

## Parallel Stories.

### Educational activities in Moderna Museet's early years

Ylva Hillström

The 1960s have been described as the happy decade, when the Museum, according to Pontus Hultén, was “totally unbureaucratic and imagination-driven”.<sup>1</sup> The pedagogy during this period has been scrutinised in various contexts before.<sup>2</sup> This study takes three exhibitions as its point of departure: *Egyptian Youths Weave* (1960), *Movement in Art* (1961), and *Vincent van Gogh* (1965). Together, they represent the span of the Museum's exhibition activities: one presentation of young people's weaving and the pedagogy behind it, one extensive, experimental exhibition featuring mainly contemporary art, and one monographic exposition of one of the great classics in modern art history. The term *mediation* is used here in its wider meaning, to include the design of the exhibition space, various pedagogical tools (such as wall texts and catalogue essays), guided tours and events (lectures, talks, film screenings).<sup>3</sup>

We do not know for a fact whether Pontus Hultén took an interest in pedagogy. The books that were donated to the Museum together with his art collection and archive do not include works by the prominent writers on pedagogy at the time.<sup>4</sup> Hultén was eager, however, to attract a wide audience to the Museum, and even though he rarely held guided tours, an article in *Dagens Nyheter* in 1963 claims that his introductory talks at the Museum's film screenings were appreciated.<sup>5</sup>

The exhibition programme in Moderna Museet's early years included both monographic presentations and experimental idea-based exhibitions. Established artists such as Siri Derkert (1960), Paul Klee (1960) and Vincent van Gogh (1965) alternated with ideas and artists that were new to the public, such as *Movement in Art* (1961), *4 Americans* (1962), and *The Inner and the Outer Space* (1965). Pontus Hultén had no fears that visitors would be discouraged if the Museum focused on new tendencies. The audience will come if the quality is high, he claimed, and quality included generous opening hours, good lighting, a restaurant and a children's workshop.<sup>6</sup>

The visitor programme featured not only art exhibitions, but also readings, guided tours, film series, lectures and discussions. This broad programme was made possible by collaborations with other

organisations, such as Fylkingen and the Swedish Film Institute.<sup>7</sup> The Museum could also operate outreach activities to attract visitors, for instance, at the Nalen nightclub: “From the stage, to the hard accompaniment of a saxophone and dancing feet, the curator Carlo Derkert showed a painting and invited us to a jazz concert at Moderna Museet on Monday.”<sup>8</sup> For children, a film club was started in 1959. Initially, it was run by Louise O’Konor, and later by Anna-Lena Wibom.<sup>9</sup> In 1966, Pontus Hultén described it in the following words:

For seven winters, we have shown films for children every Saturday afternoon, 300-400 children and adults have watched Chaplin farces, abstract films, animal movies, Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd etc. and Carlo Derkert has ended the shows with a 15-minute talk about a few art works in the Museum’s collection or part of an exhibition.<sup>10</sup>

In effect, Moderna Museet grew into a place for all sorts of artistic activities under Hultén’s directorship. One of the ideas behind this interdisciplinary and broad range was to open the Museum to citizens regardless of social class, which was in line with the Swedish welfare state’s agenda.<sup>11</sup> The new TV medium was utilised effectively to launch the Museum as an exciting and experimental house for all kinds of activity.<sup>12</sup> From the mid-1950s, the Museum’s development was covered by TV, which often reported on the exhibitions, with various perspectives on the Museum and the art.

Carlo Derkert became a curator at the Museum in 1958, and was joined in 1961 by Karin Bergqvist Lindegren.<sup>13</sup> His responsibilities included guided exhibition tours. The fact that Derkert, who had been a teacher at the Nationalmuseum since 1945, was offered a post at Moderna Museet indicates that Pontus Hultén could see the importance of having a good pedagogue by his side.<sup>14</sup> Derkert had studied art history at Stockholm University and written his Licentiate thesis on Vincent van Gogh. Although he had no special training in pedagogy, he was deeply interested in both educational issues and children and children’s images.<sup>15</sup> In the 1940s, he had met Jan Thomæus, who had launched a furious debate at the time about art education in schools.<sup>16</sup> Derkert had also come across the ideas of Herbert Read.<sup>17</sup> As he himself recalled: “If I were to mention a few names, Herbert Read is one of those who has given me ideas or helped me formulate what I believe is important in museum pedagogy.”<sup>18</sup> Read claimed that all people have an inborn ability to express

themselves in images and that creative activities are a basic requirement for one's personality to blossom.<sup>19</sup>

Carlo Derkert wanted to make the Museum into a place for meetings and dialogues. To lighten up the visitors' presumed respect for the museum, he would, for instance, pretend to trip in the Nationalmuseum's grand staircase.<sup>20</sup> Tricks such as this put him on a level with his audience – everyone was just as insignificant in relation to the imposing architecture. Moderna Museet, however, had no monumental staircases or foyers. Visitors walked right into the art. Since modern art had not yet accrued as much historic baggage, it was easier to talk about than art from more distant periods, Derkert said.<sup>21</sup> He saw pedagogues and visitors as being more like equals when faced with modern works. Showing art, he believed, was about discovering the works together with the audience. Kristoffer Arvidsson writes in his essay about Derkert that he performed his interpretations so that the listeners felt that they had discovered the images themselves, and in this way he made people feel competent.<sup>22</sup> He himself once said, "Don't think that I underestimate knowledge – I just don't believe in knowledge for its own sake. To live, that is my definition, is a voyage of discovery. To visit a museum involves discovering oneself in the pictures – through them, we can formulate all kinds of experience."<sup>23</sup>

Mette Prawitz was employed at the Board of Education. She worked for Moderna Museet in 1964 to 1967, with compulsory guided tours for all 4th-grade children in Stockholm. Carlo Derkert was responsible for all other tours, such as the well-frequented open guided tours on Sundays. Eventually, Prawitz also organised tours for other groups, including adults and children, and also helped out in other activities at the Museum.<sup>24</sup> Although she discussed pedagogical issues constantly with Derkert, she does not recall ever having talked about pedagogy with Hultén.<sup>25</sup> The American-inspired idea of dedicating a room in the Museum to practical creative activities for children had been around since 1963.<sup>26</sup> It was not implemented until 1967, however, after Prawitz read in the newspaper that another Swedish museum had created a special room for children. She recalls telling Pontus Hultén about this and pointing out that Moderna Museet ought to spearhead this field and immediately establish a space for the youngest visitors to the Museum. Within a few days, Hultén had made sure walls were erected and a separate space had been created for what became Barnens Museum (the Children's Museum).<sup>27</sup> Not until the refurbishment of the Museum in 1975, when the Workshop



Låt oss vara nylikna när vi ser på konst, glädjas över de överraskningar vi ställs inför, råder C. D.

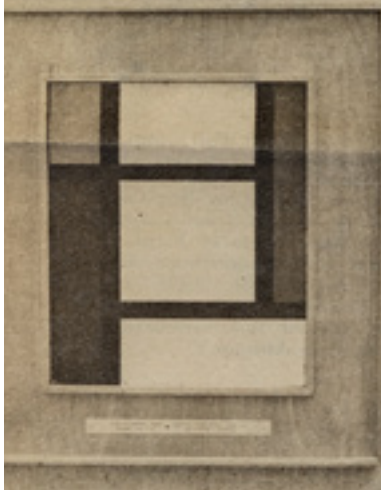
Konstverkets rytm skall inte tänkas med knoppen ...

... den skall kännas kroppen, brukar Derkert säga till de grupper av skolbarn han vägleder.

*På Fritid, nr 4 1959*

# VÄGAR TILL KONSTEN

Med Carlo Derkert som ciceron i Moderna museet



## Det väsentliga:

Det väsentliga när det gäller konst är den personliga upplevelsen. Konstupplysaren kan meddela fakta om olika stilar och konstnärliga målsättningar men dessa kunskaper får aldrig bli självändamål. Konstverk är levande väsen, vad de begär av oss är öppna sinnen och personligt engagemang.

*Carlo Derkert*

Två motpoler inom det moderna måleriet: I. v. sträng klassicism, starkt förbunden konst med lärgerna — känslornas uttryck — bakom galler, instängda (konstnär Theo van Doesburg, Holland, omkr. 1927). Nedan dess motsats, en känslöxplosion, ohämmad romantik (ett centralt avsnitt av en tavla av konst-

moved to new premises with large windows overlooking the greenery, did it become a proper creative studio for all sorts of activities.<sup>28</sup>

### Children from Egypt Weave

*Egyptiska ungdomar väver* (Children from Egypt Weave, 2 December, 1960–22 January, 1961) was the first of three exhibitions at Moderna Museet featuring woven works from the Egyptian village of Harrania.<sup>29</sup> Carlo Derkert curated the exhibition, but the initiative came from the journalist Anne Gyllenspetz, who brokered contacts between the architect Ramses Wissa Wassef and Moderna Museet.<sup>30</sup> Together with his wife, Sophie, Wissa Wassef had started an innovative weaving school in Harrania in 1951. A number of woven works were presented in Moderna Museet's exhibition halls on white walls, with large spaces in between each work. An archive photograph shows screens set at right angles from the walls to achieve more display surfaces. The exhibition appears to have been hung in a non-didactic way, that is, without any specific beginning or end, and without any text in the exhibition room.<sup>31</sup> Nor do pictures of the exhibition show any visible name signs by the works.

One of the intentions of *Egyptiska ungdomar väver* was to introduce a new pedagogy for visitors:

We took it not just for its beautiful textiles. We also wanted – as we did in the catalogue – to make propaganda for Wissa Wassef's pedagogy: His interesting and radical approach to getting children and youths to work with tapestry. One of his secrets was that they always worked without cartoons or other patterns. This idea was soon adopted by the Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, as an alternative method in the textile department.<sup>32</sup>

In a radio programme from 1969, Carlo Derkert also extolled the exhibitions *Anna Casparsson* (1960) and *Egyptiska ungdomar väver* as an example of a new pedagogy that the Museum was adopting:

I would say that these exhibitions demonstrate, among other things, that all of us, the very old and the very young, are creative, naturally creative, if only we are left free of pointers and prejudices. What we have here is a new pedagogy, and a new society, with new values, that Moderna Museet wants to fight for.<sup>33</sup>

This pedagogical position seems to have a great deal in common with Herbert Read's ideas. According to Read, art is a means of bringing individuals together, and practising art, that is, personal creativity, is a road to perfecting one's personality: "Art, we might say, can make us completely human."<sup>34</sup>

The Museum, thus, had a clear objective with *Egyptiska ungdomar väver*: to promote a pedagogy "free of pointers and prejudices", as Carlo Derkert puts it above. The exhibition catalogue was vital to spreading this pedagogy: "People don't understand the immense importance of the material, either artistically or pedagogically, unless you tell them about it."<sup>35</sup> This may seem contradictory, this desire to point at the importance of not pointing, to authoritatively preach anti-authoritarianism. Derkert would probably have explained this paradox by saying that people sometimes need help to see:

In a society where art is a part of society, say, the middle ages, an art guide would be rather superfluous – or in an African culture. I have politically radical friends ... who look with scepticism at our collection of art and regard museum guides as something weird. Is it reasonable, Carlo, they ask, that if we come to the museum with a couple of friends from work, that someone like you has to be there for us to understand how to experience Brancusi's sculpture "The Newborn"? Yees – it is reasonable, I reply, as long as there are people who don't understand his language... the result of a reduction in many, many phases, of what originally was a fairly realistic depiction of a face.<sup>36</sup>

There is no data in the Museum's archives on any programmed activities in the form of lectures or concerts, for instance, relating to *Egyptiska ungdomar väver*. Anyone wanting to know more about the works in the exhibition and the weaving school in Harrania would, it seems, have been referred to guided tours and the catalogue, which consisted of a folding poster with a large picture of a tapestry and a text about the curriculum at the weaving school, written by Ramses Wissa Wassef.

Derkert recommended his colleagues at the County Museum in Umeå, which was also showing the exhibition, to talk to the newspapers and provide them with informative articles, and to send information sheets to all the schools, with information about the exhibition and visiting hours. These measures were needed, he claimed,



to attract visitors.<sup>37</sup> *Egyptiska ungdomar väver* was seen by 15,000 in Stockholm.<sup>38</sup> It was reviewed in the press, and several critics remarked on the extraordinary creative energy that the tapestries conveyed, noting that the exhibition should indeed be seen as a contribution to the debate on art pedagogy, exemplifying the importance of allowing children to create freely and without matrixes.<sup>39</sup>

### Movement in Art

*Rörelse i konsten* (Movement in Art) drew more than 70,000 people in Stockholm, and provoked strong reactions.<sup>40</sup> The debate was furious in the daily press. In a radio interview in 1969, Hultén reminisced that many visitors appreciated *Rörelse i konsten* while others were indignant and wanted the Museum closed.<sup>41</sup>

The exhibition itself had no definite beginning or proper end. The works were installed in an open architecture through which viewers could move freely. Several works invited interaction with the beholder. One review, for instance, mentions that, “There are no signs saying ‘Do not touch’ at Moderna Museet this summer. Visitors are welcome to explore Japanese artist Kobashi’s wooden sausages ... and can move freely in Alexander Calder’s ‘leafy forest’ of cut and welded sheets of iron.”<sup>42</sup> However, the alleged absence of “Do not touch” signs in the exhibition is contradicted by the actual signs preserved in the archive.<sup>43</sup> But even if physical interaction was only allowed with some of the works, the atmosphere at the Museum was obviously perceived as permissive.

A catalogue was produced for the exhibition in a very special, oblong format. Its first part includes quotes from manifestoes and other texts by artists and philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Although these passages can reasonably be assumed to have been rather abstruse to a reader without extensive previous knowledge, they are printed without explanatory comments. They are accompanied by an index of some artists who have worked with kinetic art, a list of the exhibited works, and, lastly, an essay by Hultén on the history of 20th-century kinetic art. Hultén writes: “The camera is the picture-making machine that is available to everyone. But there are other art machines, more independent, perhaps, which also speak to us and tell us who we are.”<sup>44</sup> Worth noting is the choice of words such as “us” and “we”, that make the visitors and the Museum and exhibition





curators equals, while the Museum's voice authoritatively declares what art does to us all.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to the catalogue, visitors were offered an extensive programme of events linked to the exhibition, alternating concerts with films, shadow theatre and puppet shows.<sup>46</sup> To attract school pupils to the Museum, a presentation of the exhibition was sent to headmasters and teachers at elementary and upper secondary schools:

This is the world's first exhibition of its kind, and we hereby invite all school children to follow the artists' attempts to use movement as an artistic form of expression ... Mobile art illustrates our relationship to technology and its blessings, our joy, our hesitation, the irony of our relationship to machines. It helps us see ourselves and our situation. This is expected to be one of the most enjoyable exhibitions conceivable.<sup>47</sup>

The tone of this mail shot is decidedly didactic – the Museum declares exactly what could be learned from the exhibition. Still, the wording *the artists' attempts* stresses that a process is involved, rather than something final. *Rörelse i konsten* presented experiments and attempts, and people could visit simply to have fun.

*Dagens Nyheter* printed a highbrow intellectual exchange in which the art historian Sven Sandström, the critics Folke Edwards and Ulf Linde, *Dagens Nyheter's* editor-in-chief Olof Lagercrantz, the author Lars Gyllensten, and others, discussed concepts such as meaning and meaninglessness, life and ennui.<sup>48</sup> Well-penned arguments, which, however, required a high level of knowledge in its readers.<sup>49</sup> This can be compared to the visitors' own reactions to the art, as presented in the weekly press. The cover of *Folket i Bild* shows two men laughing out loud in the exhibition, and the headline "Laughter at Moderna Museet – is junk art junk or art?"<sup>50</sup> The article relates audience reactions:

"A scandal," says one faithful museum visitor. "Fantastic," says the new wave of young people. "This year's PR coup," serious advertising execs assure us. "Fun," says the general public. "Not so fun," says young Bollnäs-based artist Mårten Andersson.. "Headless," comments (artist Sven) X:et (Erixson). Curator Carlo Derkert sides with the defence.<sup>51</sup>

The magazine *Vi* also highlighted the visitors, who seemed genuinely entertained, even if they admitted to not understanding one bit of



the ideas behind either the exhibition or the artworks. One caption says: “Not one iota do I understand, but never would I have believed that it could be this incredibly fun going to an art museum!” And another: “You see, the new realism abstains from individual creation, it seeks to reveal reality and... – Oh give over! This is just hilarious!”<sup>52</sup> It is important to stress that this contradiction between so-called high culture and the people’s reactions was what newspapers and TV focused on in their coverage of *Rörelse i konsten*. It can reasonably be assumed that however sensational this angle was in the media, it did not necessarily reflect how the general public perceived the exhibition.

### Vincent van Gogh

The exhibition *Vincent van Gogh. Målningar, akvareller, teckningar* (Paintings, Water Colours, Drawings, 22 October–19 December, 1965) comprised a terse and spacious presentation of more than one hundred oil paintings, watercolours and drawings. Vincent van Gogh’s oeuvre belongs to the period covered by the Nationalmuseum, and the exhibition would have taken place there, had it not been for the fact that the Nationalmuseum was busy planning its major exhibition on *Christina, Queen of Sweden. A European Patron of the Arts*, due to open the following year.<sup>53</sup> The curator for *Vincent van Gogh* was Carlo Derkert, who also edited the catalogue together with Karin Bergqvist Lindegren. The catalogue for the exhibition includes a page with information on opening hours, admission, public guided tours and school visits.<sup>54</sup> In addition to a preface by Carl Nordenfalk and Derkert, it contained an essay by the artist’s nephew, Willem van Gogh, a biography, a few excerpts from van Gogh’s letters, and a list of literature about van Gogh in Swedish. This is followed by reproductions of the works in the exhibition and a list of the same, some with explanatory text taken from Vincent van Gogh’s letters to his brother Theo van Gogh. These texts are written in what could be galled a general tone that does not require the reader to have much previous knowledge. The exhibition was a great public success and was seen by more than 100,000 visitors.<sup>55</sup>

The Moderna Museet archive does not contain any material relating to mediation activities linked to the exhibition, except for a contract for a lecture by the nephew Willem van Gogh (or Vincent, as he calls himself in his correspondence with the Museum).<sup>56</sup> To attract visitors to the museum, a campaign was launched with posters

and advertisements in taxi cabs: “Take me to van Gogh”.<sup>57</sup> Guided tours were advertised in the daily press repeatedly, presenting the guides by name.<sup>58</sup>

The Vincent van Gogh exhibition got a great deal of press coverage, focusing especially on the artist’s biography and the high price tags on his works.<sup>59</sup> The press seems to have contributed to attracting visitors. Readers were reminded repeatedly that the exhibition at Moderna Museet was the last chance to see the works in Sweden, since a van Gogh museum was being built in Amsterdam (it opened in 1973). It was also reported that the exhibition was a success, and success breeds success, as we all know. One critic bemoaned that biographical facts and reproductions in the form of postcards and posters stood in the way of his experience of van Gogh’s art: “All this mediation in texts and reproductions that obscure his oeuvre make it harder to access. But if we give ourselves time to l o o k at one of his paintings, we notice how the scales suddenly fall from our eyes . . .”<sup>60</sup> The initiated visitor’s slightly contemptuous reaction to the explanatory texts can be seen as a symptom of the psychological mechanisms that incline us to want to protect the exclusiveness of a group (in this case, *art connoisseurs*) to which we have gained access through certain ordeals, social or otherwise.<sup>61</sup>

#### Parallel stories: inclusion and exclusion

These three case studies highlight exhibitions with different purposes and content: one that takes a pedagogical model as its subject, one which is expressly experimental and interactive, and one with a more traditional art historic content. Although all three exhibitions have didactic features in their rhetoric, the most prominent mediation model is dialogical, that is, it assumes that the viewer’s own experiences will influence how the art is perceived. At times, there is an obvious tension between these two approaches. The ever-relevant question of how knowledge can be shared without the pedagogue appearing authoritative, was obviously in evidence also at Moderna Museet in the 1960s. Carlo Derkert’s ambition that the Museum should be a place where visitors could discover themselves through art is in line with the co-creative mediation model that Nina Simon and many others are promoting today, more than fifty years later.<sup>62</sup>

Pontus Hultén was fully aware of the importance of using the press to stir interest. His goal was that the Museum should be mentioned in



Above: Carlo Derkert with Willem van Gogh,  
Moderna Museet, 1965. Below: *Vincent van Gogh*,  
Moderna Museet, 1965

some newspaper every day.<sup>63</sup> Whether he succeeded has not been examined here, but random searches in the Nationalmuseum press archive show that the Museum and its exhibitions were certainly widely reviewed during this period. After around one year of operating, the media were already reporting about a place where children were welcome and where the atmosphere was open. At Moderna Museet you could have fun, even play hide and seek, according to one reviewer. The works of art invited play.<sup>64</sup>

The division between mediation, communication (eg. press and marketing), and exhibition production was not as definite in the Museum's early years as it is today. Carlo Derkert might curate an exhibition, just as Pontus Hultén might handle the introduction at an event.<sup>65</sup> When Hultén was travelling or on holiday, Derkert stepped in as director.<sup>66</sup> Mette Prawitz felt that Hultén and Derkert should both be credited for creating the famously open and accessible atmosphere at the Museum.<sup>67</sup> They had a great team spirit. However, for the opening of Rafael Moneo's new museum building in 1998, when the press wrote profusely about the Museum's history and possible future, Hultén was given all the credit for this atmosphere, whereas Derkert was mentioned primarily as a charismatic tour guide. A 1998 caption in *Dagens Nyheter*, for instance, reads: "Pontus Hultén opened the Museum to children. They had their own film club and painting workshop, and were playfully guided into the world of art by Carlo Derkert."<sup>68</sup> A few years earlier, the same newspaper had written: "He is fully aware of his reputation for being 'audience oriented'. Hultén's policy so far has been to give museums the accessibility of streets and the possibility of workshops, and it was he who created a 'living room for art' at Moderna Museet."<sup>69</sup> In the 1960s, collective efforts were promoted, but in the 1990s, Hultén was presented as more or less solely responsible for creating the pedagogical museum.<sup>70</sup>

On many levels, Moderna Museet under Hultén's direction was an inclusive, playful and accessible place for a broad audience. Art exhibitions were complemented by an extensive programme of events, and Derkert's guided tours probably helped to open many visitors' eyes to art. Both printed material in the form of books and catalogues, and radio and TV broadcasts about art and exhibitions have been preserved for posterity. In connection with the Museum's opening in 1958, for instance, a book was published about modern art, edited by Bo Wennberg, who was a senior curator at the Nationalmuseum at the

time. A newspaper cutting describes it as exceptionally lucid and informative.<sup>71</sup> Critic Leif Nylén noted that the catalogues, although they omitted certain basic data about the works, provided beautiful and lavish, accessible, detailed and stimulating introductions to the art.<sup>72</sup>

Nevertheless, there was a great deal that was neither mediated nor communicated. Especially in *Rörelse i konsten* where people were allowed to touch, interact and laugh.<sup>73</sup> This most fun exhibition of all had another level that the Museum did not strive to make as easily accessible to the public. To the uninitiated, the essays in the exhibition catalogue would hardly have been easy to comprehend. The art debate around the exhibition was polemic and highly intellectual. Readers were treated to a public debate that would be regarded as esoteric today, with initiated gentlemen doing their best to outshine one another with their opinions and insights. The Museum's elitist side is excellently illustrated by an observation from an evening event, published as Christmas reading in *Svenska Dagbladet* in 1962:

One of the most memorable evenings at the Museum was when John Cage, a pioneering American composer, held a lecture titled "Where are we going and what are we doing?" More accurately, this was four different lectures held *simultaneously* on four different tapes ... Chaos arose at the Museum, a chaos that K.G. Hultén and Carlo Derkert regarded with the greatest satisfaction from their protected observation post.<sup>74</sup>

According to the journalist, the Museum's representatives were watching the perplexed visitors with amusement, apparently without getting involved or explaining the concept. The lion's share of the audience at that event were thus part of a kind of art happening staged by the artist and the Museum. This was something that they were probably not aware of when deciding to attend the lecture.

For those who did not take a guided tour, the art was left to speak for itself. Visitors had to make sense of what they saw as best they could. *Svenska Dagbladet* columnist Viola touched on this in a text from 1963:

The task now was to try to understand Jackson Pollock. It wasn't easy. And just when you really needed an explanation, an instruction, and flicked through the beautiful catalogue, all you found was "Painting", and you could see that much for yourself, or "Untitled", or "No 5", and that left you no wiser than before... In any case, the most modern art is obviously not intended for domestic use.<sup>75</sup>



Apart from Pontus Hultén, Carlo Derkert and Karin Bergqvist Lindegren, Ulf Linde is perhaps the person who made the deepest impact on the Museum in the 1960s. Linde was the editor of the Friends of Moderna Museet *Bulletin*, and a critic in *Dagens Nyheter* from 1956 to 1968. He also contributed to the process behind several seminal exhibitions at Moderna Museet, including *The Museum of Our Wishes* (1963) and *Anna Casparsson. Embroidery* (1960), before he was recruited as a curator in 1973. In 1960, he published *Spejare*, in which he argued that it is the viewer who makes the work of art.<sup>76</sup> In 1965, he published four articles in *Dagens Nyheter* on the same theme.<sup>77</sup> Here, Linde adheres to Marcel Duchamp, who, in his lecture on “The Creative Act” at the Convention of the American Federation of Arts in Houston in 1958, contended that the artist and the viewer are of equal importance to the creation of a work of art. Giving the viewer more scope, and emphasising the significance of personal experience to the interpretation of works, is in line with dialogic pedagogy. This approach was gaining a strong foothold in the 1960s.<sup>78</sup> Art pedagogy was progressing from popular education on good taste, towards allowing more freedom to viewers.<sup>79</sup>

This may look like an open, audience-friendly pedagogy. But Linde showed no understanding whatsoever for those who wanted to communicate art to the broader public. “Art is something for the few,” he claimed, but stressed that this was not an elitist point of view, since those few could be anyone.<sup>80</sup> Anyone, that is, who had sufficient knowledge. To look at, say, Marcel Duchamp’s works, where even the titles are word puzzles and the interpretations bear allusions to anything from mathematics to alchemy, is hardly for someone without background knowledge.

Carlo Derkert’s pedagogical approach, which was strongly influenced by Herbert Read, as mentioned above, has come to be synonymous with Moderna Museet’s pedagogy: everyone has the ability to see and experience art according to their own potential, and art makes us completely human. Ulf Linde’s standpoint, that art is for the few, was not as prominent but nonetheless present at the Museum in the 1960s. Dialogue may be a key word used by both, but whereas Derkert meant an overt dialogue between viewer, artwork and pedagogue, Linde was referring to a tacit dialogue between the art and the viewer. Pontus Hultén created the potential for the two approaches to exist side by side at Moderna Museet, thereby attracting both the broader audience with general interests, and the initiated few.

The tension between the accessible and the obscure has its counterpart in the field of religion, where most faiths have an exoteric, accessible and open side, and an esoteric branch that is reserved for a small, enlightened circle.<sup>81</sup> Spirituality and esoteric practices have had a far greater influence on modernism than is normally acknowledged in art history books and institutions.<sup>82</sup> Art historian Peter Cornell points out that even something as profane as an exhibition preview is comparable to a freemason ceremony, with specially-invited guests adhering to a veritably ritualistic order (he takes the preview of *The Inner and the Outer Space* in 1965 as an example).<sup>83</sup> He writes,

Nor is there any whole-hearted desire to demystify modernism among museums, the cornerstones of fine arts institutions – be they called the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim, the Stedelijk, or Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Like the art critics, they are battling with the insoluble dilemma of sitting on the fence: to both open their doors to the general public, and to keep the esoteric tradition alive.<sup>84</sup>

It may seem like the visitors to the charismatic and dialogue-oriented Moderna Museet were, in some sense, “duped” into thinking they were on an equal footing with the institution, while the Museum could carry on being a place for the initiated. The more esoteric elements of art’s history, those that the traditional initiation rites decree can only be attained after intellectual and social trials, remained unavailable to the greater, more generally interested, public. The narratives of the audience-oriented museum, on the one hand, and the elitist museum on the other, are parallel and do not exclude one another. However, the grand narrative that claimed everything was one big, fun party and that anything could happen at Moderna Museet obscures the smaller narrative of a museum for the initiated.

1. Pontus Hultén, "Förord", *John Melin till exempel. En hyllning till det enkla, vackra, lekfulla, konstnärliga, unika, egensinniga, tidlösa, moderna, experimentella*, ed. Johan Melbi, Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1999, p. 1.
2. Venke Aure, Helene Illeris and Hans Örtengen, *Konsten som läranderesurs*, Skärhamn: Nordic Watercolour Museum, 2009; Karin Malmquist, "La Cour des miracles. On Visitors, Learning and Art at Moderna Museet", and Annette Göthlund, "Activities in the Workshop and Zon. Art Education for Children at Moderna Museet", *The History Book. On Moderna Museet 1958–2008*, eds. Anna Tellgren and Martin Sundberg, Stockholm: Moderna Museet and Göttingen: Steidl, 2008, pp. 281–296, pp. 257–280; Anna Lena Lindberg, *Konstpedagogikens dilemma. Historiska rötter och moderna strategier*, Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1991; Birgitta Arvas, "Barn på Moderna Museet – VERKSTAN", *Moderna Museet 1958–1983*, eds. Olle Granath and Monika Nieckels, Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1983, pp. 187–194.
3. Bruce Ferguson, for instance, chooses to consider everything in and around an exhibition as different aspects of mediation: from the colour of the walls and how the works are selected and hung, to catalogues, websites, audio guides, posters, apps, touchscreens, wall texts, folders, guided tours and workshops. Others prefer to include only the various pedagogical resources that the visitor encounters in the exhibition space, such as various text material, guided tours and audio guides. See Anne-Sofie Stampe, *Formidlingens kunst. Om didaktisk-, dialogisk- och medskabende formidlingstilgang til kunststillinger, og hvordan det påvirker museumsgaestens oplevelse*, Kandidatspeciale, Copenhagen: Institution for Kunst- og Kulturvidenskab, University of Copenhagen, 2016, pp. 16–17.
4. Neither Jan Thomæus, Homer Lane, A.S. Neill, Paulo Freire, Ramses Wissa Wassef, Celestin Freinet, Rudolf Broby-Johansen nor Herbert Read are represented in the library.
5. Unsigned text on the Namn och Nytt page, *Dagens Nyheter*, 3 March, 1963.
6. "På tal om kultur. Samtal med museimannen Pontus Hultén", Swedish Radio, 2001. <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=1602&artikel=1767701> (19 September, 2016).
7. See, for instance, *Fylkingen ny musik & intermediakonst. Rikt illustrerad historieskrivning & diskussion för radikal & experimentell konst 1933–1993*, eds. Christian Bock and Teddy Hultberg, Stockholm: Fylkingen, 1994, pp. 167–194, and *Statens Konstsamlingars tillväxt och förvaltning*, published 1960–1966 and archive material "Stockholms studentfilmstudio" in the series "Specialsamling", Swedish Film Institute Library.
8. The signature MARKER, "Konstvisning på Nalen", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 October, 1959.
9. The information on Louise O'Konor is from "Protokoll hållet inför överintendenten", May 1958. Nationalmusei Centrala Kansli (NMCK). NMA MA A 2:77. The information on Anna-Lena Wibom is found in various sources, including the signature Malice, "Tummelplats för konst", *Dagens Nyheter*, 8 May, 1963.

10. K.G. Hultén, "Moderna Museet", *Moderna Museet besöker Oslo* (exh. cat.), ed. Olle Eriksson, Oslo: Kunstnernes Hus, 1966, pp. 7–8.
11. Cf. Benoît Antille, "'HON – en katedral'. Behind Pontus Hultén's Theatre of Inclusiveness", *Afterall*, spring, no. 32, 2013, s. 72–81, and Leif Nylén, "De dyra katalogerna", *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 4 May, 1963.
12. David Rynell Åhlén, *Samtida konst på bästa sändningstid. Konst i svensk television 1956–1969* (diss.), Mediehistoriskt arkiv no. 31, Lund: Mediehistoria, Lund University, 2016, pp. 142–156.
13. Ingela Lind, "Vägarna till Moderna Museet", *Moderna Museet 1958–1983*, 1983, p. 151.
14. For a discussion on Hultén's influence on recruitment at the Museum, see Ingela Lind, *Moderna Museet 1958–1983*, 1983, s. 151–152.
15. More on Carlo Derkert's activities can be found in Jan Bahlenberg, *Den otroliga verkligheten sätter spår. Om Carlo Derkerts liv och konstpedagogiska gärning* (diss.), Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 2001. In 2005, Bahlenberg published the book *Carlo Derkert. Porträtt av en konstvisare*, Hedemora: Gidlunds förlag, 2005. The National Library has Carlo Derkert's archive, which includes his notes on pedagogy in general and art pedagogy in particular. An issue of the magazine *Biblis* was devoted to Carlo Derkert, *Biblis*, no. 57, 2012, edited by Ingrid Svensson and Ulf Jacobsen.
16. *Uttryck, intryck, avtryck. Lärande, estetiska uttrycksformer och forskning*, ed. Ulf P. Lundgren, Uppsala: Uppsala University and the Swedish Research Council, 2006, p. 114.
17. Herbert Read (1893-1968) was a British poet, literary critic and art historian, whose book *Education through Art*, London: Faber and Faber, 1943 had a huge impact on art pedagogy.
18. Ingela Lind, Carlo Derkert and Eva Nordenson, "Om konstbildningen", *Det gamla museet och utställningarna. En konstbok från Nationalmuseum*, ed. Ulf Abel, Årsbok för Svenska statens konstsamlingar 20, Stockholm: Rabén och Sjögren, 1973, p. 91.
19. From Herbert Read, "Introduction", *The Grass Roots of Art. Four Lectures on Social Aspects of Art in an Industrial Age*, Problems of Contemporary Art no. 2, New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, Inc., 1949, p. 21, published in Swedish translation in Jan Thomæus, *Vart tar alla begåvade barn vägen*, Stockholm: Esselte Studium, 1977, p. 70. Various sources reveal the influence of Read's ideals on Moderna Museet's art pedagogy, for instance Anders Beibom, "En rolig väg till konsten", *Barnen och vi*, no. 3, 1963. Here, Derkert, like Read speaks warmly of Plato's thoughts on art as being necessary to the development of the personality.
20. Kristoffer Arvidsson, "Carlo Derkert i efterkrigstidens konstpedagogiska landskap", *Biblis*, no. 57, 2012, p. 37–47.
21. Ingela Lind, Carlo Derkert and Eva Nordenson, *Det gamla museet och utställningarna*, 1973, pp. 93–94.
22. Kristoffer Arvidsson, *Biblis*, no. 57, 2012, s. 39.
23. Ingela Lind, Carlo Derkert and Eva Nordenson Lind, *Det gamla museet och utställningarna*, 1973, p. 90.

24. Conversation between Mette Prawitz, Annika Gunnarsson and Ylva Hillström, 19 April, 2016. The author has the notes from the conversation.
25. Ibid.
26. The signature Malice, "Tummelplats för konst", *Dagens Nyheter*, 8 May, 1963.
27. Conversation with Mette Prawitz, Annika Gunnarsson and Ylva Hillström, 19 April, 2016. See also Birgitta Arvas, *Moderna Museet 1958–1983*, 1983, pp. 187–188.
28. Anette Göthlund, *The History Book*, 2008, p. 268.
29. After being shown in Stockholm, the exhibition toured to Eskilstuna, Gothenburg, Malmö, Copenhagen and Trondheim. A new exhibition with tapestries from Harrania opened at Moderna Museet in 1966, *Egyptiska ungdomar väver 1961–1966*. This was followed by yet another exhibition in 1979 on the same theme, *Barn väver* (Children Weave).
30. Cf. letter from Carlo Derkert to Erik Zahle at Det Danske Kunstinstrimuseum, 4 January, 1961, and correspondence between Carlo Derkert and Anne Gyllenspetz. MMA MA F1:10.
31. A *didactic* exhibition is based on the ambition to teach something. A didactic presentation model is characterised, among other things, by having a distinct beginning and end to an exhibition, with texts telling visitors what they should learn from the exhibition or the separate works. A *dialogic* model assumes that the viewer's own experiences will influence how the art is perceived. The focus is shifted from the sender to the receiver and to the interaction between them. A dialogically mediated exhibition often lacks a distinct beginning or end. Several alternative interpretations and points of departure are presented, and visitors can choose between a variety of activities. A third pedagogical model, which has become more popular in recent years, is the *co-creative* model, as described by Nina Simon in *The Participatory Museum*, Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 2010. Co-creation can be achieved, for instance, by inviting community groups to be advisors when an exhibition is being planned, or by asking external groups to contribute their ideas for exhibitions. The above is a summary of Anne-Sofie Stampe, *Formidlingens kunst*, 2016. See also Venke Aure, Helene Illeris and Hans Örtengren, *Konsten som läranderesurs*, Skärhamn: Nordic Watercolour Museum, 2009.
32. Ingela Lind, Carlo Derkert and Eva Nordenson, *Det gamla museet och utställningarna*, 1973, p. 103.
33. "Moderna Museet 11 år. Återblick från 1969", *Avgörande ögonblick. Moderna Museet firar 50-årsjubileum*, 24 April, 2008, [www.sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=1602&artikel=2052072](http://www.sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=1602&artikel=2052072) (31 May, 2016).
34. Herbert Read, *The Grass Roots of Art*, 1949, p. 21.
35. Letter from Carlo Derkert to Västerbotten County Museum in Umeå, 26 June, 1961. MMA MA F1:10.
36. Ingela Lind, Carlo Derkert and Eva Nordenson, *Det gamla museet och utställningarna*, 1973, pp. 98–99. This opinion was not shared by everyone, apparently. One reviewer notes that *Egyptiska ungdomar väver* was one of the Museum's most captivating exhibitions so far, and that although the

catalogue was “beautiful and amusing”, it was hardly necessary to read all about the weaves in order to get “an overall understanding of the beauty the human spirit is capable of under favourable circumstances”. Alf Liedholm, “Barn i vävstol”, *Upsala Nya Tidning*, 28 December, 1960.

37. Letter from Carlo Derkert to Västerbotten County Council in Umeå, 26 June, 1961. MMA MA F1:10.

38. Visitor numbers are mentioned, for instance, in a letter from Kerstin Stenberg to Kunstindustrimuseet in Copenhagen, 12 April, 1961. MMA MA F1:10.

39. See, for instance, the signature Boel, “Barn skapade unik vävnadskonst”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 29 November, 1960. A couple of weeks later, Ulf Linde wrote about the exhibition: “The exhibition at Moderna Museet is for adults. It should terrify them. A reminder that the price they pay for their prestigious, shiny things is that their children no longer are able to see that which lives in flesh and blood.” Ulf Linde, “Oförvillad bildsyn”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 15 December, 1960.

40. Visitor numbers taken from a summary in the archive. MMA MA F1:12.

41. “Moderna Museet 11 år. Återblick från 1969”, *Avgörande ögonblick. Moderna Museet firar 50-årsjubileum*, 24 April, 2008, [www.sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=1602&artikel=2052072](http://www.sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=1602&artikel=2052072) (31 May, 2016).

42. Uno Grönkvist, “Skrotkonst – skrot eller konst?”, *Folket i bild*, no. 26, 1961, pp. 8–10, 48.

43. One sign says: “CHILDREN UNDER 12 MAY NOT ENTER THE EXHIBITION WITHOUT BEING ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT”; others say: “Do not touch, ask the Museum staff for a demonstration”, and “The black disc can be rotated slowly. Please do not touch the pictorial elements!”. MMA MA F1:11.

44. K.G. Hultén, *Rörelse i konsten*, Moderna Museet exhibition catalogue no. 18, Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1961, p. 1.

45. Göran Odbratt has described one lecture where the speaker showed a picture and said: “Here *we* see a blue chair,” to which Carlo replied, “What do you mean by *we*? How can *you* know what *I* see?” in Göran Odbratt, “Carlo och horisontlinjen. Skisser till ett porträtt av Carlo Derkert”, *Biblis*, no. 57, 2012, p. 32. In this case, Derkert was contradicting the type of formulation that Hultén used in connection with *Rörelse i konsten*. Derkert’s previously quoted statement on *Egyptiska ungdomar väver*, on the necessity of explaining what the tapestries meant in order for people to understand them, is contrary to this, with the important difference that Derkert’s letter about the weaving exhibition is addressed to colleagues who also need to present a content, not directly to the audience.

46. Poster advertising events. MMA MA F1:12.

47. Mail shot to headmasters and teachers at basic and upper secondary schools in Sweden. MMA PHA 4.2.60.

48. See, for example, Lars Gyllensten and Olof Lagercrantz, “‘Rörelse i konsten’ på Moderna Museet. För friheten eller för publiken?”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 18 June, 1961, and Ulf Linde, “Konst som handling”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 18 July, 1961.

49. Olof Lagercrantz writes, for instance that: “The banter, the delight in design, the wittiness, the ridiculing, are all curbed to allow the protest to appear as a refinement in the flirtation with the public and with the public’s values – a caress, or a stroke against the hair, but mostly a caress,” *Dagens Nyheter*, 18 June, 1961; and Ulf Linde: “The words ‘meaning’ and ‘meaningfulness’ have always to me related to states where the rational and the irrational are inseparable. I have certainly not referred to them as ‘total’ – which Sven Sandström seems to infer,” *Dagens Nyheter*, 18 July, 1961.

50. Uno Grönkvist, ”Skrotkonst – skrot eller konst?”, *Folket i bild*, no. 26, 1961.

51. Ibid.

52. Kristian Romare, ”Hej du gamla mobil”, *Vi*, July, 1961.

53. Ingela Lind, Carlo Derkert och Eva Nordenson, *Det gamla museet och utställningarna*, 1973, p. 61.

54. *Vincent van Gogh. Målningar, akvareller, teckningar*, ed. Carlo Derkert and Karin Bergqvist Lindegren, Moderna Museet exhibition catalogue no. 50, Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1965.

55. Visitor numbers are presented in, for instance, *Dagens Nyheter*, 19 December, 1965, and *Expressen*, 20 December, 1965.

56. See correspondence between Carlo Derkert and Willem van Gogh in MMA MA F1a:29.

57. Reply to tender, 4 October, 1965. MMA, F1a:29.

58. See, for instance, *Svenska Dagbladet*, 14 December, 1965, and *Svenska Dagbladet*, 17 December, 1965.

59. Eg. in *Stockholms-Tidningen Söndag*, 17 October, 1965, and the same paper in 16 October, 1965 remarks on the high value of the works in the exhibition (SEK 50 million), and the artist’s biography. “A study in misery” is the title of Martin Strömberg’s article in *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 17 October, 1965. In *Dagens Nyheter*, 16 October, 1965, the heading was ”van Gogh’s nephew shows paintings worth SEK 50 million”. *Expressen* published a long article on van Gogh focusing on the artist’s life: Lars Widding, ”Vad det ändå finns mycket vackert”, *Expressen*, 17 November, 1965.

60. Tord Bækström, “Vincent van Gogh på Moderna museet”, *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-tidning*, 3 November, 1965.

61. For a discussion on group identity, see, for instance, Miles Hewstone, Mark Rubin and Hazel Willis, “Intergroup Bias”, *Annual Review of Psychology*, vol. 53, 2002, pp. 575–604, and Steven Fein and Steven J. Spencer, “Prejudice as Self-Image Maintenance. Affirming the Self Through Derogating Others”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1997, vol. 73, no. 1, pp. 31–44.

62. Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, 2010.

63. Conversation between Mette Prawitz, Annika Gunnarsson and Ylva Hillström, 16 April, 2016.

64. Sven Sjöberg, “Vägar till konsten”, *På fritid*, no. 4, 1959.

65. Unsigned text on the Namn och Nytt page, *Dagens Nyheter*, 3 March, 1963.

66. See, for instance in NM Museum protocol, Statens Konstmuseer and its predecessor, Nationalmusei Centrala Kansli (NMCK). NMA MA A 2:76-83.
67. Conversation between Mette Prawitz, Annika Gunnarsson and Ylva Hillström, 16 April, 2016.
68. Ingrid Borggren, *Dagens Nyheter*, 13 February, 1998.
69. Birgitta Rubin, “Man måste få ha frihet att irritera!”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 26 May, 1991. Altogether, a nostalgia for the 1960s is expressed in connection with the opening of Rafael Moneo’s new building in 1998. See, for instance, Dan Hansson and Mårten Castenfors, *Dagens Nyheter*, 13 February, 1998.
70. *Expressen*, for instance, writes that Pontus Hultén, Carlo Derkert, Karin Bergqvist “and the others” have undertaken research for *The Museum of our Wishes* and that the works were collected around Europe by the driver Karl Axel Hultstrand and the young amanuensis Olle Granath. Lars Widding, “Konstsäsongens största evenemang”, *Expressen*, 20 December, 1963.
71. Ragnhild Prim, “Högklassig konstvägledning”, *ariel*, undated.
72. Leif Nylén, “De dyra katalogerna”, *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 4 May, 1963.
73. As early as 1959, *Expressen* reported that Moderna Museet was a place where visitors were allowed to laugh: ”Of course you’re allowed to talk,” said Mr Derkert ... ‘You don’t need to shout, perhaps. But naturally you can talk. And laugh, too. Because this museum is fun.’” Lars Widding, “‘Urkul’, ‘helknasig’, ‘spännande’, tycker barnen om Moderna Museet”, *Expressen*, 23 January, 1959.
74. Urban Stenström, “Bland tomtar och troll på Moderna museet”, *Svenska Dagbladet*, 23 December, 1962.
75. The signature Viola, “En dag i mars”, *Svenska Dagbladet*, 5 March, 1963.
76. Ulf Linde, *Spejare. En essä om konst*, Stockholm: Bonniers, 1960.
77. Ulf Linde, “Fyra artiklar och tre tal”, *Efter hand. Texter 1950–1985*, Stockholm: Bonniers, 1985. The articles were originally published in *Dagens Nyheter*, on 26 March, 30 March, 4 April and 13 May 1965.
78. For discussion on the concept of open art, see Hans Hayden, *Modernismen som institution. Om etableringen av ett estetiskt och historiografiskt paradigm*, Stockholm, Stehag: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion, 2006.
79. Kristoffer Arvidsson, *Biblis*, no. 57, 2012, p. 44.
80. Ulf Linde, “Konsten är något för några”, *Efter hand. Texter 1950–1985*, Stockholm: Bonniers, 1985, p. 509. Originally published in *Ord och bild*, no. 1, 1969.
81. The historian of religion Mircea Eliade has studied esotericism in depth and proposes that esoteric structures and patterns can exist tacitly under what may appear to be profane: Mircea Eliade, *L’Épreuve du labyrinthe*, Paris: Editions du Rocher, (1978) 2006, p. 159.
82. See, for instance, Roger Lipsey, *The Spiritual in Twentieth-Century Art*, Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, inc., (1988) 2004.
83. Peter Cornell, “Den hemliga modernismen”, *Innanför och utanför modernismen*, eds. Peter Cornell, Sten Dunér, Kenneth Hermele, Thomas Millroth and Gert Z. Nordström, Stockholm: Gidlunds, 1979, p. 100.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 104.