

Curating Education, Staging the CV.

Learning at *Former West*?

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The Educational Turn in Curating – Between Neoliberalism and Resistance

In the context of *Former West: Documents, Constellations, Prospects*—a long-term international research, education, publishing, and exhibition project (2008–2016) that “engages in rethinking the global histories of the last two decades in dialogue with post-communist and postcolonial thought” and employs a series of curatorial formats between the discursive and the immersive—a so-called “Learning Place” was conceptualized by theorist Boris Buden at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (House of World Cultures), Berlin, in 2013. Almost two hundred students from international universities constituted the central part of the audience, present for seven days, twelve hours per day, of theoretical and artistic contributions by nearly fifty theorists, artists, curators, and activists through over thirty workshops and panel discussions. According to Buden’s concept, *Learning Place* aimed at a critical examination of the ideological construction of the CV through a provocative-pedagogical trick that refers to Viktor Shklovsky’s concept of “making strange.”

Learning Place constitutes a paradigmatic example of how curators and theorists since the early 2000s have conceptualized and realized educational formats within the field of curating in the context of a renewed interest in education and its related formats, such as schools, academies, and workshops. Under the title of the “educational turn in curating,” the educational became both an important issue within curating as well as a significant subject of curatorial discourse.¹ A variety of curatorial formats that draw on education have been conceptualized within the last decade, such as *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y* (2006), *unitednationplaza* (2006), *Summit: Non-Aligned Initiatives in Education Culture* (2007), as well as *Truth is Concrete: A 24/7 Marathon Camp on Artistic Strategies in Politics and*

Political Strategies in Art, presented in the context of the 2012 Steirischer Herbst-Festival in Graz. In the summer of 2015, *Creative Time* organized its yearly summit in the context of the 56th Venice Art Biennale entitling it *Curriculum*.²

Curatorial projects on education are related to political transformations that emerged in the context of the neoliberalization of education over the last fifteen years. At the same time, these projects underline the interest in rethinking education within the field of contemporary arts. The so-called “educational turn in curating” points at the renewed and continued interest in education within the field of curatorial practice and discourse. Significant contributions to this discussion were given by Irit Rogoff’s text, “Turning,” published in the *e-flux* journal in 2008, as well as by the authors of *Curating and the Educational Turn*, co-edited by Mick Wilson and Paul O’Neill in 2010 (wherein Rogoff’s text was reprinted). A critical contribution from the field of art education was given by a collective of art educators and theorists, *schnittpunkt*, which organized a conference in Vienna in 2010, and subsequently published *Educational Turn: Handlungsräume der Kunst und Kulturvermittlung* (Educational turn: Spaces of agency in art education and cultural mediation).³

The educational is persistently of interest to curatorial work, aspiration, and desire. It has emerged as a site and a perspective where transformation, rather than representation, seems of primary interest. In her essay, “Turning,” Rogoff points out that the turn ascribed to curating describes an “awaited transition,” an “active motion,” and a “generative moment” that produces new horizons.⁴ While projects such as *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y*, *unitednationplaza*, and *Summit: Non-Aligned Initiatives in Education Culture* relate to the beginnings of the Bologna Process in Europe and the criticism and resistance against the implementation of the related Bologna Accords, signed by twenty-nine European countries in 1999, other educational projects, such as *Truth is Concrete* and *Learning Place*, as well as the *Anthropocene Curriculum* (2014–2016), are situated in the aftermath of the widespread anti-Bologna protests across Europe against cuts in higher education in the wake of the global financial crisis in 2008. Indeed, the shifts within the fields of curating and art education are connected to both global economic and political transformations, as well as to the struggles against the neoliberal threat to the field of education.

In the course of the 1990s, art education emerged as a significant issue within the art field. This development was related—though not exclusively—to the elaboration of a new set of practices within the realm of contemporary art itself.⁵ Aiming at a political and social engagement through art practice, many artists and artistic collectives, such as Büro.Bert, Group Material, Wochenklausur, and many others, developed temporary, discursive, and ephemeral formats, and conceptualized structures for social relations and open processes. The idea of “art as project,” as well the

concept of the “mediation” of art through manifold modes of both discourse and education, became more significant to art practices.⁶

To summarize, we can state that the interest in educational formats and practices within the field of contemporary art and curating has been rather persistent. In the 1990s, artists and curators were interested in art education both as institutional and non-institutional modes of mediating contemporary art, and in the 2000s educational formats—night schools, academies, free universities, conferences, workshops—as ways of assembling, exchange, social relationality, and collective discourse became of interest to curators and theorists.

The hype around the educational did not, however, provoke a critical perspective on the hierarchies and imbalances between the fields of curating and educating. While the educational, both as format and as a mode of collaboratively working, gains attention in the art field, power structures and hierarchies between curators and gallery educators, between art educators and artists, are still very much at stake. On the one hand, the educational has raised attention as a field where “transformation, potentiality, and actualization”⁷ can take place; on the other, art educators who work within institutional frameworks—be it museums, galleries or biennials—hardly have the same range of choices, the same extent of autonomy, or similar budgets and resources as curators. In as much as formats of relational and discursive practices of collaboration, cooperation, and learning were widely applied over the course of the 2000s, the profession of the art educator did not necessarily gain appreciation, and neither did art educational departments within art institutions. For instance, while *documenta*12 introduced art education as one of its leitmotifs, “What is to be done?,” *dOCUMENTA*(13) bracketed education by its title, “maybe education,” and assigned it to the newly established “Department of Maybe Education and Public Programs.”

Hereafter, I will be analyzing Buden’s *Learning Place* as a curatorial project that is temporally situated in a moment when discourses on the educational turn in curating were already declining. However, *Learning Place* shares significant aspects with other curatorial projects that have been using and investigating the educational. Projects like those mentioned above—*A.C.A.D.E.M.Y*, *unitednationplaza*, *Summit: Non-Aligned Initiatives in Education Culture*, *Truth is Concrete*, or the *Anthropocene Curriculum*—are usually conceptualized by curators or theorists working with formats and modes of education in the context of temporary curatorial settings like exhibitions, festivals, or research projects. The participants are rarely part of the project from its beginnings; they do not conceptualize and self-organize their learning environment. Rather, they become part of the project by curatorial invitation, and they constitute a learning audience that is shaped by the curatorial formats and its logic.

By a close reading of Buden's project—its temporal and spatial structure, and its dramaturgy—I turn to the structural, material, and immaterial conditions, as well as the power relations that (un)balance the associations between teaching and learning. I am interested in how moments of education can be instituted in relation to the curatorial with a critical stance towards the underlying relations of power and hierarchies. Moreover, such a perspective would enhance an investigation of how affective experiences within education and art can become vital forces that open up new modes of how to transform the conditions of learning and how to constantly resituate the “self” in relation to the “world.”

Curating education, staging the CV – A performance of learning?

In the context of *Former West: Documents, Constellations, Prospects*, —a long-term international research, education, publishing, and exhibition project (2008–2016) which “engages in rethinking the global histories of the last two decades in dialogue with post-communist and postcolonial thought” and which employs a series of curatorial formats between the discursive and the immersive—a so-called “Learning Place” was conceptualized by cultural critic and writer Boris Buden for the Former West's research congress that took place at the House of World Cultures in Berlin 2013. The Learning Place aimed at creating “a multitude of encounters with the public” through a series of formats such as talks, discussions, rehearsals, and performances. Students from international universities were invited to participate, and constituted the central part of the audience. The format consisted of parallel lectures, discussions and talks by over fifty theorists, artists, curators, and activists through over thirty workshops and panel discussions exclusively for students. Furthermore, the students were invited to participate in the public program of the congress—keynotes, performances, and panel discussions—which took place in the evenings. In parallel, Buden conceptualized a particular task. Divided into ten groups, Buden asked *Learning Place* participants to respond to a call for a fictional job application at the House of World Cultures by drafting a fictional CV.

In his introduction, Buden explains the idea of the format as following: “In the real life of the art system or the academy, the CV is a must. [...] It is the master text of knowledge and art production that regulates its operation, standardizes its selection procedures, unifies its field, guards its boundaries, maintains its hierarchies, and disciplines its workers.” The criticism of the “sivization of life”⁸ through the neoliberal commodification of education would be elaborated in the form of “a week-long educational performance” that Buden had modeled after an application for an academic job, for which students would compete. The concept of Buden's *Learning Place* was to unveil the role of the CV in the context of the neoliberal valorization processes of education through revealing the fictional character of the curriculum vitae. As a means to make the sivization of life appear

problematic and controversial, Buden turned to a provocative-pedagogical trick, which he described through both the Brechtian term of *Verfremdungseffekt* (estrangement effect) and Viktor Shklovsky's concept of "defamiliarization" or "estrangement device."⁹ Moreover, Buden referred to the estrangement effect and to its counterpart, identification in relation to Brecht's concept of empathy (*Einfühlung*), seeking to "to break the narcissistic identification with the CV image and so to cut off the emotional attachment to the very practice of supplying the education industry with this sort of personal narrative that is key to its reproduction and expansion."¹⁰

In his essay, "Art as Technique" (also translated as "Art as Device," first published in 1925), Russian and Soviet literary theorist, critic, and writer Viktor Shklovsky explains the idea of "making strange" or defamiliarization (прием остранения, *priyom ostraneniya*), departing from the observation that language is characterized by routine and automation in daily life, and hence, by its inattentive and unconscious use. Shklovsky points out that poetic speech, which according to Russian Formalists is integral to an aesthetic-political understanding of social practice, disconnects the automatism of daily perception and cultural conventions of perception that inhibit a conscious reading and aesthetic perception of things and how they are perceived. Against the idea of Russian literary theory that at the time, which was dominated by the concepts of linguist and philosopher Alexander Potebnja, that "art is thinking in images," Shklovsky underlines that poetic language, respectively art, is related to perception. Unlike ordinary speech or prose, poetic language is not "economical, easy, proper." Conversely to prose, poetic language does not rely on how ordinary speech works, that is through the "algebrization" and the "over-automatization" of perception. According to Shklovsky, poetic language rather consists of a certain procedure that impedes the habitual way in which ordinary speech makes perception and thinking easily digestible. The technique of poetic language is to produce a specific aesthetic form of perception. Art, therefore, is not separable from its technique: "And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensations of things as they are *perceived* and not as they are *known*. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar' to make forms 'difficult' to increase difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. [...] Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important."¹¹

Art therefore is tightly related to a certain mode of provoking perception different from the habitualized and automatized manner of ordinary speech. Art, according to Shklovsky, is distinguished not by its subject, but rather by a specific technique; those things that are produced by this technique are therefore artistic. Not the poetic subject itself, but the specific aesthetic procedure is at the heart of Shklovsky's

idea of “defamiliarization.”

In the context of *Learning Place*, Buden used the concept of defamiliarization as a synonym of the estrangement effect. Indeed, when Bertolt Brecht visited Moscow in 1935, he came across Shklovsky’s concept of estrangement through his friend, Sergei Tretyakov.¹²

Moreover, as Sidsel Nelund argues in her analysis, Buden’s *Learning Place* does not only share the estrangement effect with Brecht, but also his concept of the *Lehrstück* (learning play), that he developed in the late 1920s and early ’30s. Hence, both the learning play, as well as the estrangement effect, might be illuminating when critically examining Buden’s concept of *Learning Place*.

Brecht published a number of learning plays during his life, such as *Lindbergh: Ein Radio-Hörspiel für die Festwoche in Baden-Baden* (Lindbergh: A Radio-Play for the Festival in Baden-Baden) (1929), *Lehrstück* (Learning Play) (1929), *Die Maßnahme* (The Measures Taken) (1930/31/38), *Der Jasager/Der Neinsager* (He Who Says Yes/He Who Says No) (1930), *Die Ausnahme und die Regel* (The Exception and the Rule) (1930/31), *Die Horatier und die Kuratier* (The Horatians and the Curatians) (1935), while other learning plays were only published posthumously. The learning play, according to Brecht, first “teaches by being acted, not by being watched.”¹³ Therefore, the learning play is paradoxically a play without audience or, put another way, the audience constitutes (part of) the actors. Reiner Steinweg, a peace and conflict researcher and theater educator, who was one of the first scholars to elaborate on Brecht’s theory of aesthetic education in relation to the learning play,¹⁴ quotes what he perceives as the basic rule of Brecht’s learning play, which he brings into the formula of “playing for oneself”: “This notion [of the learning play] applies to only those plays that are didactic to the actors. Hence, they do not require any audience.”¹⁵ As Steinweg emphasizes, in Brecht’s first notes on a theory of the learning play, he talks about “theories that aimed at collective artistic exercising.”¹⁶ The learning play is therefore strongly modeled around the idea of exercise and rehearsal. For instance, Brecht relates to the learning plays as a “series of experiments” and to the actor as the one who is “exercising.” Moreover, Brecht conceived the learning play as both an aesthetic and social practice that demands the actors to establish both collective processes of thinking and critical attitude towards society.¹⁷

The learning play’s central idea highlighted through both terms—*learning* and *play*—is a theater, the aim of which is (*self*-)education. “Through the completion of particular ways of acting, the adoption of certain stances, the recitation of various speeches, etc., the actors engage in a learning process.”¹⁸ Brecht conceived the learning play especially for amateurs, and he aimed at enhancing political self-education through theater. He introduced a novel and experimental form of theater by blurring the boundaries, not only between the actors and the audience, but also between

musicians, vocalists, and the spectators. Central to the learning play are the collaboration between the actors, the rehearsal that is more important than the single performance, and the relation between the rigidity of its form and improvisation.

The technique of the estrangement effect indeed plays a central role in Brecht's conception of the learning play from its beginnings.¹⁹ Defining alienation, Brecht argues, very similarly to Shklovsky, that "alienating an event or character means, first of all, stripping the event of its self-evident, familiar, obvious quality and creating a sense of astonishment and curiosity about them. [...] Alienation means historicizing, means representing persons and actions as historical, and therefore mutable."²⁰

Now, how would Buden translate the described concepts of defamiliarization, the learning play, and the estrangement effect into the specific spatial, temporal, and dramaturgical setting of *Learning Place* as embedded into *Former West*? Following Shklovsky's concept of "making strange," Buden would have to disrupt the habitual way of perceiving the CV as "master text of knowledge and art production," which is not seen as fiction but presented as "linear progression in the form of the gradual acquisition of knowledge, skills, and recognitions."²¹ He would have to distance and alienate the hegemonic neoliberal idea of education through the application of an aesthetic device that would produce a specific aesthetic form of perception. Following Brecht's concept of the learning play, as well as the technique of the estrangement effect, Buden would have to conceptualize a play that would allow the participants to play, to collaborate, to rehearse, and to learn for themselves, not by watching, but by acting while ensuing a strict dramaturgical form. He would have to elaborate a concept that would enhance the alienation of the actors from the self-evident and familiar way of perceiving vital educational and social processes. He would have to adopt the alienation technique to make social processes conspicuous, and to facilitate a distance from the involvement in the conditions of the present.

Dramaturgies of learning between exhaustion and refusal

Through the idea of art as a device and the effect of estrangement, Buden sought to intervene in the seemingly natural and unquestionably valid idea of self-formation through the performative gesture that aimed at disrupting and unsettling the participants. Hence, he closely related to what Fredric Jameson has highlighted as the methodology of the estrangement effect: "Here, the familiar or habitual is re-identified as the 'natural,' and its estrangement unveils that appearance, which suggests the changeless and the external as well, and shows the object to instead be 'historical,' to which may be added, as a political corollary, made or constructed by human beings, and thus able to be changed by them as well, or replaced altogether."²²

The curatorial setting of *Learning Place*, which included a daily fourteen-hour program, as well as the task of creating a fictional CV, provided a format by which the estrangement effect would be generated. Buden declared, "After having seen the schedule you will probably realize that it leaves the groups almost no time for meetings. [...] Concretely, you are put under pressure to find the additional time, taking it from attending other exciting events, from lunch and dinner breaks, from the so-called spare time, including sleep. [*Learning Place*] cannot, and it will not, offer you utopian conditions for your collective work and life."²³ Indeed, the participants, committed to draft a CV of an imagined academic job application at the House of World Cultures, mostly perceived the task as cynical gesture, and they responded with refusal, annoyance, anger, and resistance, up to the idea of initiating a collective strike.

Learning Place was spatially and temporally extensive, and at the same time it created a setting where resources of time and space became scarce. The contributions took place in the House of World Cultures and in the city of Berlin. One would hurry in order to not be late, and one would be too late, despite hurrying. Rarely could you find somebody who had decided not to attend a lecture, workshop, or discussion by prominent theorists, artists, and curators. The dramaturgy produced an artificial shortage of time and spatial resources with a simultaneous excess of what was on offer. For instance, the keynote by Irit Rogoff and the subsequent discussion between Rogoff, Stefano Harney, Adrian Heathfield, and Louis Moreno—ironically about infrastructure—was held in a relatively small room that could not accommodate all the people waiting to get access. Instead, people would sit outside the room, where chairs and benches were provided and the panel discussion was being broadcast. The economy of supply and demand created a situation between an overwhelming amount of offerings and a shortage of resources. This artificial scarcity produced and directed the feeling of uneasiness and the desire to be part of the privileged group of people who were able to access the room and physically participate in the event.

Learning Place can be characterized as a discursive format. At the same time, it represents an equally immersive format that challenged participants in multiple aspects—as physical as well as social beings. In the course of the week, students increasingly felt exhausted and tired of participating in the different workshops, meeting up with their group to organize the collaborative task of creating a CV, and attending lectures, panel discussions, and performances until the late evening. In an e-mail calling for a strike, a group of *Learning Place* participants wrote to their co-participants:

Strike Mail

MEETING Friday at 1 pm for all!

Please forward this manifesto and we will discuss it tomorrow all together!!! Cheers!

Dear participants of the Former West learning place,

[...] We know that this competition is fake – you ask us to make a fake cv, to apply for a fake job, at a fake institution. Nevertheless, we want to address the real and actual situation that this competition creates. [...]

In the introduction we were told that all parts of Former West work at the same level of hierarchy [...]

Maybe even have scheduled time for a big discussion among all the groups at the end of the week and in this way also change the roles of who speaks and who is the audience at Former West.

[...] We realized that initiating this competition is meant to be provocative, never the less it is a very authoritarian way of motivating us, to communicate with each other. Please join us all in striking against this competition [...].

Cheers! Your co-participants.

As is clear from the e-mail, the participants of *Learning Place* were aware of the requirements of a neoliberal commodification of education; their articulation of criticism refers to the hierarchical relationship between the speakers and the public, the teachers and learners, which in turn was modeled temporally, spatially and dramaturgically. Moreover, the e-mail unmasks the provocative curatorial imperative of estrangement as a rather paternalistic mode of addressing the participants.

The overall intelligent staging of *Learning Place* as performance obscures the problem that the concept of the performative disruption of a naturalized familiarity with the CV constructed the participants as being ignorant. According to Buden's concept, the narcissistic identification with the CV could only be transformed into the disruptive feeling of strangeness if the participants would accept the curatorial setting and follow the rules of the game. While, on the first day, participants would meet enthusiastically in groups, exhaustion dominated in the course of the week. The students attended workshops in the morning and the afternoons, participated in lectures, performances, and panel discussions until late in the evening, and furthermore tried to meet collectively for group work in between. In conjunction with exhaustion, aversion and critique increased, and some students expressed their anger and frustration with the conception and realization of *Learning Place*.

The setting of *Learning Place* therefore created a paradox. While participants eagerly wanted to learn, they simultaneously felt impeded in that learning. They were offered a place to learn, and this place—materialized by a table, pencils, and paper for each of the groups—was mainly occupied for taking a rest, for eating and drinking, and for convivial encounters. However, the limitations of this approach became apparent when Buden, in reaction to the

strike idea, said, "Thank you for the revolution!" This enclosed the expectation of the unexpected.

What would have happened if the strike had taken place? What would have happened if the participants of *Learning Place* had occupied the stage of the House of World Cultures and filled its spaces for public speaking? I am not sure if such an occupation would have produced, in fact, the desired spheres of possibility and agency; eventually, however, such an intervention would have provoked a temporary interruption of curatorial self-evidence and self-assurance.

If we relate Buden's concept back to Shklovsky's and Brecht's ideas, what can we find out about both its potential and its limitations? While Shklovsky developed his concepts of "defamiliarization" through art as device in 1925, in the wake of World War I and the Russian Revolution, and in relation to the ideas of revolutionized literary criticism, namely Russian Formalism, Brecht conceived his learning plays addressing violence, death, war, and resistance in 1935, after the Nazi regime had already taken power in Germany. Buden's *Learning Place* is situated in the wake of the financial crisis and its consequences, but also in the context of major uprisings such as the Arab Spring in 2011, the Occupy movement, and the Gezi Park protests. *Former West*, by its self-description, aimed at reflecting "upon the changes introduced to the world (and thus to the so-called West) by the political, cultural, artistic, and economic events of 1989," and at rethinking "global histories" in imagining "global futures through artistic and cultural practice."²⁴

At the same time, Buden's concept came very close to the ideas of Shklovsky and Brecht. The experience of *Learning Place* was very much shaped by the idea that the physical structure of the format, as well as its conceptual inclination—the time schedule, the restrictions on participation (from each of the ten groups of students, only two members of each group could participate in the same workshop), the competition—would create an effect of defamiliarization or estrangement. Buden applied Shklovsky's idea in his aim that the participants would not only "know" about contemporary neoliberal regimes of self-formation, competition, and precarization, but that they would also fully "perceive" them. The emphasis therefore is not on common knowledge, but on perception in the sense of awareness. This awareness was created by the estrangement effect—that is, a specific form of aesthetic perception that provokes strangeness, alienation, and distancing. From this perspective, the anger, doubt, and criticism produced by Buden's imposition might have constituted difficult but also productive moments from where learning processes could depart.

The program's spatial hierarchies, its tight schedule, and its accelerated dramaturgical form are to be considered precisely as the aesthetic form that provokes the effect of estrangement and defamiliarization. At the same time, these

effects were less related to the subject matter of the sivation of life. Rather, they were directed against Buden's imposition. While, on the one hand, he tied to *Learning Place* many aspects of Brecht's learning play, on the other, he did not make any use of Brecht's collective practice, rehearsal, and reflection. Rather, Buden's setting represents the performance of the sivation of life that produces exhaustion and refusal. These two affective reactions revolve around aesthetic concepts of resistance, such as the artistic strike and a Bartleby-like denial.²⁵

Seen from this angle, one could conclude that Buden succeeded, by the aesthetic performative procedure of defamiliarization and estrangement, to unveil the total biopolitical regulation and optimization of life through its sivation. Concurrently, it is questionable whether the somewhat productive affections of exhaustion and refusal actually triggered a learning process, or whether these moments did not inhibit feeding into the reproduction of the very same conditions that determine the sivation of life, as well as the economization of social relations.

After the educational turn in curating – learning from the *Learning Place*

Learning Place aimed at an emancipatory and critical learning setting, which should facilitate not only to indicate the variability of social relations, but also to enable the agency of its participants. It did not disrupt the unspoken power relations that materialized in the various formats of the *Former West* congress. The construction of unequal conditions between those who know and those who are still ignorant, between those who speak and those who listen, between those who teach and those who learn, were rather reproduced by conditions such as competition, self-regulation, and self-optimization, embedded in the curatorial-educational setting. *Learning Place* aimed at enabling an estrangement from the “self-evident and automatic performance of the CV,” and to unveil it as “problematic and controversial, as strange.” But, as I have demonstrated, the power relations within the congress itself remained completely untouched by the concept of *Learning Place*. Why was there no learning setting for the invited speakers? And why was there no platform or stage for the participants to speak publicly?

The mere knowledge of the issue of the sivation of life did not disrupt the neoliberal competitive education system itself, nor did it intervene in the unequal distribution of education-related cultural capital. The possibilities and impossibilities to first and foremost allow students to develop and construct a CV at all remained invisible. From a critical, transformative perspective on education, ways beyond exhaustion, refusal, and criticism should be invented that explore the conditions of teaching and learning, and that also enable everyday practices of learning that neither care about feeding into the CV nor maintain a naive optimism of resistance towards the neoliberal conditions of learning.

However, *Learning Place* seemed to remain unaffected by the consequences of its dependence on the presence and participation of the students, even while they enabled *Learning Place* through their physical presence, controversial discussions and debates, engagement, and participation. It was they who turned it into a pedagogical performance. The participants became integral to the performance, in as much as they enacted Buden's dramaturgy. The script of the congress itself, which determined *who* would speak, *where*, and *to whom*, clearly built a hierarchical structure that positioned *Learning Place* at the "basis" of the congress, as if its participants were the working class and the revolutionary subjects to be. They de facto realized the play that Buden had provided—that is, the dialectics of active participation and insurgent, yet revolutionary, action. However, I am uncertain if enacting a dialectics of accomplishment and resistance was the true lesson to be learned.

Hence, the question remains: how could a collaborative knowledge production between the participants and the speakers of the main program at the *Former West* congress be produced? What kind of curatorial-educational formats would such a mode of knowledge production have required? How can moments of education be instituted within the curatorial, where the educational does not serve to legitimize a curatorial setting, and where education is not supposed to support the hegemonic position of institutions, curators, and agendas?

After the educational turn in curating, the interconnections between curating and education must be considered in their mutual but unequal relationships. Moreover, the relational aesthetic of education and pedagogy is never neutral, innocent, or regarded as inclusive per se. If it is indeed the curatorial claim to take education as space and format seriously, then it could be useful to initiate alliances between the curatorial and the educational. There remains further work to be done to create these relations between curating and educating on an equal footing that would facilitate the production of spaces of dissent and controversy, but also of other and new forms of learning and shared knowledge production.

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regards the relations of curating, invisible labor, feminist politics and archival practices.

1. I am making use of the term “educational” in parallel to the term “the curatorial.” In a particular field of curatorial studies that is affine to theory, one of the most leading discourses was initiated by the Ph.D. -program at Goldsmith College in London, entitled “Curatorial knowledge,” and namely by the theorist Irit Rogoff. Rogoff perceives the curatorial as a label for the genuine production of knowledge, the “event of knowledge.” In parallel to this formulation, I am using the nominalization as a strategical tool to capitalize the verb “educating” and to underline that art education is a heterogeneous field of practices and discourses that relate to knowledge production similarly as “the curatorial.” However, a controversial debate on the “the educational” is still a desideratum.
2. *Creative Time* was founded in New York in 1973 by Susan Henshaw Jones, Anita Contini, and Karin Bacon as a nonprofit arts organization aiming to commission and support contemporary socially and politically engaged, as well as site-specific, art practices outside of museum and gallery spaces.
3. *Educational Turn: Handlungsräume der Kunst und Kulturvermittlung*, eds. Beatrice Jaschke and Nora Sternfeld (Vienna: Turia und Kant, 2012).
4. Irit Rogoff: “Turning,” *E-flux*, no. 11 (2008), <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/turning>.
5. I am referring here to art education both as a set of critical and radical pedagogical practices within art and education more broadly—in the context of art academies, biennials and festivals, the public sphere—and as art education that is related to galleries and museums. The field of art education comprises practices and strategies, organizational structures, and resources, as well as social and aesthetic relations.
6. See, for example, Marius Babias, *Kunstvermittlung und Vermittlungskunst in den 90er Jahren* (Art Education and the Art of Education in the 1990ties) (Berlin: Fundus 1995), Claire Bishop, “Pedagogic Projects,” in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, ed. Claire Bishop (London and New York, 2012), 241–274, and Helmut Draxler, Joshua Decter, Tom Eccles, and Paul O’Neill, eds., *Exhibition as Social Intervention: “Culture in Action” 1993* (London: Afterall Books, 2014).
7. Rogoff, “Turning.”
8. The term sivationization derives from the pronunciation of “CV” as “sivi”. Buden uses this neologism to refer to the process through which life by the means of the CV becomes regulated. “[The CV] is the master text of knowledge and art production that regulates its operation, standardizes its selection procedures, unifies its field, guards its boundaries, maintains its hierarchies, and disciplines its workers.” See Boris Buden, Introduction speech, 2013, unpublished.
9. In the speech that Boris Buden gave at the start of *Learning Place*, he explicitly drew upon Bertolt Brecht’s concept of the estrangement effect, as well as on Viktor Shklovsky’s notion of “making strange,” while in an interview with myself, he primarily referred to Shklovsky. For a comprehensive analysis of the relation to *Learning Place* and Brecht’s concept of the learning play, see Sidsel Nelund, “Acts of Research: Knowledge Production in Contemporary Art between Knowledge Economy and Critical Practice” (PhD thesis, Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen, 2014), 233–251.
10. Boris Buden, “Learning Place,” March 18–24, 2013 (unpublished introduction speech).

11. Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, eds. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 16.
12. Douglas Robinson, *Estrangement and the Somatics of Literature: Tolstoy, Shklovsky, Brecht* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 204.
13. Bertolt Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke in 20 Bänden* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967). Quoted in Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies*, eds. Minou Arjomand and Ramona Mosse (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1024f.
14. See Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks, *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 79f.
15. See Reiner Steinweg, *Das Lehrstück: Brechts Theorie einer politisch-ästhetischen Erziehung* (The Learning Play: Brechts Theory of a political-aesthetic Education) (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1972), 87 translated by the author.
16. Ibid.
17. Reiner Steinweg, *Das Lehrstück*, 122.
18. Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke in 20 Bänden*. Quoted in Fischer-Lichte.
19. See Steinweg, 162.
20. See Bertolt Brecht, "Über experimentelles Theater" [On the Experimental Theater] (1939), in *The Tulane Drama Review*, eds. Bertolt Brecht and Carl Richard Mueller, (Cambridge/London: MIT Press, 1961), pp.2-17.
21. Boris Buden, "Learning Place."
22. Fredric Jameson, *Brecht and Method* (London: Verso, 1998), 40.
23. Boris Buden, "Learning Place."
24. All the more, it is surprising that the chronopolitical standpoint of the *Former West* congress that introduced a critical meta-perspective on the global cartographies of West and East did not account very much for postcolonial, decolonial, and feminist approaches towards teaching and learning that address unlearning, empowerment, building community, and challenging hierarchies, such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Paulo Freire, bell hooks, Nikita Dhawan, and María Castro do Mar Varela.
25. I am referring here to Herman Melville's short story *Bartleby, The Scrivener. A Story of Wall-Street* (1853) that was often mentioned in the context of recent discussions on strategies of refusal in the field of art production. For a deeper insight into the idea of the artistic strike see Hito Steyerl, "Politics of Art: Contemporary Art and the Transition to Post-Democracy," *E-flux*, no. 21 (December 2010), <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/politics-of-art-contemporary-art-and-the-transition-to-post-democracy>.