



The History Book

On Moderna Museet 1958–2008

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La Cour des miracles On Visitors, Learning and Art at Moderna Museet

It has probably been Moderna Museet's activities and services for children and young people that have attracted most attention in the field of art education during the fifty years of the museum's existence. However, the primary focus for this study will be how the museum has served its adult public. This involves not just one story but a tangle of many stories that encompass everything from extreme aestheticism to rank politicisation. The stories include legendary individuals such as Carlo Derkert, bold adult education projects such as Moderna Museet Filialen, and art education projects such as *Public Service*. These educational activities have been densely interwoven with overarching notions to do with art, politics and the spirit of the times, and these cannot be dealt with exhaustively here. How is information about art communicated? It is not mediated simply through guided tours, catalogues, wall captions, hosts, audio guides and so on. The aspect of the museum the public encounters on an everyday basis is in fact permeated by educational activity. In other words: to whom does the museum address itself and how?

These questions are wide-ranging and difficult to answer, and instead of providing a comprehensive picture, a few broad strokes will be drawn to show the changes that have taken place at Moderna Museet. Some have been dealt with elsewhere. The fact that there is little documentary evidence concerning adult art education also serves to explain the relative imbalance between art education for children and for adults in the public awareness. Even though this has changed somewhat in that the project form – with its requirements for feedback and the achieving of goals – gained greater acceptance towards the end of the 1990s, there is not a great deal of material to consult in terms of such everyday and self-evident matters as guided tours and textual materials. In the main, I have made use of interviews in order to describe developments at Moderna Museet. These have the additional advantage of providing a different story about the museum than the one which is documented and passed on in the literature. A range of interviews were conducted and press material studied in order to enrich and modulate the image of adult education at this museum.¹

The Court of Miracles

In a 1971 interview in the French periodical *Opus international*, Pontus Hultén presented his view on the role and function of a modern museum of art. Moderna Museet was initially set up around similar concepts to those that pertained for a

traditional nineteenth-century museum, albeit one containing modern works of art. It was a “musée visite” dedicated to the cult of the object. But from the very beginning staff at Moderna Museet had also entertained quite different ambitions, and they became increasingly aware that it was possible to show art and arrange various events that might not have been acceptable or even capable of implementation in other social environments. As Hultén put it, “We played music that could not be played in concert halls, showed films that could not be shown in ordinary cinemas...”² He saw the museum as a kind of “cour des miracles” (a court of miracles) in which society both accepted and permitted the kind of thing that fell outside the norms. In fact, “cour des miracles” refers to neighbourhoods in Paris which serve as a refuge for a shady underworld, for thieves and beggars. But what Hultén presumably intended was that it is a place to which the bourgeois world could turn, offering an alternative to everyday reality and full of quite different opportunities. It was simply a place that provided a measure of freedom, the kind of freedom Hultén wanted Moderna Museet to make available.

The exhibition *Movement in Art (Rörelse i konsten)* was proof that it worked. When it closed on 10 September 1961 having remained open throughout the summer from 16 May onwards, some 70,000 visitors had made their way to Skeppsholmen. This was an impressive figure for contemporary art at that time. The exhibition also encompassed a range of different activities that were unusual in an art museum. Both films and Javanese shadow-plays were shown.³ The unusual design of the invitation card to the party the day before the private view also bears this out.⁴ It was decorated with a drawing that looked “home-made” and calls to mind Hultén's association with *Blandaren*, the students' humorous periodical. “The Friends of Moderna Museet are arranging a colossal party”, an “inauguration party” with “a spring bonfire”. The programme was to start at Moderna Museet with “a performance by Jean Tinguely's drawing machine ‘Meta-Matic 17’ which will spew forth hundreds of drawings every minute in the area in front of the museum”; there would be lunch including “pickled herring, meal, beer, schnapps, etc.” and “dancing to a swinging jazz-band”. The party would continue – a little arrow next to a boat pointed the way – with a “Nachspiel” at the fairground of Gröna Lund that included a dramatic presentation “The Funeral of the Car”, Putte Wickman with his orchestra, the Trinidad Steel-Band, and fireworks. All in, entry to this colossal party cost 25 Swedish kronor.

It is difficult to separate the exhibition from what happened around it. Exhibition time, party time, swing time – this was the Court of Miracles at Moderna Museet. Of course, there can be no question of this amounting to art education in any traditional sense. All the same, it is worth pointing out that – by expanding the range of culture on offer and including other artistic genres – an attempt was made to

← Visitor in 1966 in front of Roy Lindqvist's painting
Tip-Tip-Tip-Tip-Oldefar (1961)

Visitors participating in happening for children, 1969

entice a broader range of visitors to the museum. The aim was to appeal to many people and counteract the fear of art, while being a place for artists to present their work.⁵ Tinguely's *Méta-Matic* 17, for example, made art accessible while turning it into a spectacle at the same time. Despite the fact that it would not be until the 1970s that attention would come to focus on issues to do with the accessibility of museums – who visits them and why? – it is worth highlighting the rather sensational opening hours of Moderna Museet: every day between noon and ten at night.⁶ According to Mette Prawitz, who was an educator at the museum from 1964 to 1968, the rather naïve belief was held that a larger number and broader range of visitors would come to the museum if the opening hours were longer, lasting well into the evening.⁷ This was not how it turned out in practice, and the museum would struggle to attract visitors and to extend the range of their social composition.

Art education of a more traditional kind also existed, of course, and, during the 1960s, primarily consisted of guided tours and programmes, i.e. in a form that is still current and which has remained important through all the decades, as it has at Nationalmuseum, the museum's mother institution. The museum invites guests to conduct guided tours of exhibitions; it arranges lectures, musical soirees and thematic poetry readings in tandem with specific exhibitions. As an example, "Finnish Evenings" were arranged to coincide with the showing of the exhibition *Architecture in Finland* (*Arkitektur i Finland*, 1960); they included lectures, musical soirees of work by Jean Sibelius and Einojuhani Rautavaara, and a poetry evening of recitations of poems by Gunnar Björling, while in another, on 19 March 1965, Olof Lagercrantz gave a lecture on Dante in relation to Robert Rauschenberg's exhibition of illustrations to the *Divine Comedy*.⁸ Artists in particular played an important role in communicating about art, as in the lecture given by John Heartfield, for example, on his own works and the relationship between art and politics.⁹ Guided tours for children, and those open to the public or pre-arranged, were led mainly by the museum staff, but also by guides hired from outside.

A survey of the guided tour programmes for the year 1967 reveals that tours aimed at schools were supported financially by Stockholm city council. The funding was mainly used to pay the study circle leaders. In addition to the museum's own employees, a range of other individuals also served as guides. According to the directives of the local education authority, mandatory visits for first-year pupils at Stockholm's upper secondary schools were to be made to Moderna Museet, while pupils in their second year were to visit Nationalmuseum. A distinction is made in the accounts between the visits stipulated by the education authority and guided tours for schools which were the direct result of arrangements made between the museum and particular schools. The latter category amounted to 347 classes in 1967. In terms of pre-arranged guided tours for adults there were 107 such groups, while 206 public tours were conducted that same year.¹⁰ So as to provide a comparison with the museum of today, it may be mentioned that 207 public tours, 385 pre-arranged tours for adults, 390 school tours and 40 guided tours for pre-school

groups were conducted in 2007.¹¹ These figures confirm that the number of tours open to the public has remained constant and that the number of tours for school groups remains more or less the same, which indicates that these guided tours serve as important means of access for all visitors in every year. In contrast, the number of pre-arranged tours for adults has risen markedly, which not only indicates heightened ambitions but should also be seen in relation to the fact that the total number of visitors has increased.

Mette Prawitz talked in an interview about the guided tours for children and adults that were held during the 1960s.¹² Groups could arrive as early as eight in the morning and Prawitz might have as many as eight guided tours a day in addition to the tours for schools. "We did guided tours until we dropped", she remembered. There were no explicit educational guidelines in place during the 1960s. And no particular method or special theory was relied on in relation to adult education. The museum might receive students from the Institute of Education who would accompany a guided tour for children and then stay on to discuss what they had learnt. Prawitz described the general ideas more in terms of a sort of 1960s spirit which meant that "we believed in the good" – it was important to be receptive, to let your guard down and say what you felt.¹³ This was in line with the optimism that is reflected in the generous opening hours that were meant to entice all sections of the populace to the museum. At the same time Prawitz was also giving courses on modern art history, which for its part represents a traditional approach to the transmission of knowledge. Slides were shown in the museum's small screening room, and the well-attended courses were made up of "ordinary people with an interest in culture".¹⁴ Different types of tours were already being offered in the 1960s, each bearing the stamp of the various art educators. When Prawitz described Karin Bergqvist Lindegren's way of guiding, she used terms such as "strict" and "academic". Bergqvist Lindegren would be an important figure during the 1970s as well and curated exhibitions such as *Emil Nolde* (1967) and *Joseph Beuys* (1971) before becoming director of the museum for a brief period (1978–79). It might be mentioned in exhibition announcements in the daily newspapers that she would be doing the guided tour for the exhibition.¹⁵

Some guided tours tend to be remembered because the guide's personality is expressed with a kind of charisma, a form of stage presence, rather than because of a strict focus on the transmission of knowledge. Experience makes other lasting impressions as does a discourse that involves the visitor and engages his or her own creativity. It may be in the nature of things that the guide visitors to the museum in the 1960s remember above all was the individual who most represented a form of charismatic approach. Carlo Derkert occupied a key position as an educator and guide for both children and adults.¹⁶ Announcements in the newspapers made clear when Carlo Derkert was going to do the guided tour.¹⁷ This may not be as remarkable as it might seem given that he was also the curator responsible for many of the exhibitions.

Mette Prawitz described Derkert's guided tours in the following ways. When it came to the public tours on Sundays

in particular, so many people might turn up that Derkert had to stand on a chair in the middle of the hall and speak from this position rather than wandering between the selected works as was customary. Derkert used everyday language, often full of similes; he was extraordinarily analytical and capable of communicating the most intellectual theories in a comprehensible way. The apparently unexpected, off-the-cuff comments that were in fact carefully planned and rehearsed were part of his charm.¹⁸ Something he said he had seen on the way to the museum would be linked during the guided tour to a detail in a painting. For his listeners, these cross-references between art and everyday life “lowered the threshold” to the works.¹⁹

Since Derkert was one of the curators and worked closely with Pontus Hultén and, moreover, was one of the few people actually employed by the museum, he was in a position to exert influence over the entire range of activities. His was a unique situation in comparison with the art educators of the 1970s and 1980s. It should also be pointed out that he influenced other educators at the museum. When a new exhibition opened, such as *The Inner and the Outer Space* (*Den inre och den yttre rymden*, 1965) or *4 Americans* (*4 amerikanare*, 1962), it was Derkert who started the guided tours. The other guides could then accompany his tours to gain inspiration for the way their own tours would be structured. Having the curator responsible for an exhibition guide the other educators around the exhibition is a practice that has been maintained ever since at the museum.

New Art, New Opportunities

There is very little material concerning Carlo Derkert's vision of what art education should be that was written by himself.²⁰ A key source is thus a published debate between Derkert, Ingela Lind and Eva Nordenson.²¹ The discussion deals in part with the difference in the approaches employed by Nationalmuseum, represented by Eva Nordenson, and Moderna Museet. Herbert Read was a vital source of inspiration for Derkert as the conversation makes clear.²² Read's anti-authoritarian educational approach, expressed in such works as *Education Through Art* (1943), which emphasised the process of teaching and the importance of self-expression, influenced many people and brings those voices to mind who assert the importance of the experience of art rather than factual knowledge.

The guided tours were commented on in the debate since they were an important aspect in terms of the interface between the museum and its visitors. Derkert saw a difference between the guided tour as a journey of knowledge and one of discovery. Although he said that he did not underestimate the importance of knowledge, he could see no intrinsic value in it. “Living”, in contrast, “is a voyage of discovery. Going to a museum involves discovering oneself through images – through them a whole heap of experiences are acquired already formulated.”²³ When meeting the visitors to the museum, his aim was therefore to forget all knowledge, all “the rote learning”, and communicate a subjective experience instead: that art need not be a solemn affair. Derkert observed

of his own position that it was based on his particular background, “in which no great distinction was made between ordinary people and painters.” This attitude may also have a bearing on what Derkert also described as a difference vis-à-vis Nationalmuseum, namely, “It was a new situation for us guides as well: finding ourselves right at the heart of what was contemporary – feeling just as unsure as any member of the public.”²⁴ Doing guided tours of contemporary art meant that there was no intellectual tradition to fall back on as was the case in terms of the older and more established art on show at Nationalmuseum.

A difference emerges from the debate in the way art education was seen by Eva Nordenson, who worked at Nationalmuseum, and Carlo Derkert. On the basis of her conviction that “we see what we know”, Nordenson believed that many people conceive of a work of art as a puzzle that has to be solved. The museum therefore had to provide “adults with a degree of knowledge so they can feel secure enough to make use of the tools, so to speak. So that they can go on to unlock the painting on their own.”²⁵ She also asserted the importance of historical knowledge about the artists' own times, as, for example, in the way we now understand why Gustave Courbet was a radical figure to his contemporaries, while seeming conventional to us.²⁶ What Derkert maintained was the importance of the observer finding a personal means of access to the painting, and he toned down the significance of a strictly knowledge-based approach, “Although you do have to create an atmosphere in which anyone can feel able to say, ‘But I really like this one’. That's when you have got somewhere.”²⁷ Nordenson and Derkert both maintained that they wanted to avoid value judgements, which they regarded as antiquated, and emphasised instead other kinds of engagement. Material and technique were emphasised for “the sake of their dry objectivity” while on other occasions the guided tour became more of a “performance” in which Derkert adopted a different role.²⁸ It is interesting that in the conversation Derkert maintained that he thought it was important to inform the public about his sources and about the fact that he really had explored the subject in depth in order not to appear infallible. This declaration about knowledge may be contrasted with Derkert's own approach in relation to the technique he used in his guided tours which were supposed to appear spontaneous and casual and which were, in fact, carefully prepared and rehearsed and, moreover, repeated through many tours.²⁹ The positions adopted by Nordenson and Derkert in the conversation should also be taken with a pinch of salt in so far as they were conducting a polemic against each other. Quite clearly, knowledge was of key importance to Derkert, and constant reference to his charisma alone means neglecting how much knowledge and work lay behind it.

An interesting point of contact between Nordenson and Derkert was to be found in their view of how to cure the so called museo-phobia of some visitors. Nordenson wanted an introductory room to be set up for children and adults in which easy combinations of words and images could lead the visitor deeper into the museum, in parallel to the existing

study room where study circle leaders were on hand to provide the tools to understanding art. This introductory room was, in other words, an extension of the approach to communicating knowledge Nordenson advocated. In this room one would be given the keys to art on a more or less abstract level. The key concept is “to explain”.³⁰ While Derkert was obviously not opposed to this idea of communicating knowledge, he put forward “the workshop” as a vital aspect of the communication strategy at Moderna Museet. He pointed out that the very idea of the workshop is entrenched in the museum’s ways of working and that the museum often functioned as a studio for the artists who built their installations on site. This was not a model that could be employed by Nationalmuseum which presents the painting, drawings, prints and sculpture of past masters. What Derkert meant by the concept of the workshop found its most obvious expression in exhibitions such as *She – A Cathedral (Hon – en katedral*, 1966) by Niki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely and Per Olof Ulltvedt and *The Model (Modellen*, 1968) by Palle Nielsen (1968). These exhibitions were constructed on site by the artists, together with the staff on occasion, and in contrast with other installations that were built on site, such as Paul Thek’s *Pyramid* (1971–72), they were works that were not complete until they were activated and put to use by the visitors. *The Model – A Model for a Qualitative Society* was, as the full title suggests, a proposal for a different way of organising society as a whole. As part of the exhibition, the visitor/citizen was invited to participate actively in the construction of the work/society. These grandiose ambitions may be considered to be an outcome of the 1960s belief in the capacity of art to change society. “This was an idea that society never put to use”, Derkert said, and, despite the fact that *The Model* was reenacted in similar fashion in Gothenburg and Västerås, it remained a temporary and isolated phenomenon: “it was never realised that models of this kind could be built as permanent parts of suburban neighbourhoods...”³¹ Derkert considered this to be a betrayal and looked back nostalgically to the dynamism and experimental spirit of the 1960s.

Carlo Derkert took a very positive view of Hultén’s court of miracles and took pains to point out that art education could be so much more than guided tours. In addition to lectures and concerts in direct connection with the exhibitions, Moderna Museet introduced a new element in the 1960s in the form of “parallel activities”, which were not necessarily directly connected to the collections and the exhibitions. The museum wanted to become a centre for film – primarily the youthful, controversial and experimental films that were made after the Second World War. But also for theatre, dance and music which, according to Derkert, lacked a forum, and for which space could be provided at Moderna Museet. Derkert wrote:

*With its collections serving as a core, the museum increasingly developed into a contemporary museum for all kinds of artistic activity. The determined posture adopted by the museum in various fields amounted to an educational contribution of major importance.*³²

The parties of the 1960s, the programmes, happenings, concerts, debates, film shows and so on still contribute even today to the image of Moderna Museet as youthful, dynamic and at the centre of cultural events. But every age must come to an end. Even by the beginning of the 1970s, the court of miracles was no longer the same place in the eyes of the surrounding world and, in 1971, Pontus Hultén would say that after the events of May 1968 many people considered the modern museum of art to be a closed and isolated place in which everything was permitted because it had no effect on social reality.³³ Two years later, Derkert commented on their earlier naivety and on what turned out to be their failed attempt to attract a broader range of visitors to the museum, “We have also become aware of how class-bound we are as cultural institutions – with many social groups still remaining completely excluded.”³⁴

Moderna Museet was forced to adapt to the new social climate. In his book *Den öppna konsten* (1998), Leif Nylén described how a form of aesthetic radicalism was replaced towards the end of the decade by a political one.³⁵ And yet these forms of radicalism were not entirely distinct. Open and interdisciplinary forms of art were the first to challenge established values and bring things to a head. Out of this art there then emerged a radical impulse which would be reproduced in society and culture. “This is a meandering and erratic process, full of contradictions, ideological kick-turns and changes of role,” Nylén wrote and he continued, “What begins with *Movement in Art* ends as a movement out of art [...]”³⁶ The setting up of Moderna Museet Filialen (*filial* means branch or sub-division) in 1971 can be seen as embodying this change of climate.

From Freedom of Expression to Opportunity for Expression

Moderna Museet Filialen was seen by some people as just such a movement out of art, while others considered its operations as perhaps one of the boldest and most comprehensive adult education projects to take place at Moderna Museet. Its far-reaching ambition was to experiment with a new relationship with the public. When what had previously been a 500 square metre dining room in Kasern III for the naval recruits on Skeppsholmen and which lay close to the museum became available, the opportunity opened up. “The project came into being in March 1971 in order to relieve the pressure on the museum brought about by the wave of activities including music, dance, theatre, new visual media, debates, meetings, parties etc. which increased enormously towards the end of the 1960s and at the beginning of the 70s,” Pär Stolpe wrote in 1974 in his concluding report.³⁷

Stolpe both started Moderna Museet Filialen and ran it from March 1971 to July 1973 when the operation was ended. His background was in alternative cultural activities in Stockholm, and his aim with Filialen was to explore how a social and political situation could be incorporated within the culture. In 1969 he had produced the exhibition *Sweden Abroad (Sverige bilden i utlandet)* as part of the inauguration of Stockholm’s new Sweden House. The exhibition was politically controversial because Stolpe chose to present a version

of Sweden that failed to correspond to the one the politicians and the Swedish Institute wanted to communicate.³⁸ Hultén was interested in what was taking place in the wake of 1968 and Moderna Museet Filialen may be seen as a radicalisation of the exhibition programme in which the viewer was invited to participate actively in the artworks and in the exhibitions. In the case of Filialen, however, what developed was a practice of allowing the visitors to arrange their own exhibitions, and this differed markedly from how the museum operated and what it showed.

In 1969 Hultén and Stolpe were among those appointed by the City Council to form part of a group of experts for the planned Kulturhuset in Stockholm. Their task was to put forward a proposal concerning the form and design of Kulturhuset's cultural operations. Among the proposals Hultén and Stolpe considered was transferring a form of museal activity to the site at the central plaza Sergels torg, and there were plans to move Moderna Museet there. The idea of moving the museum from Skeppsholmen to a newly constructed building in the centre of Stockholm was entirely consistent with the view of culture taken by the Ministry of Education and Ecclesiastical Affairs, and there was great disappointment when the plans failed to become reality.³⁹

Pär Stolpe arrived at Moderna Museet in 1969 and was expected to be the linchpin of Moderna Museet as a radical venue.⁴⁰ He himself described the situation as tricky since this "radical museum" was not always appreciated by the influential association of the Museum's Friends (Moderna Museets Vänner).⁴¹ There were tensions between the various camps, and Stolpe mentioned spectacular collisions. The Friends of Moderna Museet might, for example, be having a members' meeting in one room at the same time as the Black Panthers were showing a film in another. Pontus Hultén was amused by the fact that these extremes could be housed simultaneously at the museum and liked to appear in both camps. In contrast, Stolpe would come to focus increasingly on Filialen and that project's goal of including all the various groups in society. The fact that there was a degree of scepticism towards what Stolpe was doing is borne out by a brief account by Per Bjurström. He maintains that Stolpe's work was moved "outside the walls" in order to get "clearer operational parameters and clarify the nature of the division of responsibilities", which, according to Bjurström, were necessary because the results Stolpe had previously achieved under the protection of his unaccountable position were extremely provocative, and frequently lay outside the boundaries of his job description, as well.⁴² Bjurström refers to the intervention by the parliamentary auditors in 1971 as evidence. Bjurström is unsympathetic in other words and misses the point of Stolpe's political engagement, although at the same time maintaining that through his exhibitions "at the margins of visual arts", Stolpe's aim was "to do the groundwork for a documentary record of the neglected areas of the collection while attracting new groups of visitors who were less accustomed to museums."⁴³ Like Stolpe, he also wanted to broaden the concept of the visual image, but the way he saw knowledge remained firmly entrenched in the traditions

of the museum without any radicalisation of its approach.

Pär Stolpe makes a distinction between classical art training and a radical form of adult education.⁴⁴ On the one hand, there is the bourgeois establishment stipulating what is worth seeing and what is good and bad, and – on the other – there is an aim to educate people so as to help them deal with the world and to be able to say that this is the life and society they want to create while using their own values as the starting point. This meant giving members of the public the tools and the opportunities for self-expression, and it is here in essence that we find links with the views both of Nordenson and Derkert, albeit with distinct political overtones. What was needed to turn these ideas into reality was a direct encounter between the visitors and the museum. The idea behind Moderna Museet Filialen was to see if something could be made of the creative energies liberated by this meeting. During the spring of 1971, for example, anyone could send in to Filialen any kind of picture. The walls were still empty when the time came for the press show and the private view. But subsequently the exhibition would grow day by day until a thousand or so works had been collected, all of which were exhibited under the title *Folks bilder (People's Pictures)*.⁴⁵

A typical exhibition consisted of simple screen dividers on which text and images would be mixed. As an example, the exhibition *Reklam – en förvanskad bild av samhället (Advertising – a distorted image of society)* was shown from January to March 1972. It had been put together by a "working committee within the Unga Filosofers' mass media group" and consisted of a "wide-ranging exhibition which was built on site" mounted on wall screens and made up of photographs, drawings, posters, newspaper articles, advertising signs, photographed and blocked letter texts, objects and slides, as well as book table and a nook for tea.⁴⁶ The working committee wrote that their aim was to demonstrate the distorted image of reality that advertising communicates through lies and behind which lies "difficult and hazardous labour. The exploitation of wage-earners. Products that harm us and poison our environment. Goods that put us into debt."⁴⁷ The exhibition did not only consist of what was mounted on the dividers: discussion evenings were also arranged with individuals from the advertising industry, as well as musical evenings and "an EEC evening with the parish association of Sollentuna".⁴⁸ The programme arranged for the six weeks the exhibition lasted was an extensive one. The exhibition received 8,000 visitors. This example clearly demonstrates the scale of the ambitions that were entertained, what was required of those who exhibited and the fact that the arrangers were receptive to different kinds of exhibition and were genuinely keen to ensure that attention was brought to bear on the visual culture of contemporary society. In the words of Bo Lagercrantz, efforts were being made to allow the mechanically reproduced image into the museum, "Shakespeare in Swedish could hardly be further from the original than Rembrandt on a transparency."⁴⁹ As the Advertising-exhibition clearly demonstrates, the aim was to explore the effectiveness of images and to reflect reality.⁵⁰ At issue was a forum in which people could express their views,

[Images removed due to copyright restrictions]

in words and in pictures, “the powers behind adult education have for far too long focused their operations on the printed word alone – in keeping with our educational traditions. But they have begun to realise what their obligations are to the realm of the image.”⁵¹ In his report, Pär Stolpe put it thus:

*Moderna Museets Filial demonstrated an enormous need for premises in which an informative and critical exhibition programme could be mounted, a place that would be open to everyone interested in communicating ideas to others. It was obvious right from the start that it was a fundamental requirement of freedom of expression that such premises should exist.*⁵²

Moderna Museet Filialen was established on an experimental basis and was only intended to last for a limited period of time. Its exhibitions were very dissimilar although they often shared a left-wing angle of approach. Examples would be *My Home is Palestine* (*Mitt hem är Palestina*), made up of photographs by Odd Uhrbom and organised in collaboration with the Friends of Fotografiska Museet, *The People and the Walls of Power* (*Folkets och Maktens Murar*) by Gun Kessle and Jan Myrdal, *Women* (*Kvinnor*) by Grupp 8 and *Mera mat för pengarna!* (*More food for money!*) by Matpriskommittén (Food Price Committee). During the brief period of Moderna Museet Filialen's existence, no less than 216 “activities” took place, both as part of the exhibitions and as autonomous programmes.

The fact that this operation attracted both censure from its critics and devotion from its public is reflected in the articles which bear on Moderna Museet Filialen. Barely a year after its closure, Bent Olvång was to comment, “It [*Filialen. Rapporten*] makes admirably clear that the kind of museum pedagogy that was practised at Moderna Museet Filialen is necessary if the primary institutions Moderna Museet and Nationalmuseum are to avoid becoming pompously antiquarian.”⁵³ But what did Moderna Museet Filialen represent in terms of art educational practice? This was an enterprise that was far removed from the introductory room at Nationalmuseum and a knowledge-communicative educational approach. It was not about making keys and tools available but about inviting members of the public to create their own exhibitions instead. Visitors were to be helped to portray and express themselves in the design of an exhibition. Pär Stolpe relates the ideas around Filialen to the history of adult education in Sweden, in which – as has been mentioned – he sees two main trends: a classical form of art education which deals with how a bourgeois establishment refers to what is “good or bad”, while a radical educational approach is concerned with educating yourself as a means of dealing with the world; using one's own values so as to be able to say this is the life and the society I want to create.⁵⁴ This proximity to the people was also expressed in the aesthetics of the exhibitions which, to judge by the documentary photographs, brought a

home-made quality to mind. Screen dividers were used; there was a great deal of explanatory text, and it all seemed improvised. This was not just the result of inadequate resources but should definitely be seen as being consistent with the stated ambition of counteracting museo-phobia. Bo Lagercrantz, who was a key actor in the radical cultural sphere and whose social exhibitions at Stockholm's City Museum preceded Stolpe's enterprise, defends this relative poverty in the report as follows:

*Many of Moderna Museet Filialen's exhibitions appeared deficient from a technical standpoint. This is partly because of inadequate resources, which are also accounted for here. And partly it has to do with a lack of familiarity and skill on the part of the groups who were enabled to put forward their message. In the case of the latter, these deficiencies often reflected in very expressive fashion both the ambition and the need for such opportunities to mount exhibitions. [...] And yet many people found the rather less than professional expressions of views in exhibition form all the more difficult to accept. But this is of course the way to extend debate to the people at local level.*⁵⁵

This exhibition aesthetics stands in contrast to Stolpe's report, which had been carefully put together and was very detailed, unlike so much of the core activity of the museum during the first decade.⁵⁶ The activities of Filialen came close to what Stolpe, Hultén and the other members of the expert group were hoping to achieve with Kulturhuset. It was supposed to work as a whole, to be “close to the street” while not setting up barriers to a broad range of visitors. But its artistic content was jejune and contrasted with what Moderna Museet increasingly wanted to represent – particularly under Philip von Schantz, who was director from 1973 to 1977.

Critical Voices and Alchemical Art Education

When the ambitious plans for a museum of modern art in the centre of Stockholm failed to be realised, and Moderna Museet was inaugurated instead on Skeppsholmen, without even benefiting from the space that had been hoped for out there, the museum lost its way.⁵⁷ At least, this is the image that is usually evoked. Hultén left Stockholm for Paris and it seemed as though the party that was the 1960s was finally over. The museum looked for new avenues to explore. Criticism of the shortcomings in the adult art education programmes of the museum would grow during the 1970s.

At the launch of the rehang of the museum's collection, the whole enterprise came in for strongly-worded criticism in an article by Torsten Bergmark: “The dying international avantgarde is presented in all the isolation and exaltation of a museum. [...] The hang of the collections has been carried out without any pedagogical approach, without helpful descriptions and without any attempt to locate the works of art in a social context or a period.”⁵⁸ Bergmark considered that this was entirely deliberate on the part of the management. Nor did he think oral presentations helped to any great extent. “The museum as currently constituted is aimed primarily at the established cultural elite who already enjoy the cultural

Jan Myrdal presents the exhibition *The People and the Walls of Power* in Filialen, 1971; Catti Brandelius (Miss Universum) as guide, 1999; installation view from the exhibition *Grupp 8* in Filialen, 1972; Carlo Derkert

frames of reference required – together with the values inherited from their limited social milieu.”⁵⁹

When Philip von Schantz took over as director of the museum, he faced an uphill battle. Swedish artists were still annoyed over the exhibition *New York Collection* (1973) at the museum, which had led in their view to the neglect of Swedish art.⁶⁰ Moderna Museet Filialen was also closed down and the new director, who was unwilling to pursue this project, was blamed. Pär Stolpe was among those who argued against Philip von Schantz and, in a radio interview, he declared that the museum had now become a “vast and trite public art gallery”.⁶¹ Torsten Bergmark maintained in an article that the museum had distanced itself from the public it had succeeded in attracting during the 1960s and that there was no desire to relate to contemporary visual media. He proposed:

*In order for the museum not to become an antiquarian establishment that deals only with art, prestigious objects of increasingly peripheral interest, a radical change in the direction of the museum will sooner or later become necessary, to transform it from a museum for “modern art” – which is becoming increasingly difficult to define both in terms of genre and period – into a contemporary museum for all forms of visual communication.*⁶²

Philip von Schantz’s exhibiton policy may not have been as radical as that of Pär Stolpe and was closer in spirit to that of Nationalmuseum, but this does not explain the ferocity of the criticism. There was a fundamental opposition implicit in the manner in which Stolpe and von Schantz expressed themselves: Stolpe referred to images, von Schantz to art. The former wanted to introduce the visual reality of the mass media to the museum, while the latter strove to refine further the way the museum worked and show painting and sculpture of a certain quality. The fact that von Schantz chose Ulf Linde as curator may have contributed to the criticism of the museum’s aesthetic and exclusive approach.⁶³ In a debate which took place at the turn of the year 1975–76, which included the critical article by Bergmark referred to, von Schantz defended himself and referred to the aim of establishing a study room:

*We hope during the coming year to be able to supplement our guided tours with literature, filmstrips and television cassettes. What I maintained [...] is that art that has been created in our own time should be given the chance it deserves to speak for itself. The knowledge artists communicate has to be derived from their works. Obscuring the viewer’s line of sight with the insensitivity of a know-all and a forest of pointers simply demonstrates contempt for both the artist and the public.*⁶⁴

Thomas Millroth and Göran Dahl picked up this thread and, like Bergmark, attacked Moderna Museet in a jointly written article in which they maintained that the museum “was failing to meet the elementary requirements for a museum.”⁶⁵ They described the museum under Philip von Schantz’s leadership in the following terms:

*Philip von Schantz defends Moderna Museet and thus also Ulf Linde’s unpedagogical hang of the collections. “Contemporary art ought to be able to speak for itself. Obscuring the viewer’s line of sight with the insensitivity of a know-all and a forest of pointers simply demonstrates contempt for both the artist and the public,” he writes. [...] Until now he has actually succeeded in avoiding all the low-lying scrub. The educational shortcomings are striking. Any normally competent visitor would have to be appalled at the lack of information; the confrontation with dazzling works of art [is] entirely cut off from any form of explanation.*⁶⁶

Dahl and Millroth missed “the dynamic museum pedagogy of the 1960s” and among the things they called for were an “artothèque” and a library. They encouraged Philip von Schantz to invest more in “public-friendly and pedagogical devices” instead of allowing contemporary art to speak for itself. In Philip von Schantz’ view, the museum and its curators should keep in the background so as to allow the works of art to stand forth.⁶⁷ His own artistic endeavours may have contributed to this position, to a museum that existed for the sake of art and the artist.

Criticism of a bourgeois, institutionalised and aestheticised view of art is clearly formulated in the anthology *Innanför och utanför modernismen* (1979) by Peter Cornell, Sten Dunér, Kenneth Hermele, Thomas Millroth and Gert Z. Nordström. They write in the foreword that they want to see “art as a social institution that is governed and defined by laws” and that this institution of the visual arts would encompass “forms of production, a distribution network of private galleries and museums, the art trade, art criticism, the public, the various roles artists play and the expectations of the nature of art that are the foundation for something being ‘designated’ as art.”⁶⁸ Cornell concludes his article “Den hemliga modernismen” with criticism clearly aimed at Moderna Museet as a place for the initiated. He bases his analysis on esoteric doctrines, such as theosophy and alchemy, and he demonstrates how they can both form an integral part of Modernism and be an outgrowth from it. This does not make for greater accessibility, but rather intensifies the cult derived from Romanticism of the artist as genius.⁶⁹ Cornell goes on to write, “nor is there any heartfelt desire to demystify modernism on the art of the museums [...] whether they are called the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Stedelijk or Moderna Museet in Stockholm.”⁷⁰ Cornell manages to put his finger on the dilemma facing museums here, “having to bestride two stools: to be accessible to the general public while keeping an esoteric tradition alive.”⁷¹ Philip von Schantz is described as “a latter-day alchemist” intent on preserving the aura of the work of art and avoiding a targeted art-educational approach in consequence.⁷²

Cornell’s criticism of the way the museums divide their public into the initiated and uninitiated is based on a political and economic view of museums. Living artists who work in the esoteric tradition are rewarded by the institution and the current status of Modernist art may not be called into question because of the considerable financial stakes

involved. The esoteric functions in other words as a language of power. It is here, too, that the influence of private capital is noticeable. Cornell mentions American museums such as the Guggenheim and MoMA but also points out that “private capital and influence have been brought to bear in publicly-owned museums through various forms of ‘associations of friends’”.⁷³ Moderna Museet is not mentioned explicitly, but in the concluding section Cornell makes this linkage very obvious:

*And so we end up with the celebrated extravagance of the art world with its ritual openings to which the select few are invited, those lavish previews for the “Friends” of Moderna Museet, before the general public are granted access: the whole thing reminiscent of a kind of modern, and yet ghostly, Masonic ceremony.*⁷⁴

He goes on to write:

*Purely from the financial viewpoint of the investors, the museums have to serve as guarantors against any uncomfortable falls in the rate of exchange. If the artworks they contain are ripped from their historical contexts and presented instead as cult objects, they can take on the mystical charge and eternally esoteric aura their position on the art market requires. A lack of art education is in consequence also a form of education.*⁷⁵

What Cornell sees as problematic in other words is the fact that the museums refrain from explaining art and thus deliberately contribute to its mystification. Knowledge remains abstract and not commonplace; museo-phobia is consolidated – and what is more: this is necessary in order to safeguard the values that are now being paid homage to, namely the monetary ones. A lack of art education works in this context to serve the interests of the market, i.e. attempts are made to maintain these values and communicate them to the public. It is vital to preserve the aura surrounding the work of art and to underline the expertise of the museum, particularly in terms of the canonisation of certain kinds of art. Cornell wants the museums to recognise instead that art is not created in a vacuum.⁷⁶ This criticism may indeed be overly partial – one need only think of *Ararat* (1976) as an exhibition that was close to everyday life – but it still strikes a chord in broad terms with reference to art in “the white cube”.

The Girls in the Workshop

Moderna Museet continued to grow during the 1980s and, with the expansion of its organisational structure, the role of education would also change within the museum. As has been shown, the small-scale nature of operations during the 1960s meant that a curator such as Carlo Derkert was able to alternate between mounting exhibitions and working on the educational side since professional roles could be more fluid. But changes in the division of labour increasingly meant that educationalists were not involved in exhibition production while curators worked primarily on exhibitions, even though they continued to provide guided tours of the

ones they themselves produced. The educational activities of the museum continued to be practised in tried and tested fashion, which is to say in the current terminology as part of mainstream operations, and the Workshop remained an important part of this.

With Peter Cornell’s criticism of the museum in mind, the suspicion arises that the museum failed to make a priority of art education, and there would be little change during the following decade. Nor was Olle Granath, who was head of Moderna Museet for almost all of the 1980s, able to recall that educational issues were at the top of the agenda.⁷⁷ The challenge confronting the museum was to get the public to come back. Visitor numbers were not encouraging during the 1970s; the press were not always merciful and the management of the museum was seeking to find a new approach. The decision was therefore made to show – alongside more modest contemporary exhibitions – the modern classics, the kind of art that would by now find a receptive audience in the general public. *Marc Chagall* (1983) became an unexpected hit, and this exhibition was followed by *Henri Matisse* (1984–85) and *Pablo Picasso* (1988).⁷⁸ Considering the positive visitor numbers it is interesting to explore how the museum received these large groups of visitors.

During the setting up of the exhibitions, discussions were held about mediating their content that were according to Granath, “at their most intense between the educators and in the preserve of the Workshop in particular.”⁷⁹ In keeping with the prevailing model, the exhibitions were first shown by the curator responsible to the art educators, who would then transmit the knowledge acquired to members of the public. Even though there was little discussion of educational matters outside the Workshop, it was there although its activities “only took place” as a matter of tradition, according to the then curator Lars Nittve.⁸⁰ The Workshop played a key role in the externally oriented activities of the museum, and the events that were known as the summer exhibitions, which showed a selection of what children and adults had made during the year, were always well-received. Major exhibitions on educational matters, such as *A Child has 100 Languages* (*Ett barn har hundra språk*, 1981) about the creative educational approach at local authority preschools in Reggio Emilia, also attracted a great deal of attention. “The Girls in the Workshop” had become an institution.⁸¹ Working with children was considered by some people to be a charming form of minor activity and “the girls in the workshop” were often entrusted with the task of making the decorations for parties and such events.

A certain resistance to educational texts would nevertheless linger on at the museum all the same. The emphasis was on promoting the catalogue during the 1960s, and there were no captions in the exhibition rooms. The catalogues were small-scale and always contained an inventory to facilitate the visitor’s orientation around the exhibition where a work of art might only be identified by a number. Although the aim was to sell catalogues, efforts were also made to create an aesthetic experience of art without the use of pointers. This was confirmed in the interview with Olle Granath, in

which he maintained that seeing works of art should involve an experience of art, and not of reading. He also pointed out that the more demanding an exhibition concept was, the more the visitor might need guidance.⁸² This had already been underlined by the assignment of lavish catalogues to exhibitions such as *The Inner and the Outer Space* and would become increasingly apparent during the 1980s in the catalogues for exhibitions such as *Vanishing Points (Flyktpunkter, 1984)* and *Implosion (1987–88)*. And it was in the 1980s, in particular, that a more substantial form of the exhibition catalogue became characteristic of the museum. A large volume was published for Picasso, while exhibitions such as *Hilma af Klint* and *Kandinsky och Sverige* (both were shown 1989–90) were furnished with hardback catalogues containing extensive texts. Textual material was allowed in other words, but had to remain outside the exhibition space, while Moderna Museet moved one step further towards taking on the role of the more established museums in terms of the writing of art history. The knowledge that had been acquired was made authoritative by being produced in book form.

During the 1980s, guided tours remained the primary educational technique in use. These were conducted mainly by internal educators and exhibition curators, but also by freelance guides. Initially art educators were frequently employed on a casual basis; with the passage of time they would be seasonally employed and this arrangement could then become a permanent job.⁸³ As more and more people were employed in the Workshop, they increasingly took over responsibility for the guided tours, both for adults and children. Demand for pre-arranged tours could be enormous for hit shows such as the exhibitions of the modern classics. When the telephone booking lines for the Picasso exhibition opened, for example, all the guided tours were fully booked within a matter of a few hours.⁸⁴

At this point the Workshop was not a department of its own, and its operations would appear to have been organised on a different basis to other parts of the museum. It was important that the Workshop operated at a profit and, as Susanna Rydén Danckwardt put it, the educators were expected to “pay their salaries” through their efforts.⁸⁵ In some cases, the educators were not employed over the summer when they had to “sign on” instead, or earn their keep in some other way.

Educational Projects

It was during the late 1990s that art education became professionalised at Moderna Museet. The new head of the museum had been recruited from England, where art education was seen quite differently. The British idea of public service meant that the goal of museums was to reach a broad general public. Museums were supposed to be readily and directly accessible to all, and art had to be explained and disseminated to large numbers of people. An interest in social issues was also apparent in David Elliott’s major thematic exhibitions: *Wounds (Sår, 1998)* and *After the Wall (Efter muren, 1999)*. Large and comprehensive catalogues were produced for these exhibitions and they contained a great deal of textual

and visual material. Since the catalogues were not particularly handy, a small folder was also produced for *After the Wall* to make things easier for the visitor: a clear indication of the desire to communicate.

Of course, professionalisation was also connected with the fact that the museum had become a much larger organisation, and this meant there was scope for a range of different roles. The new organisational structure that came into force on 1 January 1998 included a unit for art communication which had its own director and included the Workshop. This unit which was charged with responsibility for communicating about art was given a clear mandate to work on projects which targeted particular groups within the general public. Educational work was restructured and one of the outcomes was that the “girls in the Workshop” were assigned job titles, permanent positions and more specified tasks, such as creating a website for the museum.⁸⁶

While the guided tours remained a key component of the educational and informational activities, a number of projects were also developed outside the museum’s mainstream operations. The project form was a new way of working that would be characteristic of developments in the 1990s. It was a response both to the spirit of the age and to new opportunities for financing various kinds of activity which were not an established part of museum practice. External funding was sought for some of these projects, such as *Transit*.⁸⁷ It was in this area, as well, and in connection with Elliott’s ideas, that collaborative ventures were developed with art colleges. An example of this approach would be *Public Service* which was a collaborative project carried out in the autumn of 1999 with the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design (Konstfack). After many years of working in art education for both children and adults, Elisabet Skoglund brought her career at the museum to a close with a comprehensive project aimed at considering – from many different angles – the issues raised by the relationship between art education, the public and the artist.⁸⁸ This might be interpreted as art education having reached a point at which it had become “self-reflexive”, looking back on itself and its ways of conveying knowledge. Art education had been drawn, somewhat tardily, into the same postmodern questioning of its own identity that art itself had recently been involved in; a process which might entail a consideration from many angles of “the white cube” or an analysis of the relationship between image and reality. The project Elisabet Skoglund both initiated and ran was a collaborative venture between Moderna Museet and pupils and professors from the Academy of Fine Arts in Umeå, Malmö Art Academy and the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm. It resulted in three exploratory exhibitions at the museum, of which *Public Service* by the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design is an example. The students were tasked with exploring, problematising and activating the relationship between art and the public. Its terms of reference were restricted to the museum and its operations and, in a postmodernist spirit, the project explored what showing an exhibition actually involved. Here we see a

gradual muddying of the boundary between the museum's operations and a process of active intervention.

It is telling that the museum's major venture into contemporary art from 1998 to 2001 was assigned the title *Moderna Museet Project*. This venture was particularly significant in that it served to expand the public space of art for which the walls of the museum no longer constituted a boundary. The museum was declared to be "adaptable to the needs of art" and even though the project was based in a room in neighbouring Prästgården, previously a priest's residence, its operations were frequently located "beyond the walls of the museum".⁸⁹ One of the projects was to act in concert with the art-educational endeavour *Transit*.⁹⁰ The goal of the *Transit* project, which also represented an attempt to work on the borders between linguistics and art education, was to attract a new and multicultural public. During a series of visits to the museum, students from the educational company InfoKomp were involved in teaching Swedish both orally and in writing with reference to the art on display. It was during one of these student visits that Esra Ersen came into contact with these language courses. She decided to study Swedish at InfoKomp herself. Her studies subsequently resulted in the video work *Om du kunde tala svenska...* which became, in turn, part of *Moderna Museet Project*.⁹¹ Ersen, who had participated in the course herself, asked the students to answer the question "What would you have liked to say if you could speak Swedish?" ("Om du kunde...") in their mother tongues. Once the sentences had been translated from their mother tongues, the pupils were given them back in order to read them in that somewhat cumbersome language – Swedish. "The video raises issues to do with language teaching, or rather the very idea of integration," wrote Sören Grammel in the exhibition catalogue.⁹² The work also reflects a world of identities in continual, voluntary or involuntary, movement between countries. This is a situation that has also had reverberations in cultural policy in the form of specified targets for such bodies as museums which are encouraged to reach out to multicultural public. Art education in particular is being used to explore how art can be a tool for investigating cultural values.⁹³ In this instance, an artist reflected on language-teaching programmes aimed at immigrants. This was developed into an artistic project in the encounter with the museum as an institution; this project would contribute in its turn to increasing public awareness about the opportunities available to immigrants and the problems they encounter in relation to Swedish culture.

The museum did not only work on autonomous projects, but continued with targeted ventures linked to specific exhibitions. In tandem with *Robert Smithson* (1999), for example, the art educator Catrin Lundqvist ran a programme designed to "create new contacts with groups in society who, for various reasons, have been neglected in the museum context". The project was associated with what were known in England as "community projects" and involved a radical attempt to develop new methods for art educational activities targeted at a narrowly delineated group which might be defined on the basis of region, religion, ethnicity, social class

or language. The majority of the groups which formed part of the project were made up of individuals who had contact with psychiatric units for various reasons and an educator from the Nomad Workshop also collaborated.⁹⁴ The project lasted for five weeks and involved an intensive study of the Smithson exhibition. The participants watched the films shown in the screening room, wrote texts of their own and carried out extensive analyses. Above all, though, they created works of their own – in nature or inside the museum. There is a huge difference between acquiring theory, i.e. listening to narratives about art or looking at it, and experiencing the working processes of the artist in such a way.

During the 1990s and the most recent decade, the guided tours and other art-educational ventures which form part of mainstream operations have continued to develop. Just like the projects, guided tours have been targeted at distinct groups; these include "queer" and thematic tours. The museum is continuing to experiment with new methods within its frames of reference. A project such as *Zon Moderna* also makes clear the retrospective links that exist in terms of what has made Moderna Museet distinctive since it began. Upper secondary school pupils work together with artists to explore particular exhibitions and in this way help to develop the links between artists, the staff and the public that have always been vital. This is also embodied in the wealth of talks given by artists and open to the public which are arranged by the museum, particularly in relation to *The 1st at Moderna* (*Den 1:a på Moderna*) series.

It is worth pointing out that technological changes have meant that it is both easier and cheaper nowadays to produce wall captions, for example, while what would presumably most surprise a visitor from the 1960s would be the museum's website. It is hard to believe that the website has only been around for the last ten years.⁹⁵ Texts and images about the art collections of the museum, temporary exhibitions and other activities can now be made available to visitors irrespective of where they live. New technology has brought with it new opportunities and new challenges, and interactive e-courses are among the phenomena that will be developed by the art educators of the twenty-first century. Information will become both easier to find and more accessible, but this will also require greater resources and functioning channels of communication.

Art Education – A Useful Tool or Intellectually Harmful?

Is it possible to formulate in simple terms what art education, or communication as it is sometimes known, actually is? Much of what a museum does, and which ultimately reaches the public, is in some way or other the outcome of a process of interpretation. Art education is most frequently defined as a way of creating a framework in which to experience art. Although if we take the hang of the collection as an example, it is impossible to distinguish in unambiguous fashion where the exhibition work ends and art education begins. The very choice of which works will be shown and how they are supposed to encounter one another has an effect on the way they are read.

How a museum presents and arranges art tells its own story and is productive of meaning of a certain kind. The next step may involve the creation of explanatory texts, the holding of guided tours and/or the production of audio guides, and so on. Art education is the continuation of this story aimed at articulating it and making it accessible to people who may not be used to looking at art. It makes its appeal both to visitors who are accustomed to museums and to those for whom a museum visit is unusual. There has been an increase in the range of educational tools available for communicating with visitors, and work on mediating art has also become more complex. In addition to the educational operations which are directly linked to the exhibitions of the museum, independent activities are also provided. Other tools that have long been available are, primarily, guided tours, lectures and activities for children. In contrast, Internet texts with audio-guides and educational projects targeted and adapted to specific groups, such as *Transit* and *Public Service*, are more recent developments.

The particular issue of educational texts has been the subject of frequent discussion. Currently the museum produces wall captions and folder texts, for example, but also texts in “easy-to-read Swedish”.⁹⁶ For many years, there was resistance on the part of Moderna Museet to texts in relation to art. Exhibition catalogues were, of course, produced. These have grown in scope, and put simply, have evolved from basic inventories to substantial, information-dense books. This resistance to textual information and knowledge may be determined by a Romantic view of the experience of art in which the museum exists primarily for the artist. Such a place can almost be an extension of the artist’s studio in which the viewer is expected to be drawn into the work of the artist – a relationship which presupposes an unmediated encounter. In terms of this approach, all educational or informational endeavours become mere pointers which get in the way of the experience rather than facilitating it. Seen in this light, art education is always at risk of obscuring the view.

The attitude that art should speak for itself is connected with a fundamental standpoint which was reflected in aspects of Modernism and which has its roots in the eighteenth century. It was believed that a purely aesthetic perception existed which made experience immediate and which did not need to be preceded by intellectual reasoning. At issue were the autonomous work of art and its autonomous experience, and this theme runs like a connecting thread through the entire half-century of the museum’s existence.

In the article “Andlig äverkan” (2007) Nina Öhman, a curator at Moderna Museet from 1976 to 1996, argues in favour of the unique and autonomous artwork – and of the “work’s individual and independent self” – which requires no explanation to be appreciated.⁹⁷ She writes:

When it comes to museums of modern art at least, appreciating the unique work of art has been replaced today by all kinds of contrivances. Now the work of art is supposed to be “accessible to all”, “to be curated”, “to be analysed”. It ought to initiate debate, or put more pretentiously “to provoke” it, and

preferably “épater les bourgeois”. Most of all, it should “bring people in”, “increase visitor numbers” and “be a box-office smash”. It should be scrutinised with respect to “multiplicity”, “gender”, “LGBT”, and the perspective of the child. This seems intellectually harmful to me.

*Is a masterpiece really expected to put up with this?*⁹⁸

According to Öhman, the primary task of the work of art is to provide aesthetic experiences. What primarily evokes the aesthetic response in the viewer are sensual qualities such as colour, form and proportion. Öhman’s starting point is her experiences at Moderna Museet and the work of Otte Sköld, Pontus Hultén and Björn Springfeldt; she maintains that works of art need no other explanation than the ones they acquire from the contexts in and among the exhibition spaces. To place a painting by Georges Braque next to one by Pablo Picasso is sufficiently explanatory, with all the sonority of a choir.⁹⁹ The chronology of the hang should provide the viewer with an understanding of “that particular moment”.

This is the perspective on which Peter Cornell was commenting in the 1970s: an aesthetic ideal that excluded the general viewer through its esoteric view of art. It may be said that the way art-educational practice has developed towards opening the doors to a broader range of visitors has partly been in response to this criticism. Texts and “other pointers” may distract from an experience of this kind. In fact, all education may be experienced as a distraction. This applies irrespective of whether an educational venture involves helping the viewer “to see”, “to feel” and “to experience” or is knowledge-oriented, explaining, for example, how modernism relates to social changes.

What has emerged in relation to the adult education activities of Moderna Museet is that while traditional methods such as guided tours have been retained over the years, new approaches have also been developed in response both to the changing demands of society and to requirements of various kinds. The development of art, the way art and the image are seen, have influenced and set their stamp on the educational activities of Moderna Museet – from the lectures held at independent projects to the Internet, from the studio/workshop via Moderna Museet Filialen with its screen-mounted exhibitions that attracted large numbers of visitors to experiencing the artistic process itself. What has also emerged is that art education is transparent, so to speak: the visitor does not always notice when she or he is involved with the museum’s educational side. It is a part of the experience as a whole for the person visiting the museum.

- 1 Interviews were carried out with: Elisabet Skoglund, 28 Aug. 2007-; Eva Nordenson, 11 Sept. 2007; Mette Prawitz, 14 Sept. 2007; Pär Stolpe, 20 Sept. 2007; Lars Nittve, 22 Nov. 2007; Susanna Rydén Danckwardt, 11 March 2008; and Maria Taube, 14 March 2008. I have also been able to make use of the interview carried out with Olle Granath, 13 June 2007, as an integral part of the whole project. I would like to express my considerable gratitude to all those who generously contributed material for this article through these interviews.
- 2 Yann Pavie, "Entretien avec Pontus Hultén", *Opus International*, no. 24–25, 1971, p. 58: "On jouait de la musique qui ne pouvait pas être jouée dans les salles de concert, on présentait des films qui ne pouvaient pas être projetés dans les salles de spectacles..."
- 3 *Stockholms festspel* with music by Hilding Rosenberg and commentary by Johannes Edfelt and Bo Wallner took place at the museum on 5 June 1961 under the aegis of Fylkingen. *Fylkingen. Ny musik & intermediakonst*, ed. Teddy Hultberg, Stockholm 1994, p. 169.
- 4 See the depiction in *Moderna Museet* 1958–1983, eds. Olle Granath and Monica Nieckels, Stockholm 1983, p. 81.
- 5 Kornelia Voelske writes that Hultén wanted to counteract "Schwellenangst", i.e. to remove "the threshold" between the man on the street and fine art. Kornelia Voelske, *Pontus Hultén. Das Moderna Museet Stockholm – ein museumdidaktisches Leitmodell*, master's dissertation, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Greifswald, Greifswald 2002, p. 39.
- 6 The museum's announcements in daily and evening newspapers make clear that evening opening began in connection with the exhibition *She – A Cathedral* (*Hon – en katedral*, 1966), and these generous opening hours were retained for many years.
- 7 Interview with Mette Prawitz, 14 Sept. 2007.
- 8 See the chronology in this volume for further examples and a complete list.
- 9 John Heartfield's lecture "Kunst und Politik" and a film show took place at Moderna Museet 5 September 1967 as part of the exhibition of work by the German photomontage artist John Heartfield which was shown throughout September 1967. *Statens konstsamlingars tillväxt och förvaltning 1967. Meddelanden från Nationalmuseum* no. 92, Stockholm 1968, p. 59. Wieland Herzfelde talked about his brother's art on 19 September 1967.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 See *Moderna Museets årsredovisning* 2007, p. 23.
- 12 As she remembers it, Mette Prawitz was initially employed by the local education authority for four guided tours a day during term time. In addition she did guided tours of temporary exhibitions, when she was paid per tour. Interview with Mette Prawitz, 14 Sept. 2007.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Karin Bergqvist Lindegren was advertised as the guide for tours of exhibitions which included *Sigrid Hjertén* (1964), *Lyonel Feininger* (1964), *Claes Oldenburg* (1966) and *Emil Nolde* (1967).
- 16 Anna Lena Lindberg writes in her dissertation, e.g., "Carlo Derkert became the legendary art guide at Moderna Museet [...]" Lindberg, *Konstpedagogikens dilemma. Historiska rötter och moderna strategier* (diss.), Lund 1991, p. 272.
- 17 Carlo Derkert was announced as the guide in the daily and evening newspapers for a number of exhibitions during the 1960s including *Movement in Art* (1961), *Hundertwasser* (1965) and *Vincent van Gogh* (1965).
- 18 Eva Nordenson underlines its rehearsed nature and recalls: "Whenever he [Carlo Derkert] walked past the Parthenon frieze [on the staircase of Nationalmuseum] just as he reached a particular spot, he would stumble and say: 'Oh, there's me stumbling and what do I see? Just look at this ...' and it was a horse of some kind or other. And this would happen every morning." Interview with Eva Nordenson, 11 Sept. 2007.
- 19 Interview with Mette Prawitz, 14 Sept. 2007.
- 20 Jan Bahlenberg, *Carlo Derkert. Porträtt av en konstvisare*, Stockholm 2005. See also the list of sources in Jan Bahlenberg, *Den otroliga verkligheten sätter spår. Om Carlo Derkerts liv och konstpedagogiska gärning* (diss.), Göteborg 2001, p. 391ff.
- 21 Carlo Derkert, Ingela Lind och Eva Nordenson, "Om konstbildning", *Det gamla museet och utställningarna. En konstabok från Nationalmuseum*, ed. Ulf Abel, Stockholm 1973, pp. 90–104.
- 22 Ibid., p. 91.
- 23 Ibid., p. 90.
- 24 Ibid., p. 93f.
- 25 Ibid., p. 96.
- 26 Ibid., p. 96f.
- 27 Ibid., p. 97.
- 28 Ibid., p. 97.
- 29 Interview with Mette Prawitz, 14 Sept. 2007.
- 30 Nordenson, *Det gamla museet och utställningarna* 1973, p. 92.
- 31 Derkert, *ibid.*, p. 95.
- 32 Ibid., p. 103.
- 33 Hultén, *Opus International*, no. 24–25, 1971, p. 58.
- 34 Derkert, *Det gamla museet och utställningarna* 1973, p. 103f.
- 35 Leif Nylén, *Den öppna konsten. Happenings, instrumentalteater, konkret poesi och andra gränsöverskridningar i det svenska 60-talet*, Stockholm 1998, p. 147ff.
- 36 Ibid., p. 18.
- 37 Pär Stolpe, *Filialen Rapporten*, Stockholm 1974, text on back cover. The document was published in stencil form by Moderna Museet.
- 38 See Marianne Hultman, "Invigningen av Sverigehuset i maj 1969 – ett collage", *Moderna Museet Projekt. Liesbeth Bik, Jos van der Pol* (exh. cat.), ed. Maria Lind, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 2001, pp. 67–70.
- 39 The proposal put forward by the expert group was never implemented by the commissioning authorities. It was published instead as an article by the members of the expert group: Bror Andersson, Carlo Derkert, Pontus Hultén, Pi Lind, Pär Stolpe and Anna-Lena Thorsell, "Ett Kulturhusprogram: Experiment i social samlevnad", *Dagens Nyheter* 18 May 1969.
- 40 Interview with Pär Stolpe, 20 Sept. 2007. He finished working at Moderna Museet as a curator in 1978, having started as a consultant.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Per Bjurström, *Nationalmuseum 1792–1992*, Stockholm 1992, p. 329f.
- 43 Ibid., p. 330.
- 44 Interview with Pär Stolpe, 20 Sept. 2007. What follows is based on this interview.
- 45 The exhibition *Folks bilder. En utställning av, om och för svenska folket* opened on 3 April and closed on 16 May 1971. "Filialen in collaboration with everyone who sent in photos, slides and films" is indicated as the exhibitor. See *Filialen. Rapporten* 1974, p. 18.
- 46 *Filialen. Rapporten* 1974, p. 51.
- 47 Ibid., p. 53.
- 48 See "IV: Aktiviteter", *ibid.*, p. 55.
- 49 Bo Lagercrantz, "Filialen som provokation i museivärlden", *ibid.*, p. 7.
- 50 Lagercrantz writes further: "How often is the mass image allowed on to the walls of Moderna Museet – both the one that is served up to us and the one we create ourselves to reflect our experiences?", *ibid.*, p. 7.
- 51 Ibid., p. 8.
- 52 Stolpe, "Kommentar och slutsats", *ibid.*, p. 146.
- 53 Bengt Olvång, "Moderna museet: Vakna eller somna in?", *Aftonbladet* 4 April 1974.
- 54 Interview with Pär Stolpe, 21 Jan. 2008.
- 55 Lagercrantz, *Filialen. Rapporten* 1974, p. 9f. On Lagercrantz as one of the forerunners in terms of mounting socially committed exhibitions, see Voelske 2002, p. 82.
- 56 The exception is the book *Hon – en historia* in which the exhibition *She – A Cathedral* is presented in detail. There is in general little documentation of an exhibition once it was over. The catalogue and photographs document the operation most clearly.
- 57 Voelske refers, for example, to the fact that a concept is lacking. See Voelske 2002, p. 97.
- 58 Torsten Bergmark, "Glad konst på er – Reaktionen vädrar morgonluft", *Dagens Nyheter* 20 Dec. 1975.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 See Marianne Hultman, "New York Collection for Stockholm", *Teknologi för livet. Om Experiments in Art and Technology*, ed. Barbro Schultz Lundestam, Paris and Stockholm 2004, pp. 158–170.
- 61 Pär Stolpe, radio interview in *Obs Kulturen*, Sveriges Radio, 5 April 1974.
- 62 Torsten Bergmark, "Moderna museets dilemma", *Dagens Nyheter* 11 April 1974.
- 63 See Philip von Schantz, *Fiskens tecken*, Stockholm 1997, p. 150. An interview with Philip von Schantz in *Paletten* is illustrated with a caricature of Giorgio de Chirico's *Le Cerveau de l'enfant*: "the child" has Ulf Linde's features, and the work – signed Berndt Pettersson – is now called instead *Le cerveau de von Schantz*. "Museum director Philip von Schantz interviewed by Christian Chambert and Thomas Millroth", *Paletten*, no. 2, 1974, p. 48.
- 64 Philip von Schantz, "Den samtida konsten bör få tala för sig själv!", *Dagens Nyheter* 10 Jan. 1976.
- 65 Göran Dahl and Thomas Millroth, "Moderna Museet sviker elementära krav på ett museum – inget bibliotek, inget artotek, inga pedagoger", *Aftonbladet* 2 Feb. 1976.

- 66 Ibid.
- 67 In his autobiography Philip von Schantz writes as follows: "The artists were their own directors and the participation of the museum was mainly limited to technical assistance. (My feeling is that today 'the curators' guide the work of young artists to far too great an extent.)" von Schantz 1997, p. 158.
- 68 "Förord", *Innanför och utanför modernismen*, eds. Peter Cornell, Sten Dunér, Kenneth Hermele, Thomas Millroth and Gert Z. Nordström, Stockholm 1979, p. 7.
- 69 Cf. Cornell, *Innanför och utanför modernismen* 1979, p. 53ff.
- 70 Ibid., p. 100.
- 71 Ibid., p. 100.
- 72 Ibid., p. 101.
- 73 Ibid., p. 103.
- 74 Ibid., p. 104.
- 75 Ibid., p. 103.
- 76 Ibid., p. 105.
- 77 Interview with Olle Granath, 13 June 2007.
- 78 Chagall attracted almost 300,000 visitors to the museum; Matisse was seen by about 180,000 and Picasso by close to 280,000 visitors.
- 79 Interview with Olle Granath, 13 June 2007.
- 80 Interview with Lars Nittve, 22 Nov. 2007.
- 81 The fact that the expression "the girls in the Workshop" was used was confirmed in interviews with both Elisabet Skoglund, 28 Aug. 2007, and Maria Taube, 14 March 2008.
- 82 Interview with Olle Granath, 13 June 2007.
- 83 This was, for example, the path Elisabet Skoglund took to becoming employed at the museum. Interview with Elisabet Skoglund, 28 Aug. 2007.
- 84 Interview with Susanna Rydén Danckwardt, 14 March 2008. During the 1980s and 1990s, Rydén Danckwardt worked within the art education programme and was responsible for lectures and guided tours for teenagers and adults.
- 85 Interview with Susanna Rydén Danckwardt, 14 March 2008.
- 86 Susanna Rydén Danckwardt was assigned this task and switched from art education to the communication unit. Interview with Susanna Rydén Danckwardt, 14 March 2008.
- 87 For example from Stiftelsen Framtidens kultur that was set up in 1994, and funds from the wound-up wage-earner funds were supposed to be used for "creative" and "long-term" cultural projects.
- 88 Skoglund has also written several books about art education. See, e.g. Elisabet Skoglund, *Lusten att skapa*, Stockholm 1990; *Leken och konsten*, Stockholm 1993; *Konstsamtal Samtalskonst*, Stockholm 2005.
- 89 David Elliott, "Förord", *Moderna Museet Projekt. Maria Lindberg* (exh. cat.), ed. Maria Lind, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1998, p. 2. The colophon, p. 24, contains a brief description: "Moderna Museet Project is a new project within the framework of the operations of Moderna Museet in Stockholm. While it is taking place under the auspices of the museum, it is usually located outside the museum's walls. Artists are invited to make works of art for the project room in Prästgården next to the museum on Skeppsholmen, for other environments and situations in Stockholm or in other places."
- 90 Financed by funds from Stiftelsen Framtidens kultur, *Transit* took place from 2001 to 2002. This was a collaborative project between Moderna Museet, Norrköpings Konstmuseum and Bildmuseet in Umeå. Karin Malmquist was the project leader. See additionally Karin Malmquist and Matilda Olof-Ors, "Rapport, Transit", *Rapporter och uppsatser om Moderna Museet*. F20:6, Moderna Museets myndighetsarkiv.
- 91 Esra Ersen's *Om du kunde tala svenska...* was shown from 15 November 2001 to 13 January 2002 in the studio at Moderna Museet and at Jerusalem's Grill House, a kebab restaurant on Södermalm in Stockholm. The work has been shown at seminars and similar events, e.g. during the "Uppdrag Mångfald" seminar days at Södertörns högskola, Flemingsberg, 14 Nov. 2002.
- 92 Sören Grammel, "Fjärilar", *Moderna Museet Projekt. Esra Ersen* (exh. cat.), ed. Maria Lind, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 2001, p. 15.
- 93 See e.g. *Beyond Multicultural Art Education: International Perspectives*, ed. Dough Boughton and Rachel Mason, Münster 1999, which contains discussions and analyses from various perspectives on the theory and practice of art education in 13 different countries. See also *Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education*, eds. Susan Cahan and Zoya Kocur, New York 1996.
- 94 Nomadverkstan was a not-for-profit association based in a converted coach, fitted with seats and workshops. Nomadverkstan was set up during Stockholm's tenure as European City of Culture in 1998 with the aim of spreading culture to the suburbs of Stockholm. Moderna Museet's collaborative partner in the project was Andrew Hackman, the set designer and project leader of Nomadverkstan.
- 95 The website was launched on 14 February 1998 in tandem with the inauguration of the new building. It was initially fairly spartan, and its primary content was a kind of calendar of what was taking place in the building. At its start, Moderna Museet's website had some 400–500 visitors per day, compared with 6,000 visitors per day in 2008.
- 96 The development of easy-to-read texts is part of the project "Ett museum för alla – ett helhetsperspektiv på tillgänglighet" which was initiated in 2006 at Moderna Museet. Texts in easy-to-read Swedish form part of the museum's efforts to achieve cultural, intellectual and physical accessibility.
- 97 Nina Öhman, "Andlig åverkan", *Om tillståndet i konsten. En essäsamling om konsten i samtiden och i evigheten*, ed. Leif Mattsson and Susanna Slöör, Stockholm 2008, pp. 37–40, see p. 37.
- 98 Ibid., p. 38. Öhman criticises Moderna Museet in particular and, a little further on in the text, p. 39, the presentation of Barnett Newman "shoved into a minimal corner-space between two doorways. It is more than enough to make you feel depressed."
- 99 Ibid., p. 37.

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