

An Emancipated Visitor

Art rarely just comes along in our everyday lives. Art is usually framed within an exhibition by architecture, curatorial concepts, museum institutions and the whole art business. This framework implies a number of functions: it confirms social differences, it makes visible the political and economical constraints of art production. For some works of art, it is this framework itself that makes it possible to perceive them. It is this framework that turns persons into visitors.

This framework is also the place where art mediation occurs. Art mediation designs bridges and paves access roads for visitors, weaving them through the institutional framework. Maybe the mediation makes the framework more transparent, or maybe the visitors perceive themselves as competent and confident enough to begin to play with the framing of art.

We invite you as a visitor to experiment with the framework requirements of art so as to build your own experience. Draw your own conclusions about how the framework of the art trade works, and which rules apply. Even if you know all about this on a theoretical level, try it out yourself in practice, or do it just for fun.

EXPERIMENT 1: TIME AND MOTION

- Walk through an exhibition as if in slow motion. Do it for at least 40 minutes. Slow down each of your movements, but never stop. While doing this, respect the common rules of an exhibition (don't touch, don't shout ...). Be aware of how your perception of the art works and the world around you changes. Observe the inner dialogue you are having with yourself during this time. After 40 minutes take a rest and reflect on your experience, either alone or in a group. Then decide whether you want to see the exhibition again at normal speed, or to try something else.
- Walk at a fast pace without ever stopping, and walk several times through the same exhibition. If the exhibition is large, take one complete walk through the whole exhibition. Here, too, respect the common rules of an exhibition (don't touch, don't shout ...). Be aware of your sensory perceptions, feel your body in space. Listen closely to your inner dialogue while you walk. Then take a rest and reflect on your experience, either alone or in a group. Then decide whether you want to see the exhibition again at normal speed, or to or to try something else.
- Check your personal habits in exhibitions, then take the direction you usually don't take. Change your sequential behaviour: if you tend to read first the text about the work of art, first take a look at the work of art, or vice versa. Take rests although you are not yet tired. Stretch occasionally or squat to alter your line of vision. What is changing?

EXPERIMENT 2: CHANGE FOCUS

- During the exhibition visit, above all pay attention to the other people who are there: the person at the ticket counter, the guards, the staff, the visitors. Take a close look at them. How do they move, what are their facial expressions? If you want to, and if you are really interested in them, walk up to them and begin a conversation. How does this personal contact change your perception of art?
- In an exhibition, look only at minor details. Where are the fire extinguishers? What are the cords around the pieces of art made of? What do the window frames look like? Stay close to the details. This is not about architecture, we want to find out what happens to the art works when we are focussed on other details of the room, perceiving the works of art only from the corner of our eye. And we want to find out what these details tell about the framework of an "exhibition". What are the messages they send to us?

EXPERIMENT 3: BE PERSONAL

- Go through an exhibition thinking about a personal problem or with a specific social, political or economical question in mind. Draw your inspiration from the works of art, to find solutions for your problem. Find out how artworks can open personal spaces for you. Just pretend that this is possible. What happens?
- Perceive accurately how you feel today, while visiting an exhibition, right now. Look at the exhibition as if it were made just for you and for your present mood. Imagine that the exhibition were a mirror of yourself.
- Choose an exhibition text (a photocopy taken from a catalogue, an exhibition brochure, a leaflet available in the exhibition). With a thick, black felt marker, cancel all the text that doesn't interest you at the moment. Leave only those portions of text that mean something to you at the moment. You can also draw on the text, draw over it. Be curious what happens.

The work of the following people was inspiring for this workbook chapter:
Eva Sturm, Jaques Ranci re, Pierre Bourdieu, Gilles Deleuze, Stefan Heidenreich, Annette Krauss, Antje Neumann.

In which ways does your experiment affect your interaction, perception and reflection of the exhibition?
Fill out the following scorecard.

1 = completely unaffected, 2 = changed slightly, 3 = changed, 4 = changed drastically, 5 = completely different

EMANCIPATED SCORECARD		1	2	3	4	5
01	the extent to which your imagination is stimulated					
02	the way in which you interpret what you see					
03	the way in which you reflect					
04	the way you interact with the audience					
05	the way in which you perceive the objective properties of the art					
06	the level of symbolism you discern in the works					
07	the way in which you use your own (existing) knowledge					
08	the extent to which you are relaxed					
09	the way in which you use your own (existing) competences					
10	the way your body feels in space					
11	the extent to which you are emotionally aroused					
12	the way in which you perceive the exhibition space					
13	the perceived cultural framework					
14	the perceived institutional framework					
15	the extent to which your actions impact these frameworks					
16	the way in which you relate to the artworks in the exhibition					
17	the way in which you perceive the audience					
18	the way you interact with the exhibition space					
19	the way in which you perceive the intention of the artist					
20	the way your memories are triggered					
21	the way in which you use your body					
22	the way in which you make links with everyday reality					
23	the way in which you interact with the narrative of the exhibition					
24	the way in which the artworks in the exhibition function					
25	the level of spontaneity of your actions					
26	the extent to which your curiosity is stimulated					
27	the extent to which the exhibition relates to society					
28	the extent to which you are amused					
29	the way in which you read the narrative of the exhibition					
30	your overall opinion on the exhibition					