

# Call for Papers:

## Towards a Museum of Mutuality



Performance by Nasam Aboud during the final presentation of the project *Give us the Museum*, 2018, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photograph: Maarten Nauw.

### THEME OUTLINE

Engendering integration while acknowledging differences is one of the biggest challenges facing museums globally today. Institutions must reconceptualize the relationship between their collections and the engagement with (new) audiences at all levels. In response, there has been a shift in the museum model, both theoretically and on the level of institutional arrangements, from the museum as a site of authority to the post-museum as a site of mutuality (Falk, 2012). The act of curating at its most basic is about connecting different concepts and cultures, and bringing their elements into proximity with each other in order to create innovative ways of seeing that counter social injustice and promote equity on all possible levels. Beyond the museum as “contact zone” (Clifford, 1997), and following Terry Smith (2012), the curatorial turn is interested in exploring new contexts and relationships, and working with an artifact’s ability to reveal hidden knowledge. Museums have become spaces for knowledge creation (Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 1999) as well as agents of social regeneration and vehicles of broad social change

(Sandell, 1998). Similarly, feminist and postcolonial researchers and museum practitioners seek to decentralize the universal, Western epistemological logic as only one way of seeing things. The striking concordance between these two fields speaks to the need for setting up knowledge networks that bridge different epistemologies, iconographies and vocabularies (Mbembe, 2016). These diasporic networks by implication also affect museums everywhere when it comes to issues of representation, inclusion, and exclusion.

Debates around the place of the audience and the social role of the museum have emerged since the advent of new museology (Vergo, 1989; Sandell, 1998). More recently, sponsors and policy makers have demanded that museums become radically shared public spaces and that they play an important role in social cohesion through increased accessibility and public participation (Belfiore, 2009; Lynch, 2011; McSweeney and Kavanagh, 2016). However, it is only relatively recently that museums around the world have begun to recognize the powerful role of displays and exhibitions in the process of lifelong learning and transnational identity constitution (Falk, 2012; Levitt, 2015; Clover, 2015). Museums have the potential, as Borg and Mayo explain, to be “conceived of as sites of struggle, of cultural contestation and renewal” (2010). Acknowledging that objects tell different stories to different audiences—some of which may be contradictory—and that these differences need to be excavated through innovative curatorial and educational practices, raises important questions that must be addressed at the global level.

This special issue of *Stedelijk Studies* aims to frame and interconnect these current movements towards making museums spaces of mutuality. We welcome both theoretical contributions and more practice-based research focussing on questions such as:

- In our contemporary global world, what kinds of citizens are museums creating?
- How can nationalism and cosmopolitanism be brought together under museum roofs in different cities and nations around the globe?
- How is this new imperative of exposing multiple voices and representation impacting exhibition culture(s) and the position of the expert in museums?
- How are institutions negotiating issues of public agency and empowerment?

The issue, titled *Towards a Museum of Mutuality*, will be edited by Prof. Dr. Rosemarie Buikema, Prof. Dr. Emilie Sitzia, Dr. Margriet Schavemaker, Rosa Wevers, and Vasso Belia.

## **STEDELIJK STUDIES**

*Stedelijk Studies* is a high-quality, peer-reviewed academic journal which publishes research related to the collection and on the institutional history of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, museum studies (such as education and conservation practice), and current topics in the field of visual arts and design.

### **SUBMISSION**

Deadline for the abstract is **September 7, 2018**.

Deadline for the essay is **December 7, 2018**.

Publication of the issue is **May, 2019**.

Manuscripts and other editorial correspondence should be sent to:

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