply fluctuation or unsteadiness, but a deliberate change of position or a calculated shift of settings. The overall aim of the following 'moves' is political in the sense that they attempt to distort, subvert, abuse, misuse what is generally taken for granted and is therefore hegemonic. The five authors in this section use all the available tools (real or imaginary) to do this. The end result is a reconfiguration and redistribution of words, events, tactics, names, and language that any serious reading of the curatorial would, from now on will find difficult to ignore, brush off, turn a blind eye or a deaf ear.

-Ariella Azoulay begins the proceedings by providing us in three languages with the tools that have helped her curate the exhibition *Constituent Violence 1947-50*. At first, these tools appear as if they are only applicable to the context of Israel and Palestine: shifting the treacherous delineations and sedimentations that have structured a geo-political situation in order to open up a different future. However, a careful reading of these tools reveals a greater potential for curators: a way of thinking the ethics of a curatorial politics in general.

-Sarah Pierce highlights the shifts that occur between curating and the curatorial. In doing so, her aim is to focus on this intangible moment called 'the beginning': the point at which the curatorial sets off. Unlike curating, which structures itself by setting up or obeying real or imaginary limits (funding deadlines, openings, closings, etc.), the curatorial is, on the contrary, a simple operator that allows us to blur all

these (dead) lines and limits thus challenging and (some times) attenuating their constraining powers.

-Doreen Mende proposes three short vignettes that allow us to see how a small displacement of meaning can potentially open up a new field of investigation in curatorial studies. She asks three pointy questions: is there not a blind spot between curating and the curatorial? Is there not, alongside what is exhibited, what is also inhibited? And finally, are exposures and interpretations not symptoms of a missing origin to the work of art? The use of words such as blind spot, inhibiting and symptom might at first seem unreasonable, but on reflection they soon reveal their true potential.

-Roopesh Sitharan confronts us by giving us a text written in both Malay and English. His aim is not perverse: an act of pedantic sophistry, for example. His aim is to deliberately expose how knowledge takes place: in shifts of language. These can be idiomatic (Malay-English in his case), but these can also be curatorial (subject-object, for example). These shifts show that knowledge cannot take place without blind spots or “vacuums” as Sitharan says. The curatorial needs them for otherwise nothing (on the page or the exhibiting space) would ever take place.

-Finally, Joshua Simon, adopting the style of a public declaration at a political rally, brings this section back to Israel-Palestine. In doing so, he reveals for us the most paradigmatic and problematic shift imaginable: ‘betrayal.’ With this word, his aim is not to propose a new tool. He does not want all of us to become betrayers or traitors. His aim is to highlight the driving force that exhibition displays can often produce. In doing so, he exposes how the curatorial operates politically: an operation that cares little for protocols of allegiance.

The fourth section is entitled *Heresies*. At first, the word ‘heresies’ could be understood as a set of opinions profoundly at odds with what is generally accepted. If this were the case, then the following essays would simply be understood as performing a critique of received ideas about the curatorial and its place in the world. However, *Heresies* is understood here to have a different meaning. As the essays in this section demonstrate, the issue is not about critique (pretend to stand outside of the institution) or criticality (shifting the parameters within the institution), but about inventing new terms that defy the odds. The shift is here crucial because the aim is not to put forward new opinions (*doxa*), but of regenerating knowledge (*episteme*). In doing so, these contributors asks us to have a good look at our vocabulary for it might contain many clichés and hang-ups and it is high time that these are replaced.

-Defying all received knowledge in political theory, Valentina Desideri and Stefano Harney propose to abandon all notions of collectivity and community because they are both based on plots, i.e. schemes of destination that rest on the supremacy of the ‘one’ ruthlessly achieving its destiny by any means possible. Against this, they propose to become complicit in acts of conspiracy that, extraordinarily, know no plot. This has huge consequences for the curatorial because it provides a clear ethics

that defy 'good governance' and 'good policy.' Anarchical, we should all work together on this conspiracy without a plot. We have nothing to lose.

-Shunning the idea that a question is just a starting point or a framework for a discourse, Susan Kelly addresses the possibility of transforming questions into political incentives able to challenge the way knowledge and practice are appropriated by hegemonic systems of power. Armed with a renewed understanding of what a question is, Kelly helps us to see that, contrary to what is commonly believed, an art work, an exhibition, or an institution are not just questions waiting to be answered, but sites of empowerment where knowledge and practice can regain all their political potential.

-Nora Sternfeld challenges the received idea that curating is simply the work of displaying art or artifacts for educational and aesthetic experiences in order to put forward the idea that curating is the task of ensuring that something actually happens between viewers. Inevitably, the problem is always, how does one make sure that this 'something' is actually worth happening? Sternfeld addresses this problem by emphasizing the importance of always retaining the uncertainty or the possibility of the question (a decided 'perhaps') as the central tenet of any curatorial event.

-Valeria Graziano situates curatorial practices within a history of social encounters: on the one hand, the aristocratic and/or bourgeois social meet-ups and on the other hand, the festive sociabilities of popular gatherings. While the former is constituted by a haughty attention to language, the latter is brought together through the affects of bodies. With this history, Graziano aims to bastardize curatorial practices in order to make them what they ought to be: neither elitist nor populist events.

The title of the fifth section (*Refigurations*) is borrowed from Donna Haraway and its use in the context of this book is an attempt to not fall victim to the temptation of always re-con-figuring the world, that is, of always pretending that we all agree (con- together) on the particular shapes and forms of our world. Abandoning the need to articulate these false accords, this fifth section therefore focuses on personal re-figurations of what is usually taken for granted. This takes a variety of unexpected shapes: re-thinking the idea of the modern, re-imagining exhibitions as devices, re-writing the history of a local community or region, and re-figuring what 'being-contemporary' actually means. With these refigurations, the curatorial expands its remit and becomes not only a tool to challenge disciplines (history, geography, anthropology, ethnography, etc) and their appending fields of knowledge, but also a tool with increasing political potential.

-What else calls the most for re-figuration, but modern art? Contrary to received opinion, Helmut Draxler argues that modern art is not a specific period in history that would pitch itself neatly against contemporary art. Modern art has never left our horizons of understanding because it is a multiplicity of affects and discourses that, so far, has resisted all attempts at generalizations and reduction. Draxler's argument becomes particularly poignant with regards to collection and curating

because they are the real motors that continue to make the 'modern' in art such an uncanny presence today.

-Jean-Louis Déotte challenges us by considering the exhibition at the same level as the radio: both are surfaces of (re)production. Basing his argument on the work of Walter Benjamin, Déotte argues that an exhibition or a radio are surfaces of (re)production because unlike art, they are aesthetic devices. This does not mean that the exhibition and the radio are identical to mechanical reproduction. This simply means that they are tools of signification and therefore of power that, contrary to artistic production, can never fall out of fashion.

-Anshuman Dasgupta takes us to Sikkim. For him, the curatorial reveals itself as a 'sensuous' event that takes place when the dynamics of a site are exposed in a workshop. The aim of this workshop is to get the local community to come together and work out the dynamics of the sites they inhabit. In this way, the curator is therefore neither an anthropologist nor an ethnographer, but the one who simply brings people together for a sensuous gathering of community building. With his unusual curatorial project, Dasgupta slowly refigures the history of this little-known part of the world.

-In a thorough analysis, Cihat Arinc teaches us that the curatorial is an event that also takes place in cinema and specifically, in what concerns him here, in recent Turkish cinema. His aim is to reveal how particular directors curate ghostly objects (architectural, soundscape, narrative) in their film in order to reveal a different political side to official Turkish history. With precision and patience, Arinc singlehandedly refigures a troubled history and the way it is visually exposed.

-Finally, Adnan Madani offers four intertwined vignettes of what's it like to be at once contemporary, Pakistani, and involved in the art world. For him, the crux of the matter is to understand what kind of contemporaneity one is speaking about when it comes to the unsteady balance between the secular and the religious that characterizes Pakistan today. This does not imply proposing a different modernity (a different precursor to today's world, for example), but to expose the many contradictions that makes an individual 'contemporary' today, all in the hope of not ending up in a timeless no-man's land.

The final section is titled *Stages*. With this word, the intention is not to compare the curatorial with theatre. In theatre, a stage is usually a raised floor or platform on which actors perform. When it comes to the curatorial, the stage expands beyond all recognition, taking in buildings, sites, geographical areas, and even in some cases, countries. With the word *Stages*, the intention is also not to compare the curatorial with a specific length of time, a point, period or step in a process of development (the seven stages of man, for example). When it comes to the curatorial, the idea of 'period' always gets a bit fuzzy: times crisscrossing each other to the point where it is no longer possible to talk of a determined period when this or that happened, when a show started or ended. *Stages* mark instead, as Arendt's quote in exergue of the texts in this section tells us, the co-appearance of subjects, objects, architectures,

communities and worlds and with it, the formation of a polis. The curatorial is this polis, always transient, incomplete, and thus necessarily controversial. In this way, the world is not a stage; stages make the world.

-In order to differentiate between the curatorial (this event that sees the encounter of people and/or objects) and the para-curatorial (these secondary events that accompany the exhibition; participatory projects, for ex.), Bridget Crone proposes to understand the former as a sensible stage, that is, as a site's organization and legibility. The curatorial or the sensible stage is therefore an event and a diagram that forms itself as people, spaces, and objects come together. This interpretation not only sets the tone for this section; it also allows us to have a clear understanding of the dynamisms at work when we speak of the curatorial.

-Aneta Szylak expands the notion of stage by exploring the notion of context. As a self-confessed methodologist who curates contexts, Szylak's aim is to show that a context is not a frame, but an event that is not only deliberately created as the process of curating is under way, but also occurs spontaneously and without agency. With this way of looking, Szylak does not propose a set of formulas on how to investigate a site or a stage, a building or a gallery, a situation or an environment, but to put forward a praxis that needs to be re-invented each time anew.

-Ines Moreira asks us to divert our attention from the stage, its conceptualization, its actors, and its settings in order to pay attention to what goes on behind the scene: the backstage. To take a reverse perspective or to focus on the opposite side of a show's construction is to focus on the mess, confusion, and disorder that usually takes place before (and some times also behind) the stage and to expose the participatory processes of reflexivity that characterizes exhibitions. From such perspective, suddenly, concepts, ideas, and even languages all appear under a different light and the curatorial is no longer what it seems.

-Finally, Ji Yoon Moon proposes to understand the curatorial as a choreographic mode of operation. Her aim is not to compare curating with dancing or curators with choreographers, but to highlight the way a renewed practice can create a different relationship to subjectivity and therefore to the profession that results from it. Curating is not the product of a subject in an assembly line; it is the result of a play of epistemic games that constantly put into question the limits of the subject and its practice. With Moon, the curatorial becomes this act of writing for the other, a gift of words, images and gestures that can only in turn be put in question.

This anthology ends with a rather cynical coda. Charles Esche's take on 'the curatorial' is very much that of a museum director burdened with financial, political, educational, and social responsibilities. Ending with such a tone is not a complacent way of bringing everything down to earth; one final 'get real' postscript destined at best to question or at worst to invalidate what was discussed in the preceding chapters. Esche's text is here to simply remind us of the task at hand, that of producing what he calls 'a critical surplus,' that is, an excess or remainder that allows not only for reflection, but also for the imagination to take off; an excess or

remainder that, for once, cannot be appropriated by either ideology or market forces, precisely because it belongs to no one.

If the old symbolist poet read these essays today, he would probably remain his disgruntled self because they would not give him the keys or methodologies to accomplish his 'Total Work of Art,' but he would perhaps reluctantly agree that life on earth knows in fact no final Orphic explanation, only fragmentary answers that, surprisingly, not only give the chance to think again, but also the courage to fight back against the complacency of easy formulations, the lure of spectacles, the sedimentation of ideas, the draw of the sound bite, and, above all, against endless empty promises. Much thus needs to be thought out and done and I am proud to say that *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating* is a good place to start.

Jean-Paul Martinon