

BEATRICE VON BISMARCK

# The Devil Wears Historicity or, The Look of Provocation: When Attitudes Become Form— Bern 1969/ Venice 2013\*

On Exhibitionary Voguing.

Editorial by Nanne Buurman

Recent years have seen not only attempts to institute exhibition history as a branch of art history but also a major trend towards the restaging, redoing, and reenactment of historical art exhibitions. Last year, for instance, the Getty Research Institute put together an ambitious exhibition on Harald Szeemann's life and work that travelled from Los Angeles via Bern and Düsseldorf to Turin and will reach the end of its tour in New York, featuring a meticulous one-to-one reconstruction of his *Grandfather* show (1976).<sup>1</sup> In this context, the following essay by Beatrice von Bismarck is a particularly timely contribution to the evolving discussions around exhibition redos. Originally published in 2015 in German, we make it available in English because it gives important insights into the political and economic implications of such reiterations.<sup>2</sup>

Taking her cue from the observation that exhibitions are inherently temporary and performative, the art historian and pioneer of curatorial studies in Germany discusses the problems that may arise when the ephemeral character of exhibition constellations and their constantly

\*This essay is a full and slightly revised translation from the German original "Der Teufel trägt Geschichtlichkeit oder im Look der Provokation: *When Attitudes Become Form—Bern 1969/Venice 2013*," first published in Eva Kernbauer (ed.): *Kunstgeschichtlichkeit. Historizität und Anachronie in der Gegenwartskunst*, Paderborn 2015, pp. 233-248. A much abridged and modified version of the text appeared as "Exhibiting Performances. Process and Valorization in *When Attitudes Become Forms—Bern 1969 / Venice 2013*" in: Dena Davida, Mark Pronovost, Véronique Hudon, Jane Gabriels (eds.): *Curating Live Arts. Critical Perspectives, Essays and Conversations on Theory and Practice*, New York/Oxford 2018, pp. 29-37.

<sup>1</sup> The touring exhibition was developed out of the materials from the Harald Szeemann archive, acquired in 2011 by the Getty Research Institute from his widow Ingeborg Lüscher. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to her and to special collections archivist (now assistant curator for modern and contemporary art) Pietro Rigolo for sharing with me on several occasions their insights into the process of archiving and exhibiting Szeemann's legacy.

<sup>2</sup> See also her contribution to the catalogue accompanying the Getty Institute's Szeemann project: "When Attitudes become a Profession. Harald Szeemann's Self-Referential Practice and the Art of the Exhibition," in: *Harald Szeemann: Museum of Obsessions*, ed. by Glenn Phillips and Phillip Kaiser with Doris Chon und Pietro Rigolo, Los Angeles 2018, pp. 249-264.

changing complex historical meanings are not taken into account. With regard to the restaging of Szeemann's *When Attitudes Become Form* (1969), curated 2013 by Germano Celant in dialogue with Thomas Demand and Rem Koolhaas at the Fondazione Prada in Venice, she calls attention to the historical paradox involved when a show dedicated to procedural and conceptual practices that sought to escape art market objectification using strategies of dematerialization, re-materializes forty-four years later as a celebrity curator's work commoditized into a signature look and lifestyle product. Playing on the title of the 2006 movie *The Devil Wears Prada*, von Bismarck's "The Devil Wears Historicity" thus suggests that freeze-framing temporary exhibitions into recognizable brands turns them into commodities with historical patina that a younger generation of curators may want to don like a fashionista would a vintage Prada piece: to display their distinction in the hope that some of the original fabric's historical significance will rub off on them.<sup>iii</sup>

Remarkably, history and fashion are interwoven not only in popular culture but also in philosophical reflections. In his materialist critique of "the whore called 'Once upon a Time'" in "historicism's bordello," Walter Benjamin, for instance, calls for a revolutionary revisiting of history in order to actualize as-yet unrealized historical claims in the presence of the now: "The French Revolution viewed itself as Rome reincarnate. It evoked ancient Rome the way fashion evokes costumes of the past. Fashion has a flair for the topical (...) it is a tiger's leap into the past."<sup>iv</sup> Michel Foucault likewise uses clothing as a metaphor for history, describing genealogy as "history in the form of a concerted carnival" that pushes "the masquerade to its limits."<sup>v</sup> Thus, he presents a counter-model to what Friedrich Nietzsche called "the lustful eunuchs of history," who ascetically "dress up in the part of wisdom and adopt an objective point of view" that "hides (their) malice under the cloak of universals."<sup>vi</sup>

But while von Bismarck's title stands in line with this trope of history as fashion, it is important to understand that—diverging from the movie—it is not so much chief-curator Germano Celant who stars as the devil in her essay. By presenting a carefully patched-up version of Szeemann's show in the Prada context, she argues, it is rather the whole curatorial constellation that is dressed up in the gown of *history* (my emphasis) turning the exhibition into high fashion, a trend that—incidentally—permeates large parts of the field.<sup>vii</sup> Perhaps it is no coincidence, then, that those responsible for the staging even chose to copy the look of the different floors of the original venue at Kunsthalle Bern. (See Fig. 0) In their ornamentality, the herringbone wooden floor and the black & white tiles make quite a memorable and photogenic backdrop for the down-to-earth installation of the artworks that largely did without plinths, frames, or any other display structure—a gesture that was novel at the time.

<sup>iii</sup> In the movie, editor-in-chief of *Runway* magazine, Miranda Priestly, demonstrates to her new fashion-unsavvy assistant Andy how ignorant she is about fashion for not being aware that the cerulean blue of her sweater was actually chosen for her by the fashion industry, including the people present in the room, then recounting the whole genealogy of the specific kind of blue. The character Miranda Priestly is modelled on Anna Wintour, legendary editor-in-chief of *Vogue* US, known for her liking of Prada pieces.

<sup>iv</sup> Walter Benjamin: *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, in: idem.: *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn, New York, 1968, pp. 253-264, here 261-262.

<sup>v</sup> Michel Foucault: "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History (1961)," in: idem.: *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice. Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. by D.F. Bouchard, Ithaca 1977, pp. 139-165, here p. 161.

<sup>vi</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche: *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), in: *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. by Walter Kaufmann, New York 1968, III, Sec 26, cited here from Michel Foucault: "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," pp. 158-159.

<sup>vii</sup> As I have noted elsewhere, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, for instance, also appropriated elements of Szeemann's practice (such as the DIY aesthetics of the *Attitudes* catalogue), turning them into a sort of shabby chic. See Nanne Buurman: "With CCB. Displaying Curatorial Relationality in dOCUMENTA (13)'s *The Logbook*," in: *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, 5/1, 2016, pp. 76-99. For the tensions between materiality and dematerialization, authenticity and simulation negotiated in d(13)'s retro-aesthetics, see also Buurman: "Mediating Dematerialization. dOCUMENTA (13) als eine post-digitale Ausstellung?," in: Klaus Krüger /Elke Werner /Andreas Schalhorn (eds.): *Evidenzen des Expositorischen. Wie in Ausstellungen Wissen, Erkenntnis und Ästhetische Bedeutung erzeugt wird*, Bielefeld 2019 (forthcoming).

Nevertheless, a critical reading might ask whether the patterns of the floors are not conceptually neglectable because the floors just happened to be in the Kunsthalle at the time, and still are. Looked at this way, the literalist attention to the floors could be taken as a misguided act of mim-icry since any attempt to be faithful to the whore of history will necessarily misfire.<sup>viii</sup> A more generous reading, however, could see in this doubling of the Kunsthalle floors in the Venetian Palazzo an attempt to draw attention to the floor as the scene of the action and as a stage/catwalk for artistic attitudes. Yet, it is important to note that no act of exhibiting can be innocent, and the virginity of exhibits cannot be restored simply by reconstructing the original setting as closely as possible.<sup>ix</sup> As a response to “The Devil Wears Historicity,” I therefore suggest that the 2013 reenactment of the 1969 show could also be read metaphorically against the grain of its makers’ intentions as an exhibition in drag or, more specifically, as an act of exhibitionary “voguing”.<sup>x</sup>

Voguing is a dance developed in the context of the queer multi-ethnic ballroom scene during the second half of the twentieth century in New York. It involves striking poses adopted from fashion magazines like *Vogue*, interrupting the dance movements by temporarily freezing in posture.<sup>xi</sup> As a strategy to escape poverty by transcending not only gender roles but also racial and class boundaries, the “pursuit of realness” by the voguing battle participants—as Judith Butler points out— involves both the “reiteration” and the “subversion” or “displacement” of the said legitimating norms due to their “double movement of approximating and exposing the phantasmatic status of the realness norm.”<sup>xii</sup> It is in this sense that Beatrice von Bismarck’s text helped me understand the Venice show’s restaging of the Bern exhibition as a Benjaminian brothel of historicism, where an appropriation of Szeemann’s *Attitudes* fossilizes the practices and processes at play, while such a freeze-framing of historical positions, read through the lens of voguing, potentially also renders visible the multiplicity of temporalities and economies haunting such a show.

<sup>viii</sup> In his critique of John L. Austin’s speech act theory, Jacques Derrida argued that every performative speech act necessarily misfires because the context of an utterance can never be controlled and thus will always infect the performance. For the discussion around parasitic speech acts and the constitutive failure of the performative, see Derrida: “Signature Event Context,” in: *Limited inc*, 1988, pp. 1-23.

<sup>ix</sup> See Nanne Buurman: “Angels in the White Cube. Rhetorics of Curatorial Innocence at *dOCUMENTA (13)*,” in: *OnCurating*, 29, May 2016, pp. 146-160, where I discuss curatorial camouflage of display elements.

<sup>x</sup> For curatorial drag see Buurman: “Exhibiting Exhibiting. *documenta 12* as a Meta-Exhibition”, in: *kunsttexte*, 3, 2016, online: <https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/18452/8042/buurman.pdf> [23.05.2019].

<sup>xi</sup> It was popularized (some say co-opted) by Madonna’s song and video *Vogue* (1990) based on Jennie Livingston’s documentary film *Paris is Burning* (1990). The film’s protagonists often describe voguing as genuine imitation (over-) affirmative of socially dominant role models (such as the “superstar”, the “executive” or the “Ivy League student”) with *realness* as the aspirational goal of temporarily becoming and being recognized as whoever they wanted to be. For a critique of white cis appropriation of voguing, see <https://www.intomore.com/culture/the-colonization-of-ballroom-culture> [23.05.2019].

<sup>xii</sup> See Judith Butler: “Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion”, in: Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat (eds.): *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, Minneapolis 1997, pp. 381–395, here 388/389.



Fig. 0:  
Installing of fake “Kunsthalle” floors for *When Attitudes Become Form – Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, Fondazione Prada, Ca’ Corner della Regina, Venice, 2013.  
Photo: Still from exhibition video, produced by Fondazione Prada, Camera: Maurizio d’Adamo & Maurizio Romanelli, Editing: Fabrizia Vitaletti, available at <https://vimeo.com/149172847> (accessed 5. April 2019).



Fig. 1:  
One of the photos by Thomas Demand that document the Kunsthalle Bern spaces reconstructed by Rem Koolhaas within the architecture of Ca’ Corner della Regina from the exhibition catalogue *When Attitudes Become Form – Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, ed. by Germano Celant, Milan 2013, p. 369.



## Beatrice von Bismarck: The Devil Wears Historicity or, The Look of Provocation: When Attitudes Become Form–Bern 1969/Venice 2013

When the exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form–Bern 1969/Venice 2013* opened at Fondazione Prada in Venice in June 2013, coinciding with that year's Biennale, the preview was a packed event, operating with all the mechanisms of hierarchization and exclusion to fuel desire by limiting access and prohibiting any close interaction with the works on display. The focus of all this attention was a now-legendary show that took place from March 22 to April 27, 1969, at Kunsthalle Bern under the title *When Attitudes Become Form. Works–Concepts–Processes–Situations–Information*, establishing the reputation of its curator Harald Szeemann. The director of Fondazione Prada, Miuccia Prada, commissioned the Italian curator Germano Celant to reconstruct the exhibition in 2013 together with the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas and the German artist Thomas Demand.<sup>1</sup>

Although the late 1960s saw a number of curatorial projects with a similar aesthetic focus, *When Attitudes Become Form* has come to be celebrated as the most important of these shows devoted to what at the time was considered the “new” art.<sup>2</sup> This involved approaches based on conceptuality, ephemerality, and processuality, in terms of both materials and modes of production and presentation. Accordingly, the works could consist of air, electricity, or ice, they could be developed for or even during the exhibition, and they were often designed in such a way that the end of the show also marked the end of their existence. The scandal surrounding *When Attitudes Become Form* coincided with Szeemann's decision to leave Kunsthalle Bern, where he had been director since 1961, and to sever all institutional ties (at least officially) in order to work as an independent curator.

The Venice event is worth a closer look because it exemplifies a historicity that is specific to exhibitions, articulated continually in relation to changing artistic practices, roles, and products. It is a distinct quality of the exhibition medium that it deploys the historical referentiality of art on a meta-level. In this light, *When Attitudes Become Form–Bern 1969/Venice 2013* raises questions that go far beyond the relationship named in the title between the two exhibitions in 1969 and 2013. Instead, it focuses attention on the fabric of historicities brought into play by the various different components of the exhibition.

One fundamental property of exhibitions is the way they bring different temporalities to bear. Firstly, they incorporate the medial and material constitution of the exhibits, as well as that of their displays, spaces, and institutions, thus determining the degrees of stability, processuality, and ephemerality. Secondly, they bring together the various histories introduced by the exhibits, displays, spaces, and institutions via their own

<sup>1</sup> *When Attitudes Become Form – Bern 1969/ Venice 2013*, Fondazione Prada, Ca' Corner della Regina, Venice, June 1–November 3, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> The book *Exhibiting the New Art. 'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When Attitudes Become Form' 1969*, edited by Christian Rattemeyer, uses Szeemann's characterization of the work shown in 1969 as “new art” in its title and expands the category to include the exhibition *Op Losse Schroeven (Situations and Cryptostructures)*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, March 15–April 27, 1969. See Christian Rattemeyer et al. (eds.): *Exhibiting the New Art. 'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When Attitudes Become Form' 1969*, London 2010.

past and the conditions under which they came into being, as well as the meanings, functions, and status attached to them. And thirdly, thanks to the “anachronic” structure of art, by which earlier works remain connected to later ones via a chain of substitutions,<sup>3</sup> an exhibition and the artworks it presents becomes a system of intersecting and interlocking historical references.

If one understands exhibitions not just as the sum of their exhibits but as independent constellations in their own right that stand as the result of cultural practices, then they themselves are fundamentally temporal in character, over and above the temporality of the individual elements combined within them. Their production as well as their presentation and reception are marked by different time-related factors and conditions: by the ways they are created, scheduled, and developed; by frameworks, intervals, and dynamics. Moreover, like theater and dance events, they are ephemeral: once the exhibition is over, the things that were on show may survive, but the constellation it created and which constituted it is lost. In this light, every exhibition can be understood as a performance and each iteration of a touring exhibition as a restaging.<sup>4</sup>

As works in their own right, exhibitions are analogous to the kind of art installations that emphasize their character as situationally defined constellations.<sup>5</sup> Each presentation and re-presentation implies altered relations between all of the elements involved in the exhibition. As well as the exhibits, displays, spaces, and institutions, this means that the relevant discourses and all of the participating individuals enter into dynamic relations to one another—artists and curators, museum directors, critics, gallerists, theorists, and different (groups of) visitors. These relations result from processes of combination, mediation, and fusion, constituting the exhibition as a spatiotemporal constellation. As such, the exhibition has both its own “anachronistic quality,”<sup>6</sup> making it a historical eye-witness, and a potential that remains in effect across different time periods, connecting them. Thanks to these properties, the means of exhibiting can be used to rethink history, to revise it in the process of going through it again, but also to highlight the exhibition’s own involvement in processes of writing history.

Repeating or restaging an exhibition therefore poses the challenge of doing justice to this constellational quality. Beyond the original exhibits, it is also a matter of taking into account the ways in which they are tied into the structure of meanings and functions constituted by all of the exhibition’s former elements. Not just the exhibits undergo the processes of recontextualization inherent in exhibiting, but also the exhibition itself. It is performed as an exhibition, as a constellation in time and space. On a meta-level, it displays its own historicity, as well as the (often contradictory) procedures and strategies that are involved in the historical evaluation of the

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood introduce the term “anachronic” for artworks to distinguish their art-historical referentiality “as” art, allowing one work to stand for another, from an “anachronistic” referentiality that makes them eye-witnesses to history. See Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood: *Anachronic Renaissance*, Brooklyn 2010, pp. 13-14.

<sup>4</sup> On the temporally structured character of exhibiting, see Beatrice von Bismarck et al. (eds.): *Timing – On the Temporary Dimension of Exhibiting*, Berlin 2014 and Rike Frank/Beatrice von Bismarck (eds.): *Off Our Times: The Aftermath of the Ephemeral and Other Curatorial Anachronics*, Berlin 2019 (forthcoming).

<sup>5</sup> The creation of an artistic work as a site-specific constellation is exemplified by the practice of Michael Asher. See, for example, Birgit Pelzer: “Michael Asher” in: Kynaston McShine (ed.): *Museum as Muse. Artists reflect*, exhibition catalogue, New York 1999, p. 157.

<sup>6</sup> See Nagel and Wood: *Anachronic Renaissance*, pp. 13–14.

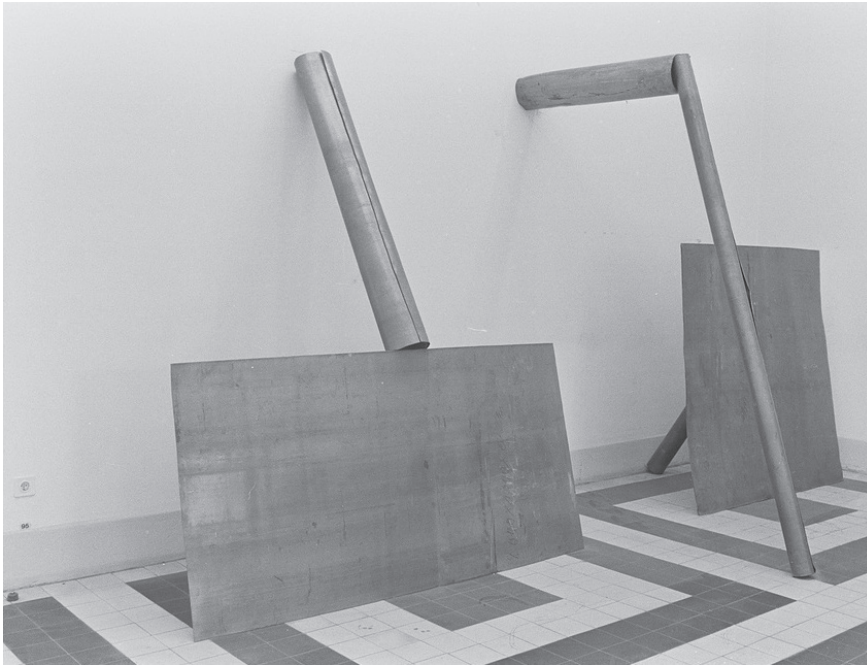


Fig. 2a:  
Installation view of *Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form*, Kunsthalle Bern, 1969. From left to right: “Shovel Plate Prop” (lead), “Close Pin Prop” (lead), “Sign Board Prop” (lead), (1969) by Richard Serra. Photo: Balthasar Burkhard © J. Paul Getty Trust, Courtesy Getty Research Institute Los Angeles (2011.M.30).



Fig. 2b:  
Installation view of *When Attitudes Become Form – Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, Fondazione Prada, Ca' Corner della Regina, Venice, 2013. From left to right: “Shovel Plate Prop” (steel), “Close Pin Prop” (lead), “Sign Board Prop” (lead with antimony) (1969) by Richard Serra. Photo: Attilio Maranzano, Fondazione Prada.

exhibition and that constitute its new presentation. The role of exhibitions in the becoming-public of art means that the economics and politics of this becoming-public are also reflected in the restaging. If the objects in an exhibition always show something, but also themselves and if, in the same way, exhibitions, understood as works in their own right, show both something and themselves, then repeating an exhibition is a third-order act of showing: it shows something, it shows itself, and it shows the conditions that constituted the exhibition it is itself restaging. In this way, re-presenting an exhibition is not least an opportunity to reflect on the criteria, processes, and conditions governing its (art-historical) evaluation.

In recent decades, exhibitions about historical exhibitions have developed into a distinct genre of art presentation. In the reconstructions “of the most important art exhibitions of the 20th century in Germany” in *Stationen der Moderne* (1988), in the *Degenerate Art* show at Los Angeles County Museum (1991), in Christian Philipp Müller’s adaptation of Edward Steichen’s *The Family of Man* (1955) in *The Family of Austrians* (1993), in Goran Djordjević’s *INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF MODERN ART* featuring Alfred Barr’s *MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK, 1936* in the Serbia and Montenegro Pavilion at the 2003 Venice Biennale, in the staging of the history of the *Münster Sculpture Projects* (1977–2007) by Dominique Gonzalez Foerster in *Roman de Münster* (2007), or in the show looking back at *Les Magiciens de la Terre* (1989) at the Pompidou Centre in Paris (2014), artists and individuals from different professions and research fields used diverse procedures, strategies, and agendas to examine examples from exhibition history themselves originally produced by artists and others acting as curators in the art field.<sup>7</sup> Initially, critical archival practices, as deployed in artistic Institutional Critique and in a parallel wave of museological reflection in theory and practice, formed the arena for this growing interest in modes, conditions, and possibilities for the presentation of art and culture. In more recent times the status of exhibitions has evolved insofar as they have now become not only a prominent medium for historical research on art but also independent cultural products in their own right. Situating *When Attitudes Become Form—Bern 1969/Venice 2013* within this development thus means bringing the historicity of art to bear on the historicity of exhibitions in order to take into focus the potential of the latter in terms of visual politics.

The exhibition in Venice in 2013 was not the first to reference *When Attitudes Become Form*. Immediately after the Bern show in February 1969, it began to emancipate itself from its original venue, touring to Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld and the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London.<sup>8</sup> Szeemann was involved in the installation of both of these shows, and the London event was organized by Charles Harrison.<sup>9</sup> As a result of this

<sup>7</sup> See Michael Bollé (ed.): *Stationen der Moderne. Die bedeutenden Kunstausstellungen des 20. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland*, exhibition catalogue, Berlinische Galerie, Museum für moderne Kunst, Photographie und Architektur, Berlin 1988; Stephanie Barron (ed.): *Degenerate Art. The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*, exhibition catalogue, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, Los Angeles and New York 1991; Torsten Neuendorff (ed.): *family nation tribe community shift. Zeitgenössische künstlerische Konzepte im Haus der Kulturen der Welt*, exhibition catalogue, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin 1996; Branislav Dimitrijević and Dejan Stretenović (eds.): *INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF MODERN ART featuring Alfred Barr’s MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK, 1936 in Pavilion “Jugoslavia” Giardini di Castello Venezia*, exhibition catalogue, La Biennale di Venezia – 50th International Art Exhibition, Belgrade 2003; Brigitte Franzen et al. (eds.): *Skulptur Projekte Münster 07*, Cologne 2007, pp. 104–116, and Beatrice von Bismarck: “Display/ Displacement: Zur Politik des Präsentierens,” in: Jennifer John et al. (eds.): *Re-Visionen des Displays. Ausstellungs-Szenarien, ihre Lektüren und ihr Publikum*, Zürich 2008, pp. 69–82; see also the exhibition *Magiciens de la terre. Retour sur une exposition légendaire*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, July 2–September 15, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> The exhibition ran from May 10 through June 15, 1969, at Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, and from August 28 through September 27, 1969, at Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. Originally, further shows were planned in Rome, Stockholm, and Paris. See correspondence between Harald Szeemann and Philip Morris, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Special Collections, Harald Szeemann Papers, 2011.M.30, box 288, file 4. I am grateful to Glenn Phillips, Acting Head, Department of Architecture and Contemporary Art, The Getty Research Institute, for his support while viewing the material in the Harald Szeemann Archive and for generously making available the research results generated during preparations for the Venice exhibition.

<sup>9</sup> On the changes made to the selection of artists by Charles Harrison, see Christian Rattemeyer: “‘Op Losse Schroeven’ and ‘When Attitudes Become Form’ 1969,” in: Rattemeyer: *Exhibiting the New Art*, p. 56.



mobility, not only the location but also a number of other components of the show changed: some of the exhibits themselves, the spatial conditions, the respective institutional focus of collecting and display, and the discursive contexts, as well as the individuals involved as curators, designers, publishers and book designers, gallerists, and audiences. This is where the performative logic of exhibitions comes into play, according to which, like theater and performance art, exhibitions always imply aspects of reenactment.<sup>10</sup>

For the installation in Venice, Thomas Demand picked up on the performative character of restaging insofar as he recorded the meeting of the Venetian palace architecture with that of the Kunsthalle in Bern in photographs. (Fig. 1) His pictures, published in the exhibition catalogue, capture the impossibility of the undertaking, what he calls “the grotesque in the project,”<sup>11</sup> but also its character as an experiment, as a testing of the possibilities of curatorial reconstruction. In the context of his own photographed replications of historical events, and especially his photographic engagement with John Lautner’s cardboard architecture models, the detail shots appear not so much as documentation but as possible forms for a spatial design.<sup>12</sup> In this potentiality, rather than assigning the 2013 show the status of a definitive reconstruction, Demand underlines a process-related temporariness, placing the exhibition in a series of past and possible future iterations taking the Bern show of 1969 as their point of reference.

With the exception of Demand’s contribution, however, the 2013 show actually worked against the performative character of re-staging by aiming to reconstruct the original as faithfully as possible. (Fig. 2a-b) According to repeated statements by commissioner Miuccia Prada and curator-in-chief Germano Celant in the catalogue, the emphasis was on re-presenting the exhibits from the original show and the architecture of the Kunsthalle in Bern “as identical as possible.”<sup>13</sup> In terms of the architecture, this meant resurrecting the Swiss venue inside the Venetian palazzo, creating the closest possible approximation. Concerning the art on display the self-set task was to reestablish the ensemble on the basis of intensive archive research, bringing as many as possible of the exhibits from 1969 together again and, as Celant writes in the catalogue, to remake those whose current location could not be ascertained, that were not available for loan, or that no longer existed.<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 3a-b) The different procedures used to achieve this include reprints, production of an “exhibition copy” (Paul Cotton, Barry Flanagan, Eva Hesse, et al.), double dating to imply a new version (1969 and 2013, as with Neil Jenney), replacing the work originally shown with another (Alighiero Boetti, Barry Flanagan, Claes Oldenburg, et al.), and finally re-execution or re-performance. The latter was put into practice either by the artist’s estate (in the case of Sol LeWitt and Joseph Beuys) or by the artists themselves, a step agreed to by, among others, Daniel

<sup>10</sup> On this understanding of reenactment in relation to art performances, see Nina Tecklenburg: “Mythos Ereignis – Mythos Aufführung. Künstlerische Reenactments als Entmythisierungsverfahren,” in: Jens Roselt and Ulf Otto (eds.): *Theater als Zeitmaschine. Zur performativen Praxis des Reenactments. Theater- und kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven*, Bielefeld 2012, pp. 87–96.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Demand in “Germano Celant/Thomas Demand,” in: Germano Celant (ed.): *When Attitudes Become Form. Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, exhibition catalogue, Ca’ Corner della Regina, Fondazione Prada, Venice 2013, Milan 2013, p. 400. For Demand’s photographs of the interior built into Palazzo Ca’ Corner della Regina, see, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 369, 386–87, 546–47.

<sup>12</sup> See Thomas Demand: *Model Studies*, London and Madrid 2011.

<sup>13</sup> In their introductory texts in the exhibition catalogue, Miuccia Prada and Germano Celant also speak, among others, of a “reconstruction of that exhibition, exact and complete in all its parts,” of “[p]roposing this situation again at the Fondazione Prada, just as it was,” and their wish to get nearer to “a strengthening and a reinforcement of the idea of recreating it ‘exactly as it was’ in the eighteenth-century palace of Ca’ Corner della Regina, in Venice, in 2013.” See Celant (ed.): *When Attitudes Become Form. Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, pp. 377, 379, 390.

<sup>14</sup> See Germano Celant in “Why and How. A Conversation with Germano Celant,” in: *ibid.*, p. 404.



Fig. 3a:  
Installation view of *Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form*, Kunsthalle Bern, 1969. From left to right: works by Bill Bollinger, Eva Hesse, Gary B. Kuehn, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Richard Tuttle, Alan Saret and Keith Sonnier. Photo: Balthasar Burkhard © J. Paul Getty Trust. Courtesy Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2011.M.30).



Fig. 3b:  
Installation view of *When Attitudes Become Form – Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, Fondazione Prada, Ca' Corner della Regina, Venice, 2013. From left to right: works by Gary B. Kuehn, Eva Hesse, Alan Saret, Reiner Ruthebeck and Richard Tuttle. Photo: Attilio Maranzano, Fondazione Prada.

Buren, Jan Dibbets, Joseph Kosuth, Keith Sonnier, and Lawrence Weiner. In view of this reconstructive approach, it is all the more astonishing how few of the original exhibits were included: of the 148 objects listed for the 1969 exhibition, 42, i.e., roughly one third, were remade. Another third were missing altogether.<sup>15</sup> In several cases, the missing works were represented by markings in the space and photographic documentation of their 1969 installation, a curatorial decision that further reinforced their proxy character via a religiously charged absence. (Fig. 4a-b) The claim to maximum exactitude strengthens the Venice show's character as a work in relation to its performative disposition. It follows principles similar to those applied to the remaking of art installations since the early twentieth century, beginning with El Lissitzky's *Abstract Cabinet* (1927/1928 and 1968/1979) and Kurt Schwitters's *MERZbau* (1920-36 and 1980-83).<sup>16</sup> The exhibition is defined as an assemblage of exhibits whose individual authorial properties are subsumed under the context of meaning sustained by the authorship of the exhibition. The exhibits stand not for themselves as art, but for the exhibition as a work.

For most of the exhibits in the 2013 show, this put them at odds with their conceptual orientation at the time of their presentation in 1969: on the one hand, the re-staging is entirely in keeping with conceptual art, as it matches the performative and ephemeral emphasis of the exhibition's title, inserting the work into a perpetual continuation of itself; on the other hand, the works remade in 2013, now permanently materialized, go against the impulse of the 1960s that sought to subvert their own commodification as objects by means of ephemerality and processuality.<sup>17</sup> In the new presentation of the exhibition, which made no explicit distinction between different modes of reconstruction, the re-staging of a work of conceptual art appears indistinguishable from the reproduction of ephemeral, destroyed, or lost works. Besides making it possible to exhibit them for a few months, in many cases this object status also rendered the works capable of being traded or fetishized for the first time. Ultimately, then, these tensions reflect the evolution of the art-historical and commercial appreciation of this formerly "new" art: work that was previously neglected and marginalized is now added to the category of art that is recognized in terms of its market value, joining its ranks as if it had never been left out. And for the work that was art-historically established on the basis of its conceptual approach, this restaging as part of art-market history also foregrounds its character as a commodity. The reference point for the curatorial project of 2013 is the valorization of the previous exhibition, not the qualities that gave rise to it. This approach to the original exhibition transforms the role of materiality and mediality within the aesthetic concept of the art on show and the way it is viewed by art history.

<sup>15</sup> In 2013, according to the list in the catalogue, 44 of the 148 exhibits from 1969 were missing. See "Register" in Celant (ed.): *When Attitudes Become Form. Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, pp. 549–587.

<sup>16</sup> For an in-depth look at the issue of preserving and restaging art installations, see Barbara Ferriani and Marina Pugliese (eds.): *Ephemeral Monuments. History and Conservation of Installation Art*, Los Angeles 2013.

<sup>17</sup> The fact that some of the participating artists were aware of the ambivalent effects of the reinstatement of their works is reflected in the answers given by Rafael Ferrer, Keith Sonnier, and Lawrence Weiner to questions asked by *The Brooklyn Rail* at the time of the exhibition in Venice, on July 15, 2013, see: <http://www.brooklynrail.org/2013/07/art/rafael-ferrer-with-barry-schwabsky>, <http://www.brooklynrail.org/2013/07/criticspage/bern-19698202venice-2013>, <http://www.brooklynrail.org/2013/07/criticspage/re-from-lawrence-weiner-studio> (accessed March 26, 2019).



Fig 4a:  
Installation view of *When Attitudes Become Form*,  
Kunsthalle Bern, 1969. From Left to right: “Belt  
Piece” (1966-67), “Splash” (1969) and “Shovel  
Plate Prop”/ “Close Pin Prop”/ “Sign Board  
Prop” (1969) by Richard Serra.  
Photo: Harry Shunk © J. Paul Getty Trust.  
Courtesy Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles  
(2011.M.30).

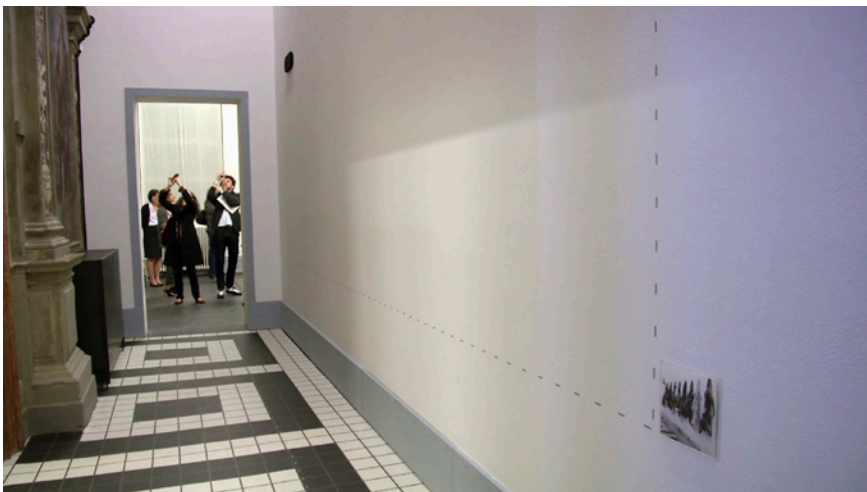


Fig 4b:  
Installation view of *When Attitudes Become Form*  
– Bern 1969/Venice 2013, Fondazione Prada, Ca’  
Corner della Regina, Venice, 2013. Markings in  
the space and documentary photos as placeholder  
for “Belt Piece” (1969) by Richard Serra.  
Photo: Still from exhibition video produced  
by Fondazione Prada, Camera: Maurizio  
d’Adamo & Maurizio Romanelli, Editing:  
Fabrizia Vitaletti, available at <https://vimeo.com/149172847> (accessed  
5. April 2019).



In spite of its claim to historical exactitude (or perhaps precisely because of this), the Venice show's reference to *When Attitudes Become Form* focused less on the individual artworks brought together by the exhibition and more on the reputation it established in the intervening 44 years as a curatorial ensemble. The historically transformative effects caused by this can be seen on many levels, beginning with the media coverage of the exhibition in 1969. From the outset, Szeemann made sure the show was carefully documented; as well as Balthasar Burkhard, who regularly documented exhibitions at the Kunsthalle, he hired New York photographer Harry Shunk to capture not just the finished presentation but the process of installing the show, and he invited the journalist Marlène Belilos and her film team from French-speaking Swiss television to report on the show before it opened. (Fig. 5a-b & 6a-b) In both cases, Szeemann placed particular importance on the foregrounding of an easy-going quality of collective working processes. The image of the exhibition thus produced reflected the ideals of the Italian artist and art critic Piero Gilardi, who had advised Szeemann during the development of the show: if Gilardi had got his way, a collaborative, nonhierarchical, and politically motivated process would have shaped the exhibition during both the preparatory phase and the show itself. This, however, is reflected neither in the installation views of the resulting exhibition nor in the actual process of its creation, during which Szeemann retained firm control over the selection, development, and combination of exhibits.<sup>18</sup> The visual record of the exhibition's genesis, the staging of working processes as an integral part of the works in photographs and films, went far beyond the possibilities of curatorial practice in 1969. The special properties of the exhibition, on which its historical significance is based, were thus far more pronounced in these media artefacts than in the show itself. With the photographs by Burkhard and Shunk and the film footage by Belilos, the exhibition became a picture that was to contribute significantly to its image after the fact. In this way, mediatization and documentation helped to constitute an archive of memory that was always already geared towards the future, designed to show how things might have been.

In the Venice show, this afterlife of the media image extended to the figure of the curator. The task of using the exhibits to recreate the curatorial narrative of the original as faithfully as possible was one for which Celant, as he himself writes, considered himself especially predestined and legitimized, firstly because his own exhibitions and publications pursue similar preferences in the field of contemporary art to those produced by Szeemann (who died in 2005) and secondly because he was personally involved in the Bern exhibition as one of those who spoke at the opening.<sup>19</sup> In the restaging, then, he reprised the part of an exhibition-maker who is the central point of reference in discussions about the emergence of the curator as a profession, about the question of curatorial authorship, and about changes in the

<sup>18</sup> On the role of Piero Gilardi, see Christian Rattemeyer: "'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When Attitudes Become Form' 1969" in: Rattemeyer (ed.): *Exhibiting the New Art*, 40, 46–50. See also Gilardi's account looking back: "Temporary Artistic Communities. Piero Gilardi in conversation with Francesco Manacorda, 8 November 2008," in: *ibid.*, pp. 230–238.

<sup>19</sup> See Germano Celant: "Acknowledgments" in *idem.* (ed.): *When Attitudes Become Form. Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, p. 379.



Fig. 5a:  
Artists installing *When Attitudes Become Form*, Kunsthalle Bern, 1969. From left: Giovanni Anselmo (holding the right side of the glass), assisted by Gilberto Zorio, working at *Il cotone bagnato viene buttato sul vetro e ci resta*, 1969; Sarkis and Jannis Kounellis (center); Alighiero Boetti (right) making *La Luna*, 1969.  
Photo: Shunk-Kender, © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, Source: *When Attitudes Become Form – Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, exhibition catalogue, ed. by Germano Celant, Milan 2013, p. 230.



Fig. 5b:  
Artists installing *When Attitudes Become Form*, Kunsthalle Bern, 1969. From left: Giovanni Anselmo (holding the right side of the glass), assisted by Gilberto Zorio, working at *Il cotone bagnato viene buttato sul vetro e ci resta*, 1969; Sarkis and Jannis Kounellis (center); Alighiero Boetti (right) making *La Luna*, 1969.  
Photo: Shunk-Kender, © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, Source: *When Attitudes Become Form – Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, exhibition catalogue, ed. by Germano Celant, Milan 2013, p. 230.



Fig. 6a:  
Bernd Lohaus, Yvon Lambert, Joseph Beuys during the installation of *When Attitudes Become Form*, Kunsthalle Bern, 1969.  
Photo: Claudio Abate, Rome, Source: *When Attitudes Become Form – Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, exhibition catalogue, ed. by Germano Celant, Milan 2013, p. 68.



Fig. 6b:  
Mario Merz, Eliseo Mattiacci and Joseph Beuys during the installation of *When Attitudes Become Form*, Kunsthalle Bern, 1969.  
Photo: Shunk-Kender © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, Source: *When Attitudes Become Form – Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, exhibition catalogue, ed. by Germano Celant, Milan 2013, p. 68.



presentation of art since the 1960s. It was with Szeemann that the profession acquired the kind of glamour previously reserved mainly for artists.<sup>20</sup>

In 1969, however, this role was not yet fully evolved: Szeemann had been director of Bern's Kunsthalle for eight years, and although he had already invited Christo to wrap the building, he did not yet have the reputation of a rule-breaking innovator and *enfant terrible*. His roots in theater may be one reason for his affinity with the performative approaches he brought to Bern with *When Attitudes Become Form*; this factor also contributed to the formation of his self-image as a curator, grasping the work of performative assemblage as an independent creative practice, at least related to that of an artist. Szeemann conquered his place in art history alongside the post-Minimal and Conceptual art that he exhibited and which, like him, was barely recognized at the time; his talent for self-promotion, evident in his writings and in photographs, played an important part in this. Here, as in the image of the avant-garde artist, scandal, marginalization, and outsider status signaled his prominent position, causing him to be judged by similar criteria to the art he supported. In the course of his career, this form of engagement continued, making its mark even on posthumous tributes: here, the curator appears as the author of his works, overshadowing the exhibits themselves. This process is the same as that described by Nathalie Heinich using the example of the mythologization of Vincent van Gogh: reception shifted the emphasis from the work to its creator, from the artist to the individual, creating a legend with a historically unquestionable special status.<sup>21</sup>

In his relationship with Szeemann as a figure exalted in this way, Celant initially adopted a curatorial role similar to the one he would have adopted when dealing with artists: in Venice, he curated Szeemann and his work. Their closeness in biographical and art-historical terms served as a badge of expertise and authenticity. Beyond this, however, the closeness also linked his own role as curator with that of his predecessor, doing so in two ways: firstly, Celant participated in Szeemann's status as an exceptional figure in the field of art, the transfer of symbolic capital from one to the other being aided by the points of contact in their biographies, and secondly, Celant stepped into the role of independent curator tailored, expanded, and valorized by Szeemann, a position that in the course of the past twenty years has been accorded a status equal to that of artists, in terms of both creative potential and social standing. The fact that Celant was accompanied by two renowned cultural figures, Thomas Demand and Rem Koolhaas, as curatorial advisors is part of the current trend of major exhibitions no longer seeming to be able to do without a team of curators from different professions and disciplines. (Fig. 7) Celant's performance thus manifested not only his current task as curator of an exhibition commissioned by Fondazione Prada, but also the

<sup>20</sup> For more on the valorization of the curator's role, as exemplified by the reputation of Harald Szeemann, see Beatrice von Bismarck: "Celebrity Shifts: Curators, Individuals and Collectives" in: Mona Schieren and Andrea Sick (eds.): *Look at me. Celebrity Culture at the Venice Biennale*, Nuremberg 2011, pp. 180–191.

<sup>21</sup> See Nathalie Heinich: *The Glory of van Gogh. An Anthropology of Admiration*, Princeton 1996, pp. 46, 61–75, 140. On the intensive art-historical response to Harald Szeemann immediately after his death in 2005, see Beatrice von Bismarck: "Harald Szeemann et l'art de l'exposition," *Perspective. La revue de l'INHA* (1/2013), pp. 176–182. See also Nathalie Heinich: "La Consommation de Célébrité," in: *L'Année sociologique*, 3eme série, vol. 61, no. 1, Sociologie de la consommation 2011, pp. 103–123 and Nathalie Heinich: *Harald Szeemann: Un cas singulier*, Paris 2014.

added value acquired by this task and position in the intervening 44 years: an upward revaluation that built, via the capitalization of subjectivity, on the current valorization of creative activity that sees artists cast as role models for the post-Fordist working world.

The visibility offered by this reputation-founding exhibition to the artists, the artworks, and the curator was also the focus of the financial support from Philip Morris. The tobacco company, who approached Szeemann in 1968 with a sponsorship offer, imposed two conditions: the show would go on tour and it would feature young contemporary artists. The exhibition's conceptual orientation, its genesis, and its afterlife were all thus connected in key ways with this sponsoring which—compared with other exhibitions taking place at the same time with similar content—created luxurious conditions for travel funding, installation, the above-mentioned photographic and filmic documentation, the catalogue, and the further dissemination of the exhibition after its first “performance.”<sup>22</sup>

The paradox that an exhibition of art that experimented with means of not submitting to the structures of the art market, or at least not to the extent demanded by that market as it existed in the 1960s, should be among the first international exhibitions to be made possible by corporate sponsorship, is among the historically significant aspects of *When Attitudes Become Form*.<sup>23</sup> This seems to prefigure the abandonment of the political and economic ideals connected with processuality and ephemerality, as clearly manifested today in the ongoing market success of conceptual art. The focus shifts once again from the unfolding of a performative event to the marketable product or the marketable body of the artist that makes a repeated performance and exhibition possible. If not the artists or the work itself, then it is their proxies who represent the associated economic and above all symbolic capital.

At the same time, however, this also reflects the special significance acquired by the role of exhibitions in the becoming-public of art within the context of a society that has since the 1960s been increasingly geared toward performative self-design.<sup>24</sup> This role turned questions of presentation into a political issue, sparking not only demonstrations for presentational self-determination like those of the Art Workers Coalition, but also debates on the rivalry between curators and artists. Understanding presentation as representation of the featured works, artists, curators, or institutions means claiming a role in creating one's own visibility and shaping a public image—an image that is decisive for one's own future marketability within the economies of the art field.

Having been integrated into the economization of images, *When Attitudes Become Form* could not escape the marketing of its own reputation,

<sup>22</sup> On Philip Morris's commitment, see Christian Rattemeyer: “‘Op Losse Schroeven’ and ‘When Attitudes Become Form’ 1969,” in: Rattemeyer (ed.): *Exhibiting the New Art*, 19, 27. The fact that the sponsorship also covered various publicity media like the catalogue and posters is clear from Szeemann's correspondence with Philip Morris. See The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Special Collections, Harald Szeemann Papers, 2011.M.30, box 288, file 4.

<sup>23</sup> On this, see Benjamin H.D. Buchloh: “The Thresholds of 1969,” in: Celant (ed.), *When Attitudes Become Form. Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, p. 504.

<sup>24</sup> In 1979, Philip Morris retrospectively explained its special commitment to exhibitions of fine art rather than the performing arts by saying that exhibitions promise the creation of a lasting image because they are less ephemeral, mostly producing a catalogue that outlives them, and always thinking of visual documentation. See Sam Hunter: *Art in Business. The Philip Morris Story*, New York 1979, pp. 29–30.



established in 1969, of having “made art history.”<sup>25</sup> On the contrary, its association with conceptual positions and avant-garde topicality made it into a gallery-compatible commodity. In 1986, Bob Nickas tried to realize this market value in an exhibition at Bess Cutler Gallery in New York where he showed work that had featured in the 1969 exhibition together with more recent work under the title *When Attitudes Become Form*, and again two years later, with slight alterations, at Galerie Hans Mayer in Düsseldorf, this time with the Bern exhibition’s subtitle as the main title: *Works-Concepts-Situations-Information*. And Hans Mayer then transformed the show into a commodity by purchasing it wholesale, exhibiting it shortly thereafter at the Art Cologne fair, and then selling it to the Parisian gallerist Marcel Fleiss in 1992.<sup>26</sup>

As representatives of a turning point in art history, not only the exhibits and their curator have taken on a life of their own, but also the title of the exhibition, the catalogue, and the exhibition architecture. Appropriations and modifications of the original title have been used to signal breaks, shifts, and new accents in art and art discourse, be they aesthetic, institutional, or political. Titles like *How Latitudes Become Forms* (2003), *When Attitudes Escape Form* (2004)<sup>27</sup>, or *When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes* (2012) riff on Szeemann’s title as a reference not to the artistic approaches of the 1960s, but to historical verdicts concerning the attitude for which they stood, as a point of departure for discussions of alternative historiography of institutions, the implications of a globalized art field, and changes to the concept of artistic labor. A similar process has taken place with the unwieldy information aesthetic of the 1969 exhibition catalogue that was designed to resemble an office file: its format, materiality, structure, and design were intended to manifest the moment of historical change embodied by *When Attitudes Become Form*, even when repetitions of this gesture exchanged the casual, ephemeral, low-key aesthetic for elaborate, durable book productions with object status.<sup>28</sup> The catalogue for the Venice exhibition represents the high point of this development to date: the original loose-bound collection of typewritten pages found its antithesis in a bulky thousand-page glossy catalogue containing both the documentation of the original exhibition and that of its most recent iteration. With this departure from the original properties on which the exhibition’s reputation was based, “provocation” could become a self-sufficient characteristic that ultimately was to find a further translation, according to the curators, in the architectural gesture of inserting Bern’s Kunsthalle into the building of the Fondazione Prada and the implied (avant-garde-style) break with the past.<sup>29</sup>

*When Attitudes Become Form—Bern 1969/Venice 2013* can thus be described as a reference to a historical exhibition in which the interplay of historical links between the objects and individuals involved primarily reflects the

<sup>25</sup> In a letter to Mary W. Covington, his contact at Philip Morris, Szeemann wrote on September 21, 1969, with regard to the constantly changing route of the exhibition tour: “If for you it is no more interesting that the show continues, it would of course be the best that after London we send the works back to the owners. The show was anyway very successful and made ‘art history’ (see *Düsseldorfer Handelsblatt*, Sept. 16th).” The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Special Collections, Harald Szeemann Papers, 2011.M.30, box 288, file 4.

<sup>26</sup> Francesco Stocchi: “Every Critical Act is a Creative Act,” in: Celant (ed.): *When Attitudes Become Form. Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, p. 449.

<sup>27</sup> Philippe Vergne (ed.): *How Latitudes Become Forms. Art in a Global Age*, exhibition catalogue, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis 2003; Isabelle Zürcher (ed.): *When Attitudes Escape Form. Kunsthalle Basel 1969-1970*, exhibition catalogue, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel 2004; Jens Hoffmann (ed.): *When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes*, exhibition catalogue, California College of the Arts, San Francisco 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Such a solidification of the flexible office file aesthetic is manifested, for example, in *Live in Your Head. Concept and Experiment in Britain 1965-75*, exhibition catalogue, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London 2000 and Hoffmann (ed.): *When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes*.

<sup>29</sup> On the claim to update the provocative potential of the 1969 exhibition, see Miuccia Prada: “Foreword” in: Celant (ed.): *When Attitudes Become Form. Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, p. 377.

mechanisms of recognition in the curatorial field: over time, the components of the original constellation (exhibits, artists, curator, sponsor, publication medium, and exhibition architecture) are transformed into proxies that perform their increase in economic and symbolic value. The exhibition emerges as a staged attention asset. In place of a possible comment on the implications of the role of exhibiting in economies of visibility, it offers an unbidden exploitation of these implications. For all of those involved, the 2013 restaging became above all an act of self-valorizing inscription into history, thus transforming that history. A key aspect here is the suppression of the logic of performance in favor of a logic of finite works, the historical process of valorization congealing to a mere “look.” The historical context is replaced by the reputation developed on the basis of that context. Processes are captured in pictures and finally cast as an image; with the switch from Philip Morris to Prada, the deal with visibility moves from low-profile sponsorship to high-profile hosting. (Fig. 8) Although a reflection on the curatorial restaging project takes place not in the exhibition itself but only in the catalogue, leaving the possibilities of curatorial commentary, research, and experimentation in the process of reenactment largely unused at Ca’ Corner (with only Demand’s contribution making use of this performative angle), in its focus on the role of the original show’s image, *When Attitudes Become Form – Bern 1969/Venice 2013* does highlight the changes in meaning undergone by the various objects and individuals involved in the exhibition and by their interrelations. Where artists like Goran Djordjevic, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, and Christian Philipp Müller took the possibilities of such transformations of meaning as their point of departure in reference to earlier exhibitions in order to explore and comment on historical processes of valorization in presentation, the Venice show shone a spotlight on the values thus generated. Although this did draw attention to the always ambivalent marketability of art that may accompany its becoming-public as facilitated by exhibiting, it also demonstrated the fact that procedures and strategies of becoming-public in and with exhibitions play a decisive role in defining their potential to either cement the conditions of this economization or to transform them.



Fig. 7:  
Thomas Demand, Germano Celant and Rem  
Koolhaas during the preview of *When Attitudes  
Become Form – Bern 1969/Venice 2013*,  
Fondazione Prada, Ca' Corner della Regina,  
Venice, 2013.  
Photo: Vittorio Zunino Celotto, Prada



Fig. 8:  
Miuccia Prada answering Walter de Marias “Art  
by Telephone” (1967) during the opening of  
*When Attitudes Become Form – Bern 1969/Venice  
2013*, Fondazione Prada, Ca' Corner della Regina,  
Venice, 2013.  
Photo: Getty Images

**Beatrice von Bismarck** is a professor of art history and visual culture at the Academy of Arts (Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst) Leipzig, where she also teaches cultures of the curatorial. Previously, she worked as a curator of the department of 20th-century art at Städel Museum, Frankfurt, taught at the Leuphana University in Lüneburg, and was co-founder and co-director of the *Kunstraum* der Universität Lüneburg. In Leipzig, she was co-founder of the project-space /D/O/C/K and initiator of the M.A. Program *Cultures of the Curatorial*, which started in autumn 2009. She also co-conceived and co-directed the itinerant *TRANScuratorial Academy* that has been touring from Berlin to Mumbai and Phnom Penh (2017-2018). Publications include *Cultures of the Curatorial* (ed. with Jörn Schafaff and Thomas Weski), 2012; *Timing - On the Temporal Dimension of Exhibiting* (ed. with Rike Frank, Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer, Jörn Schafaff, and Thomas Weski), 2014; *Hospitality - Hosting Relations in Exhibitions*, (ed. with Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer), 2016 (all Sternberg Press, Berlin); *Now-Tomorrow-Flux: An Anthology on the Museum of Contemporary Art* (ed. with Heike Munder and Peter J. Schneemann), JRP|Ringier, Zurich, 2017; *Curatorial Things* (ed. with Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer), 2019 (forthcoming), and *O(f)f Our Times: The Aftermath of the Ephemeral and Other Curatorial Anachronics*, (ed. with Rike Frank), Berlin 2019 (forthcoming). Her essays have been published in numerous catalogues and critical readers. For her research project on the "Curatorial", she was awarded the Opus Magnum fellowship of the Volkswagen Stiftung, Hannover (2015-2017).

documenta studies #07  
July 2019

BEATRICE VON BISMARCK:  
The Devil Wears Historicity or, The Look  
of Provocation: When Attitudes Become  
Form-Bern 1969/Venice 2013

PUBLISHERS:  
Nora Sternfeld  
Nanne Buurman  
Ina Wudtke  
Carina Herring

EDITING:  
Nanne Buurman

TRANSLATION:  
Nicholas Grindell

GRAPHIC DESIGN:  
Bogislav Ziemer

documenta- and  
Exhibition Studies

Every effort has been made to contact the rightful owners with regards to copyrights and permissions. We apologize for any inadvertent errors or omissions. Should any entitlement to such rights arise, please contact: [info@documenta-studien.de](mailto:info@documenta-studien.de)

KUNSTHOCHSCHULE  
KASSEL