proach to curating that cuts across various disciplines and creates new approaches and perspectives on artistic practices. Dance exhibitions bring together elements of different artistic traditions: conventions of exhibition of visual art, modern dance's emphasis on being "hard to see" i.e. being experiential rather than based on an object/subject division, the media-informed viewing habits of the contemporary spectator, and even the programming requirements of contemporary museums. In doing this, a new form of mediating performance is emerging in practice, one that untangles this genealogical puzzle in ways that respond to the demands of new kinds of audiences. In the best instances of these grey zones, and other combinations of dance with the museum, this form of mediating dance is both *critical* in its focus on and thematization of the spectator-performer relationship, where it is suggesting a new kind of intimacy, but also *informed by the history of modern dance* and thus *discipline-specific*, continuing and reimagining a certain form of dance practice.

This is lastly also an example of how the concept of curating, having been developed in the visual arts, can flow into the performing arts and create also there new forms of presentation through a curatorial engagement with the specificity of the mediation of performance to contemporary audiences. As will also be shown in in the next section on curatorial practices in the theatre, what is meant by this kind of development is not just a maturation of the theoretical tools used in analyzing performance, but also a mediating praxis that is itself developing too.

3.4 Curating Theatre / Theatre Curating

3.4.1 Dramaturgy vs. Curating

Theatre scholar Tom Sellar argues in his 2014 essay "The Curatorial Turn" that the performance curator is the "great white hope for progressive theatre makers" (2014, 21). This inflationary claim is contrasted by Sellar with the historical role of the dramaturg, who he portrays as fulfilling similar functions in regards to "[c]onnecting a public to the art through interpretation," but who does not possess the same level of institutional power and influence to be able to do this effectively (26). The performance curator is thus portrayed as a rebranding of the dramaturg's role, the only difference being imbuing them with more control over budgets and authority over decision-making. This effectively imports the curatorial discourse's mystification and emphasis on the author-function. His definition thus reads like an expansion of the term curator into the field of dramaturgy in the interest of dramaturgs wanting to assert their power and authority over the performance event within theatre institutions.

The concept of dramaturgy, and more specifically the role of the dramaturg, deserve however a more nuanced exploration than this, in order to evaluate the

extent to which it too is establishing new beginnings within the interdisciplinary performance field. By situating the distinction historically within the context of the emergence of the term in the 18th century, and the observation that the term has not gained the same amount of attention as its visual arts counterpart, the relationship between these two terms for mediating figures can be better clarified, and more effectively linked to contemporary practices of mediation in theatre.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, during his brief time at the Nationaltheater in Hamburg in the 18th century would, in a series of essays, outline the broad definition of the dramaturg as it still persists today (Lessing [1767–1769] 2003; Turner and Behrndt 2008). In his conception, the dramaturg becomes responsible for a fluid and shifting list of responsibilities that work together in order to design the entirety of the experience of theatregoing, from the audience's perception and behaviour to the text and the actions onstage. In this way, the dramaturg would become responsible for the theatrical *event*, with the goal of presenting works of theatrical repute and which achieved this Aristotelian ideal of tragedy and catharsis to the audience in a manner amenable to them (Turner and Behrndt 2008, 19–23). This basic approach would determine the general profile of the dramaturg going forward. They act as a mediating figure between various stakeholders both internal and external to the theatre. This means not only communication between directors, actors, stagehands, and audience, but also a whole host of (potential) responsibilities, depending on the project, theatre, and individual profile of the dramaturg (and of course on the historical era they are working in).

A contemporary dramaturg can be responsible for editing and choosing texts to realize, designing the yearly program, positioning the theatre within its wider arts ecosystem, choosing directors and putting together production teams, doing research on productions and material, being involved in the conception of works with their teams, suggesting changes to productions in rehearsals, doing public relations and marketing, being involved in producing new works, applying for funding, managing budgets, etc. (Beck 2007, 313). Obviously no dramaturg can do all of these tasks all the time; the intention in listing this wide range is to show the extent to which being a dramaturg also comes with the challenge of defining just what the exact profile is that one takes on, depending on a host of personal and institutional factors. What cuts across all these different tasks is the understanding of the dramaturg as a kind of mediating figure responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the delivery of a work's *drama*.

The elicitation of drama is understood here as being achieved through negotiating between various aspects of and stakeholders in a performative event, as has been established earlier in this volume. It is situated in the unfolding of what theatre scholar Hans-Thies Lehmann calls the *performance text*, which is constituted by all the different various sense-giving actants that make up the situation (2006, 85). This in turn means that all those other aspects that have been listed, in other words

the social and material infrastructure of the theatre and its labourers, influences the creation of the drama, as well as the realization of a performance through a specific text, production, staging, on a given night with a certain audience and set of performers. Just like in curating's relationship to context, there is no way to draw a definitive line between text and context, rather the job of the dramaturg is a working-with these different forces, steering them to the best of their (ever only partial) ability in order to make an expression of the world in the world.

Taking from Lehmann's later book on dramatic theatre, he argues that the *affective and mental upheaval* that is the result of the tragic formula is what lies at the centre of theatre's societal relevance (2013, 16). Lehmann makes clear that this upheaval is something that must take place in the performative event, and cannot be simply reduced to a tragedy communicated solely through the linguistic text of a work, e.g. when experienced through the play as literature. Rather than it being a characteristic of dramatic theatre, he calls tragedy a state that is achieved differently across predramatic, dramatic, and postdramatic forms of European theatre practice. In doing this, not only does Lehmann diminish the importance of a literary text, which is often the basis for much theatre scholarship, but he argues that "there can be no tragic experience without a theatre experience" (Lehmann 2013, 30; translation added).[7]

Lehmann connects the tragedy at the centre of theatrical experience with a gesture of transgression. While Brecht's Verfremdungseffekt for instance played with this transgression within the theatre play itself, contemporary theatre's act of transgression is more fundamentally one of its framing and contextualization. Lehmann writes of contemporary theatre practice:

> So if it is correct that tragedy can be located in a moment of transgression, then what this means in the times of deconstruction of representational theatre is that it raises the question as to whether transgression [*Überschreitung*] must still be sought out (only) in that which is displayed [*dargestellt*], or whether it much more must be sought out in the mechanisms of display, of theatre itself, in its form and in its praxis. (Lehmann 2013, 21; translation added)[8]

His point is that the contemporary dramaturg's area of responsibility must not be limited to the confines of a work, but must also consider the mechanisms of contextualization of the entire apparatus itself in its broadest sense in order to realize a dramatic experience. This ends up closely resembling the concept of curatorial

7 "es [gibt] keine tragische Erfahrung ohne Theatererfahrung."

8 "Denn sollten wir das Rechte damit treffen, das Tragische in einer Geste der Transgression zu verorten, so betrifft diese Überschreitung in Zeiten einer Dekonstruktion des Theaters der Repräsentation gerade auch die Frage, ob eine Überschreitung noch im Bereich des (nur) Dargestellten zu suchen ist, oder ob sie vielmehr die Mechanismen der Darstellung, des Theaters selbst, seiner Form und seiner Praxis betrifft."

practice as put forward earlier in this volume. The question then becomes what happens to the concept of *drama* and thus the *dramaturg*, as well as articulating any potential difference between this profession and curatorial practice.

Lessing's concept of dramaturgy emerged, as has already been stated, during the early enlightenment period, in an age when the centrality of the theatre text to theatrical experience was undisputed. His *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* can be interpreted as a way of describing a kind of Werktreue that is anchored to the playtext in such a way that it functions as the locus of meaning. His understanding of the role of the dramaturg is as being *in service* to the realization of the drama qua playtext. As Lehmann explains, dramatic theatre is defined by its adherence to this text, and with it its adherence to a coherent and cohesive narrative world that is formed by it. The task of the dramaturg in dramatic theatre is to ensure the functioning of the "dramatic frame" of the tragedy (Lehmann 2013, 271–272).

European theatre's move away from dramatic towards post-dramatic forms of theatrical production, where the playtext is only one aspect among others in the constitution of the performance text of the theatrical performance, has seen also the role of the dramaturg adapt and often take on expanded roles and importance. Their goal continues to be the realization of the tragic formula, now however no longer as much through a "Werktreue" realization of dramatic texts, but through the practice of working with the various actants that constitute the specificity of the performance.

While the dramaturg seems to have survived the transition to post-dramatic theatre, more contemporary developments may be proving to be too difficult to keep up with: European theatre practice is moving away from a post-modern approach that informed much post-dramatic theatre, embracing more an approach marked by engagement off the theatre stage, applying its strategies instead in order to intervene directly in societal processes outside of the proscenium arch, as Lehmann remarks. It is at this juncture in the development of European theatre that the concept of the dramaturg seems to struggle to remain a relevant practice, based on how theatre practitioners are talking and reflecting on their practices. As theatrical practices are often now being combined with other arts in a larger interdisciplinary arts space, what has followed is a seeming loss of interest in the term as compared to the concept of curating.

This leads to the need to distinguish finally between the concepts of curating/curator and dramaturgy/dramaturg. The approach of the last chapter was to present curating as having developed into a practice of co-creating the event of critical knowledge production, a practice of wresting actants into a constellation that allows the possibility of non-hegemonic knowledge creation to occur. The chapter also examined how the *curator* is the embattled professional profile of many arts practitioners that do this. Curators must contend with the issues of being in a position of mediating forces of power, and the relationship this has to their own

increase in power and status that comes along with being a middleman, and which is inherently linked to proto-capitalist tendencies towards control.[9]

Dramaturgy can now be understood as a term that stemmed from enlightenment-era attempts at transforming the theatre into a space for public education through the realization of dramatic plays. At the foundation of theatre lies the tragic formula, which describes the intended effect of affective upheaval in the theatrical performance. The dramaturg is in charge of ensuring, as best they can, the realization of this performance. What dramaturgy emphasized early on was the importance of the performance itself, with the shift to post-dramatic only strengthening the role of the dramaturg in the constitution of the performative event.

In making this juxtaposition, it is argued that curating as a practice of co-creating the event of critical knowledge production and dramaturgy as the practice of creating a performative event of affective upheaval and transgression are *largely equivalent practices*. Their similarity exists firstly because of their common history as mediating figures within the cultural institutions of the enlightenment, charged with both caring for upkeep of the institutions (the network of performers, the material needs of museum collections) and with offering the public what they considered to be exemplary cultural production. This similarity must be understood to have some important qualifications. While the dramaturg has also undergone changes in the interim, and while their power has in some cases been greatly expanded, the discipline and tradition in which they operate has only within the past decade begun with any significance or magnitude a process of transformation of its mediating figures towards considering the mechanisms of display themselves, as Lehmann writes, in the curatorial sense.

This view is argued by theatre scholar Bertie Ferdman in an article on the relationship between curating and theatre. She takes from curatorial scholar Paul O'Neil the late 1980s as the period when visual arts curating made the shift from "a *logistics* of programming to a *concept for* programming," meaning a shift in focus from the logistical considerations of tickets and bookings, towards aesthetic goals (2012, 10). This is opposed with the situation in theatre, where such approaches are only now beginning to be established. For Ferdman, a common emerging trait among this new kind of practitioner is that they are engaged in questioning "preconceived assumptions that shape performance, as well as his or her own role in shaping that discourse," in other words a form of mediation that is aware of its position within the manifold relationships that make up the performative event but which tries nevertheless to enact upon them some influence (2012, 17).

If it can then be established that curatorial practice and this critical approach to dramaturgy that has emerged in the past decade are indeed largely equivalent, and

9 This happens through control e.g. of availability, see regarding this Andreasen and Larsen 2007.

becoming more so as both dramaturgy establishes the discourses around moving from a logistics to a concept for programming, and artistic practice itself becomes increasingly interdisciplinary, then what can surely be established as a difference between the two is when they rose to prominence.

As has been shown in Chapter 2, the figure of the curator in the visual arts has a long history of struggle with its relationship to the author figure, and as a result of this struggle has developed, at least partially, coping mechanisms within the field itself. Thus within the community of the visual arts, there exists forms of resistance engrained in it that help resist (though also that help perpetuate) this form of curatorial authorship, such as institutional critique (see section 3.2.2) or forms of collective curation, tempered by the persistence of the myth of the curator-genius (such as Obrist or Szeemann).

In theatre on the other hand, there is a very different relationship to the issue of authorship and its relation to mediation. This can be exemplified in the genre of director's theatre (*Regietheater*), where the director has grown into an all-important author figure, when not taking on the god-like status of *auteur*. The example of director Frank Castorf shows how this style of being director can also be expanded to an entire theatre (in his case Volksbühne Berlin). Contrary to the visual arts, there has been much less of a reckoning with this kind of singular authorship over collective work. As Ferdman has rightly argued, the discourse around this is emerging, and a variety of "alternative models" of curating performance also exist that are collaborative, non-hierarchical, and open. They reject the Szeemann-like star curator in favour of collective governance and decision-making done by artists themselves according to various structures and protocols (Ferdman 2014, 14, see also 2.3.1n20). The terms curator and dramaturg therefore do not share this same kind of equivalency.

However, returning to the dramaturg, there is also the issue that historically, the position has worked differently from this, which has arguably been part of its downfall. Dramaturgs are not normally in leadership positions, taking on rather subordinate roles that are structurally removed from certain kinds of autonomy (over budgets, over staffing). As Sellar points out, "[t]he dramaturg's ideas must be processed through layers of collaboration and according to the theatre's flexible but omnipresent hierarchies" (Sellar 2014, 26). This is mirrored for instance by the (after the 2019/20 season former) director of the Münchner Kammerspiele Matthias Lilienthal, who, in interview with Sellar, also sees the problem of the dramaturg as being one that is limited by its position within the institution of the theatre. He says that in calling himself a curator instead, Lilienthal has found that he has come into newfound possession of a "freedom generally to set up a framework not limited to the standard repertory," rather than being severely limited in his outcomes by the preestablished infrastructure in which he worked as a dramaturg (Lilienthal 2014, 78).

The only seeming contradiction to this position to this problem of the dramaturg's lack of authority can be found in the approach practiced by Brecht with his Berliner Ensemble around 1954 in the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm. Similar to the all-encompassing practice of Harald Szeemann beginning in the 1960s, Brecht's ensemble consolidated a great deal of power and decision-making in him and his role as dramaturg, in the interest of realizing his vision of the plays the company would stage. Unlike Szeemann however, Brecht would seemingly only produce a model for further consolidations of power by theatre directors (such as the aforementioned Frank Castorf), with seemingly less resistance from the institution of theatre.

Therefore, though dramaturgy is per se now similarly positioned to curating, and has also recently undergone the same shift towards conceptual and contextual production rather than on logistical concerns, the lack of an already-established discourse, as well theatre's lack of dealing with issues of singular authority/authorship to the same extent as the visual arts have, mean that theatre practitioners who are both beginning to enter the interdisciplinary arts, working more conceptually and expressively with context, and are seeking a pre-existing fundus of academic work and artistic examples in this field are gravitating to the curatorial discourse instead of a renewed approach to dramaturgy. This has the advantage of being able to engage with the mediating practices of a wide range of artistic practices, including performance. Because of this, its discourses are all the more adaptable to also experimental and conceptual theatrical practices. While dramaturgy is a term mostly associated with one kind of artistic practice, the curatorial discourse has profiled itself as a flexible and adaptable field equipped for interdisciplinary arts practices.

What then remains of the specificity of theatre as a field with its own unique history? Does it get totally subsumed into curatorial studies, vanishing without a trace? The answer is once again to return to the specific knowledge of theatre practitioner within the wider curatorial field.

3.4.2 Truth is Concrete

As part of the 2012 Steirischer Herbst festival in Graz, Austria, chief dramaturg Florian Malzacher initiated a 7-day/24-hour "marathon camp" that would be called *Truth is Concrete*. The project occupied a black-box theatre and an accompanying gallery space for the duration of the project, in spaces designed by raumlaborberlin. Activities would continue through the night, with participants invited to also sleep, live, and eat at the camp for the duration of the event. The title is in reference to a quote hung above Brecht's work desk during his exile in Denmark, and served, in Malzacher's words, as "a reminder never to forget the reality around him" in a time of extreme political turbulence (Malzacher 2014b, 5). The marathon's goal was

to rediscover the link between the arts and politics against a background of intense geopolitical upheaval: Malzacher recounts the watershed events that were transpiring as the team was conceiving of the project: the Arab Spring was spreading across the Middle East, the Occupy Wall Street movement had started, the European debt crisis was in full swing, and the Fukushima nuclear catastrophe had begun, to name just a few. The question for the organizers became whether art could have a role to play in these global crises, or whether, as one populist extremist politician put it, art could only ever be a leftist hobby.

To try to answer this, the marathon presented artistic projects engaged in social and political change through talks and presentations, as well as present a great number of performances, concerts, and workshops that engaged participants directly. Events during the 170-hour-marathon were categorized into several different groups: general assemblies held every day at 14h, short presentations of concrete artistic practices called tactic talks, thematic blocks and panels hosted by guest curators, a series of recurring events such as yoga and screenings, an open marathon of "non-curated" contributions where anyone could sign up for a slot, and a series of durational projects like a hair salon and a media archive that were present over the duration of the marathon. The central program points were kept to a rigid and strict timeline, with a so-called "continuing room" existing as a space where conversations could spill over the allotted time limits. (Steirischer Herbst n.d.-a)

One of the key criticisms of the event's format addressed by the organizers was the extent to which this project was simply yet another example of spectacularized over-production, meant to feed the neoliberal knowledge machine rather than foment resistance. To this Malzacher argued that the project was, as opposed to the interview marathons of for instance Obrist, designed to be impossible. Similar to Enwezor's Documenta 11, which displayed more video material than one could have ever realistically consumed over the entire opening hours of the documenta, *Truth is Concrete* offered more activities than one could ever hope to consume. The goal was thus not to canonize a certain selection of voices, but rather to present a great deal of them, and let the participants navigate their own way through it, in this way allowing them to each make their own version of the marathon, making it more participant-driven. This lack of a clear structure was Malzacher's way of making the marathon difficult to commodify, and positioned the whole as an offering to be taken as needed, rather than to be force-fed content as in Obrist's marathons. (Malzacher and Warsza 2017; 37–39, 132)

Among those involved in the event and its subsequent documentation were many names that have today well-established practices that operate in-between art and activism, including many who have now become the usual suspects on that circuit, including The Silent University/Ahmet Öğüt, Slavoj Žižek, Rabih Mroué, Center for Political Beauty, The Yes Men, raumlaborberlin, International Institute

of Political Murder, Ultra-red, Forensic Architecture, and Pussy Riot, to name just a few examples (Steirischer Herbst n.d.-b).

Saying "participants" leads to a key component of the project, namely that because of its nature, with its close living and working quarters over a prolonged duration, and its concerted attempt to merge living with artistic practice, it dissolved these boundaries between actors and spectators. The goal was to bring together these people from many different backgrounds into a common space for creating, thinking, and living together, making everyone in some way a participant, rather than dividing into a system of "passive" spectators and "active" actors. The format of the marathon was such that the usual steps of production, presentation, and perception were so intensely interlinked due to the proximity and spatio-temporal concentration of the everyone involved in the project that their normative division was short-circuited. This transgression was part of the premise of *Truth is Concrete*, as it was exactly this deconstruction of the infrastructure of artistic practice in search of more effective ways of asserting art's role in political activism that Malzacher sought out.

This dissolution of the spectator/actor divide allowed for *Truth is Concrete* to take on a permeable relationship to the reality that it wished to interact with, in that it became a place for the exchange and even application of knowledges, a knowledge-machine for artistic activism, between everyone involved. It functioned as a place that was at once connected to but yet separate from the world around it, a mirror of society and its problems, but still somewhat a secure, stable, and separate place to negotiate these issues and develop responses to them. This would fit into what Malzacher views as the function of theatre, as a space "in which societies have long explored their own means, procedures, ideals, and limits" (Malzacher 2014b, 38): the theatre as a laboratory to develop answers to society's challenges.

In her reflection on being a participant in the marathon, curator Maayan Sheleff relates how she felt that the eliciting of this multiplicity of approaches and outcomes allowed for the project to move beyond the sole authorship of the individual organizers, becoming more of a group articulation (Malzacher and Warsza 2017, 135). She relates as well an interesting anecdote that helps illustrate this, explaining that a couple of days into the marathon, a protest march was organized by some of the participants against a museum in Graz and its sponsorship by a bank working with a polluting oil company. She points out that the same bank also was a sponsor of the festival, but that at no point did the organizers of *Truth is Concrete* try to intercede in the organizing of the protest rally. The action culminated in a march into and disruption of the museum's lobby and pouring (vegetable) oil onto its couches (133–134).

The anecdote shows two things. The first is that the form of Sheleff's analysis and reflection on the project mirrors also the self-organizing approach of the larger project she was involved in. Taking on an "outsider" or observer position would

have missed the point of the marathon—and would have furthermore been largely impossible. One had to involve oneself and participate. The personal anecdote is then the only possible way of reflecting on the marathon, as once again there was no vantage point that you could observe it from in its totality, rather only individual personal experiences of it.

Second, this small protest action organized by the participants is evidence that the marathon week could also be a place to enact "concrete" change in the world around it, existing then not just as its own bubble, but rather using the protected space of the theatre project to foster and catalyze action. The protest, though small, showed that the marathon was even able to go against its own self-interest, criticizing one of its sponsors, and in this way effectively generating a genuine line of flight away from the contingencies of its constituent parts (in Deleuzian terminology, becoming a body without organs).

A more ideal outcome than this Malzacher could not have hoped for. Much of his approach to theatre leans on the post-Marxist writings of philosopher Chantal Mouffe and political theorist Ernesto Laclau's concept of agonistic pluralism, a position that he frequently comes back to when describing his view of how the theatre can be a space for experimentation and politics, exemplified here. Mouffe argues for a conception of democracy that has its basis in conflict tempered by mutual respect and a common framework for debate, eliciting a play of ideas that allows differing opinions to be voiced and a diversity of actors to be heard from.

The commonality between Mouffe's agonism and the theatrical format for Malzacher is the elicitation of true conflicting ideas presented within a clearly-defined *arena* with certain mutually-agreed-upon rules. This allows for debate and for a diversity of different actors to be involved in the process of debating social issues. He points out that the concept of *agon* from their term is related to the ancient Greek concept of contest and argument, used to describe sport, but also the debates between protagonist and antagonist in Greek tragedy, demonstrating the suitableness and aptitude of the theatre as a space for eliciting such debates.

Not only was this concept of agonism exercised in the curatorial framework of *Truth is Concrete,* but significantly the very notion of confrontation and provocation was also present within the artistic practices of those who were invited to participate in the conference. The central concern for Malzacher was that the issue of the relationship between art and activism, and the nature of the relationship between art and politics, its role in communities, be once again opened up for debate.

With the project, Malzacher makes a large-scale (through the project's size and number of participants) claim that the relationship between art and politics must be rethought, for the current paradigm has lost its connection to contemporary reality, arguing that a "homeopathic, second-hand idea of political philosophy and art has become the main line of contemporary cultural discourse" (Malzacher 2014b, 14). For him, the classic leftist idea of 1970s-era thinkers and practitioners that ac-

tivism can be a private, micropolitical struggle has lost its efficacity and must be reimagined. In his curatorial practice for this conference, Malzacher used the practices and tacit knowledge of staging theatre to organize an arena for debating the role of art in activism. In the same way, his position towards the artistic practices he hosts is that art must be made *useful* through using its tools and techniques to be subversive and create actual change in the world.

Malzacher's understanding of "usefulness" is obviously deserving of some scrutiny here, including the question of its alignment with the concept of a curatorial responsibility towards critical knowledge production. He is careful to position his understanding of usefulness as a characteristic fundamental to art's broader relevance for society more generally, writing in his contribution to the book on *Truth is Concrete* after the conference that

> [o]bviously the claim for "usefulness" is problematic—it seems to agree with the social democratic instrumentalization of art as a mere tool for social work and as an appeasement strategy. Especially in recent years, … the idea that the positive effects of art should be measurable has become a common trope. Art should either fit seamlessly into governmental concepts or it should stay in the realm of symbolic gestures… (Malzacher 2014b, 25)

In place of this safe and subservient notion of "useful" art, Malzacher positions a more engaged definition of art, arguing that the most useful works are ones that

> offer no easy answers, they give no easy comfort. They are useful not only through their direct engagement, but also through—subtly or polemically—their critique of the capitalist status quo. (Malzacher 2014b, 25)

Malzacher then points to many activists like Pussy Riot and their action in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, or Schlingensief's *Please Love Austria* as instances of this differently useful art practice. They are carefully-planned provocations, meant to elicit a response, and meant to set off a debate not unlike that which Malzacher tried to create among the participants in the project. In this way, the project significantly manages a striking symmetry of form and content, in that its organizational framework, in creating an arena for subversiveness and action using the practices of art effectively mirrored Malzacher's thesis that the artists and activists he invited also did just that, creating modest but actual moments of change using artistic strategies.

The approach that Malzacher takes towards *Truth is Concrete* is significant for understanding what has come to be understood as curatorial practice within the field of theatre. While Malzacher's official title for Steirischer Herbst was Chief Dramaturg, he would later come to frequently cite *Truth is Concrete* as an instance of a *curatorial* practice in theatre, and furthermore (and this is not necessarily a given) as an example of him working as a *curator*.

Though sometimes falling back on the notion of curating as a collect-all for mediation of all kinds, Malzacher in his writing subscribes more to a view that the name you give to a mediating figure largely does not matter, rather that the usefulness of the term curator is as a "self-provocation" (Malzacher 2017, 17). He explains that calling his practice curating is not just exchanging one term for another, but rather demanding a different approach from oneself, a way of questioning one's mediating practice through a change of title.

The word itself is not Malzacher's main focus, it is more the resulting projects that matter. Curating is just one way of challenging oneself, of trying to "come up with something new" (Malzacher 2017, 32). This is an approach that coincides more closely with Rogoff's call for creating new concepts, rather than expanding old ones, despite still playing in the field of old terms. The fluidity with which he moves between terms to describe his practice also speaks to a mindset oriented towards establishing new terms, in that the fluidity and emphasis on questioning both point towards a practice of analyzing the current field of power relations, and intervening in it to affect change.

As outlined in section 3.2 and argued in section 3.3, curating in the performing arts must be sensitized and interact with the disciplinary histories of the various practices that come together in curatorial projects. This can be seen in Malzacher's approach to curating theatre, in that he emphasizes the use of the discipline-specific knowledge of theatre, namely understanding it as the art of establishing an agon, an arena for debate, after his reading of Chantal Mouffe. He roots this approach in the historical developments of the theatre, as well as in his own background in creating theatrical projects. Theatrical practice (and his knowledge as a dramaturg) becomes then for him the knowledge of how practically to create this arena. In an interview with theatre scholar Tom Sellar about *Truth is Concrete*, Malzacher gives some insight into how he sees theatrical practice being applied in this way:

> I want to ask, what does it mean when we spend time together? Can we enforce this? … When you invite people to stay for [170 hours], you have to think about what time means. What does it mean when people spend time together, when they become a collective? When they get annoyed with each other? What group dynamics kick in? That's what I think is specific for the field of theatre… [t]hinking from the specificities of theatre itself—that's the interesting part. (Malzacher 2017, 18)

Malzacher in this quote recasts theatre as a knowledge of how bodies move in space, one that can be used in order to design the context, the arena, of the performative event. In *Truth is Concrete*, it was visible how this seemed to function very well. The point was not to control or overdetermine every aspect of the lives of the participants for a week, but rather to set up a frame where things could happen that went

beyond what the organizers could predict, a space where they could discuss and debate their similarities and differences. In this way, *Truth is Concrete* was a way of producing an arena for debate and action using the specific knowledge of theatrical practice to do so. Building on the conclusion of section 2.3.3, the project once again is designed to be an event of critical knowledge production, with an approach that is determined by the background and history of the discipline(s) being employed.

Putting this together with his position that calling oneself curator should be a self-provocation to do something new, Malzacher uses the *methods* of theatre in order to achieve the *ethos*, the moral character, of curating.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter began by using the approach to interdisciplinary arts scholarship of Shannon Jackson to argue for a receiver-centric understanding of the art encounter. Theatricality here is understood as a characteristic inherent to every encounter with art, be it performance or an object, because every such encounter is an event, constituted by a number of factors. The way that curating fits into this constellation is by understanding it as a practice of taking responsibility for at least a portion of these factors, and attempting to shape them so as to produce an event of critical knowledge production for the audience. Taking this broad theoretization, this chapter then explored ways that curatorial thinking, understood as an undisciplined practice, has found its ways into the performing arts of dance and theatre. In contrast to music, these are areas where extensive and thorough scholarly and artistic commitments to curatorial practice have taken place, and as such help to form a collection of curatorial practices in the performing arts that can be referred back to in the consideration of curatorial practice in music as will be examined in the following two chapters.

What this chapter has shown is that, far from being a specific set of practices and definitions, curating in the performing arts, just as in the visual arts, is a site- and situation-specific task, acting at the nexus of so many stakeholders. This means that curating begins with a knowledge of its connections, and is *not* material-agnostic. While Jackson's theses helped approach these in a more nuanced way at the beginning of the chapter, how curating has intermingled with dance and performance, in particular in the context of dance in the museum, has also shown how engagement with specificities of a disciplinary practice can lead to new forms of mediation, as in Bishop's concept of the grey zone, or Malzacher's concept for *Truth is Concrete*.

In the field of theatre, curating has had to be differentiated from the related practice of dramaturgy, with which it shares many similarities. While the two fields conceptually are highly similar, the professional profiles of the curator and dra-