

SOME EXHIBITIONS THAT FORMED JENS HOFFMAN AS A CURATOR



*Les Magiciens de la Terre*, curated by Jean-Hubert Martin, Centre George Pompidou, Paris, 1989



*Places with a Past: New Site-Specific Art*, Charleston, curated by Mary Jane Jacob, Spoleto Festival USA, 1991



*The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945-1994*, curated by Okwui Enwezor, P.S.1 Contemporary art Center, New York, 2002



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*Pioneers*, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts- Lower Galleries, San Francisco, Sep-Nov. 2007



*Painting Between the Lines*, CCA Wattis Institute For Contemporary Arts- Lower Galleries, San Francisco, Oct-Dec. 2011



*Letizia Battaglia*, installation view, *12th Istanbul Biennial*, curated with Adriano Pedrosa, Sep-Nov. 2011

## LA KUNSTHALLE PIÙ BELLA DEL MONDO

Un progetto per il Centro delle Arti Contemporanee di Como

Martedì, 29 novembre 2011 dalle 10 alle 19

### XV. CURATING THE MOST BEAUTIFUL KUNSTHALLE IN THE WORLD

#### JENS HOFFMANN

Curator and writer, Jens Hoffmann is currently the director of the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco. He is assistant professor at the Curatorial Practice Program of the California College of the Arts in San Francisco and guest professor at NABA, Milan. He is the founding editor of *The Exhibitionist: Journal on Exhibition Making* and editor-at-large of *Mousse Magazine*. At the Wattis Institute Hoffmann has since 2007 curated solo exhibitions of artists such as Ryan Gander, Tim Lee, Roman Ondak, Kris Martin, Jordan Wolfson, Peter Coffin, Abraham Cruzvillegas, Claire Fontaine, Mario Garcia Torres, Aurelien Fremont, among others.

He is also working on a long-term retrospective of the work of Tino Sehgal (2007/ongoing) and as part of the Capp Street residency program curated solo exhibitions with Mario Ybarra Jr. (2007), Tim Lee (2008), Abraham Curzvillegas (2009), Harrell Fletcher (2009), Renata Lucas (2010), Paulina Olowska (2010) and Kris Martin (2011). Group shows he has organized at the Wattis Institute include: *Pioneers* (2007), *Apocalypse Now* (2007) (co-curated with Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla), *Low Life Slow Life Part 1 & 2*, organized with Paul McCarthy (2008/09), *The Wizard of Oz* (2008) *Passengers* (2007/2009), *Moby-Dick* (2009), *Huckleberry Finn* (2010), *More American Photographs* (2011), *Painting Between the Lines* (2011).

Currently he is working on *John Baldessari: Class Assignments (Optional)* opening in January 2012 as well as the group exhibition *When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes* opening in September 2012. Hoffmann is also organizing the long-term exhibition project *Americana* (2007 – 2012) at the Wattis Institute in collaboration with the Curatorial Practice Program of the CCA. authoring *Show Time: A History of Exhibitions* (2012). From 2003 to 2007 Hoffmann was Director of Exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; from 2001 to 2003 Hoffmann worked as a curator at the Museum Kunstpalast.

He has also worked for institutions and exhibitions such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Dia Center for the Arts, New York; Documenta X, Kassel;



Portikus Kunsthalle, Frankfurt; Laboratorium, Antwerp; Performance Space 122, New York and the Theater Am Turm, Frankfurt.

Hoffmann was co-curator of the 2nd San Juan Triennial (2009), a curator for the 9th Lyon Biennial (2007), co-curator of the 1st Prague Biennial (2003), co-curator of the 1st Tirana Biennial (2001), a guest curator for Manifesta 4, Frankfurt (2002) and assistant curator of the 1st Berlin Biennial (1998). With Harrell Fletcher he curated the 1st People's Biennial, presented at five US museums in 2011 and 2012.

Most recently Hoffmann was, with Adriano Pedrosa, the curator of the 12th Istanbul Biennial. His most recent books include *The Next Documenta Should be Curated by An Artist* (Revolver, 2004); *Perform*, co-authored with Joan Jonas (Thames&Hudson, 2005) and *The Studio* (Thames&Hudson, 2011). Currently he is authoring *Show Time: A History of Exhibitions* (2012).

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#### TO SHOW OR NOT TO SHOW

A conversation between Jens Hoffmann and Maria Lind

Curating, to me, is fundamentally linked to exhibition making. I feel some frustration with how the term "curating" has been adopted by all sorts of fields to describe any process that involves making a selection of something.[...] For me curating is about formulating a certain theory or argument, based upon which one makes a selection of artworks or other objects with the aim of creating an exhibition in which those objects and artworks are displayed to the public. [...] Traditionally I could say someone is an interesting curator because they know how to work with artists, how to install an exhibition, how to write a good catalogue essay. Today anyone can put together a lecture program based on an idea that they read about in a journal and call themselves a curator. I think it's just too easy. Exhibition making is a craft, and I treasure that. Too many curators seem to think exhibition making is a thing of the past and that today it has to be all about what I call the paracuratorial: lectures, screenings, exhibitions without art, working with artists on projects without ever producing anything that could be exhibited. I would not be worried about it if I saw it only here and there, but there is a big push toward it, and I feel that we actually still do not really understand the potential of exhibitions. They are an important social ritual, with vast possibilities. I do not think that the exhibition as a format for the display of art has been fully explored, and it certainly has not been exhausted. [...] You know my work and how many exhibition formats I have embraced and perhaps even conceived, and the wide range of artworks and other aesthetic objects I consider, which constantly challenges normative codes about exhibition making. I do it while staying by and large within the gallery space. Perhaps all of this also has to do with my interest in objects as elements that carry and speak about history, and how we experience them when we see them in a museum. I am interested in the idea of staging and the theatrical experience, which grows out of my studies in theater. [...] Art and curating have become so popular that they have suffered a tremendous decline in quality. [...] The moment curating got disconnected from exhibition making, at least partially, it was a free-for-all. I would go as far as to say that the sorts of speculations that you are doing with curating are partly to blame for that, and also part of the reason why I am hesitant to call myself a curator any more.