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**Museum education and ‘the desiring eye’
Educations of vision in new educational settings in art museums**

Abstract/Introduction *During the last 10-20 years significant changes have occurred in educational settings in art museums. Partly as a consequence of constructivist approaches to learning, the position of the ‘good learner’ has turned into the position of a subject willing to participate in educational projects where students’ ways of seeing, students’ voices, and students’ direct interventions have become central. The ‘desiring eye’ focused on sensuous, subjective, and highly individualized forms of viewing has thereby become a central requisite in new educational settings in art galleries (Illeris, 2006). In this paper I will use an example from a recent educational project to explore some of the consequences that the involvement of the viewer in participatory activities might have for the act of seeing itself. I will discuss questions such as: How do new forms of experimental educational settings challenge the dominant practices of looking of ‘the disciplined eye’ and ‘the aesthetic eye’? And how do they stimulate and/or challenge the ‘desiring eye’ of the participating visitor?*

Case study of education of vision in new educational settings in art museums: Speak Up

It is Monday morning and a vagabond finds a lady lying dead in a narrow street. She still looks fresh, except for bruises and torn clothing. He finds a book in her pocket and opens it on the last page. It says: “Lonely ... Oh, so lonely. Have just been to the hairdresser. It became a little too short, but that’s the way things are. I think I’ll go out tonight. But not to those fancy places. It’s simply too boring. People with no humour. It’s pure façade. I hate to be there. No, I think I’ll go to The Blue Lagoon, but then I’ll have to go through the dark alley. I really don’t like it. I once heard of someone who was abused in there. But I am not afraid. I have nothing to lose anyway. Dear Diary, I am so alone. I am so lonely.”

This short and dramatic narrative is transcribed and translated¹ from a soundtrack produced by L, S and M at Arken Museum of Modern Art, located south of Copenhagen. The three 15-16-year-old boys were participants in a ‘digital workshop’ called *Speak Up* arranged by the educational staff upon the occasion of the American artist Duane Hanson’s exhibition

¹ All translations from Danish to English in this paper are my own.

Sculptures of the American Dream, which took place 27 January – 3 June 2007². The basic idea framing the educational setting was to stimulate the visiting school classes in the construction of small events that would allow artist Duane Hanson's lifelike sculptures to 'speak' through the adoption of specific eyes selected and created by the learners. The workshop was organized in five phases with a total duration of 4 lessons (3 hours):

- 1) The class was given a short introduction to the exhibition, with an explicit focus on different ways of approaching the artworks using a few sculptures, selected by the students, as examples. The exemplifying approaches were based both on semiotic readings of the various forms of signs present in the sculptures, and on the creation of visual relationships through the selection of a particular practice of looking, for example the practice of the art historian, the practice of a friend or the practice of a detective. No biographical, art historical, sociological or other more traditional introductions to Duane Hanson's oeuvre were offered.
- 2) In smaller groups, and equipped with small digital dictaphones, the students were asked to 'give voice' to one or more selected sculptures through the establishment of visual relationships based on semiotic readings and the use of particular practices of looking of their own choice.
- 3) The students presented the sculptures they had chosen to their classmates together with their sound recordings.
- 4) Final discussion and evaluation of the process and the learning outcomes were guided by the educators.
- 5) The soundtracks were uploaded on the Arken blog on the Internet.

In an interview Lise Sattrup, the educator responsible for the project, explained the connection between this kind of educational setting and the development of different practices of looking, by pointing to the three concepts of *looking*, *positioning* and *narration*: looking carefully at the sculptures to understand what and how they communicate, taking a conscious viewer position in the relationship with the artwork through the selection of an 'eye', and construction of a narration that explores the particular visual event created through practices of looking and positioning. Sattrup also explained how the project started with some fundamental reflections around educational settings in art galleries:

How do we make this to be about art? How do we make them enter the galleries and look at the art in a way that they do not come to the art museum to experience the artworks but actually find themselves closed in a computer room?

She continues:

When they had to give voices to the sculptures we were very focused on the eyes they used. We started by making a kind of tour of half an hour but the tour was made in a way that they chose a sculpture and then we talked about that and about different ways of looking at it. What if it was a friend standing here talking to it? And what if... you chose different positions to enter. You talked about the work but you also started that roleplay to sort of put the different eyes in motion.

All together Sattrup's statements in the interview, the educational aims of Speak Up, can be

² The sculpture, L, S and M worked with, was Duane Hanson: *Derelict Woman*, 1973, life-size, polyester and fiberglass, polychromed in oil, with accessories

summarized as follows:

- To engage the students through participatory activities which mainly take place in exhibitions, not in isolated laboratories and studios.
- To construct 'settings' that make it possible to establish relationships between groups of students and artworks of the students' own choice.
- To give voices to the artworks through the students' construction of narratives based on different 'eyes' in the creation of relationships between students and artworks.
- To stimulate shared metareflection through explicit discussions on the positioning of the educators, the students, and the artworks in the educational setting.

The project: Between play and conscious constructions of vision

The Speak Up case studies and the interview with Sattrup are a part of the small sample of qualitative empirical data generated for the research project *Between play and conscious constructions of vision. Practices of looking in experimental educational settings in Danish art galleries* financed by the Novo Nordisk Foundation and carried out at the Danish School of Education, University of Aarhus. The aim of the project is to gain an understanding of the ways in which experimental museum education challenges the traditional practices of looking staged by art museums through visual and spatial organizations of the exhibitions, and through specific educational initiatives such as guided tours or workshops. The empirical data consist of a collection of written and internet-based material, interviews with educational staff, and observations of 'classes' from two experimental educational settings: *Speak Up – digital workshops* at Arken and *u.l.k. – Young People's Art Laboratories* at the Danish National Gallery. These settings were both selected because of their explicit aims of creating different relationships between viewers and artworks from the traditional 'objectifying' or 'subjectifying' practices of guided tours and workshops.

Because of the obvious limitations of length, I will base the arguments of this paper on only one case, the study of Speak Up, while the study of u.l.k. will not be further discussed³. Furthermore, before I return to the case of L, S and M and the poor and lonely dead woman on the street, I will present my theoretical perspective and the ways in which the education of vision has traditionally been constructed in educational settings in art museums.

Visual culture as a theoretical approach to museum education

The theoretical perspectives guiding this paper are located in the field of visual culture studies, a recently established and still very open and dynamic area of research, which includes scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds such as sociologists, media theorists, art historians, museologists and researchers in art and museum education. A key issue in visual culture studies

³ The outcomes of the entire project are planned to be published in an article in a reviewed journal during autumn 2008.

is to be found in the scrupulous problematization of positivist assumptions: those of the act of seeing as a 'natural' and 'objective' access to the world around us, in favour of understanding vision as influenced by a number of historically and socially constructed 'practices', 'strategies' or 'screens' that influence what and how we see (e.g. Sturken and Cartwright 2001, Elkins 2003, Illeris 2004). While the discipline of art history has traditionally concentrated on the study of the artwork as a solitary *object* which could be exhibited, interpreted and understood by the historian but which does not play any active role itself, scholars occupied with art from a visual culture perspective like Norman Bryson (1991) and Barbara Stafford (1999) have, even if in very different ways, studied the way in which certain practices of looking are constructed and maintained in encounters between art and its publics. Scholars with a background in museology, such as Tony Bennett (1994) and Andrew McClellan (2004), have also focused on questions regarding visual culture, through studies of the ways in which viewer positions are constructed in museums and galleries through social relationships between visitors and museums, exhibitions and hangings.

Visual encounters as events

In order to frame the understanding of the complex interaction dynamics that take place between the viewer, the viewed and the various contexts of viewing in encounters with works of art, I will use the term 'visual event'. Inspired by social constructivist epistemology, I understand visual events as constructions constituted through interactions between a limited number, *not* of empirically existent visitors, artworks, hangings or surroundings, but of possible *positions* which often are dynamically shifting among the partakers in the event: looking positions ('subjects'), looked upon positions ('objects'), framing positions ('contexts') and vision positions ('eyes') (Illeris 2003, 2004).

To further explore the ways in which certain 'eyes' are established and maintained through the organization of visual events in art museum settings, I will turn to Dutch Professor Mieke Bal. In her 1996 book *Double Exposures; The Subject of Cultural Analysis* Bal constructs a similar idea of the functioning of visual events to the one outlined above, but while my *educational* approach basically takes its point of departure from an idea of equivalence and exchange between viewing positions, Bal's *cultural analytic* approach is based on a vision of viewing positions as fundamentally asymmetrical and intertwined with relationships of power and dominance. Inspired by the French linguist Émile Benveniste (1971), Bal characterizes the basic positions involved in art museum settings as 'persons' in a discourse, where the first person is the one 'speaking', the second person is the audience who is 'talked to' and 'listening', and the third person is the, present or not present, object 'talked about'.

Bal points to the first person, not as the museum as institution, physical appearance or 'context', but as the position which holds the 'expository agency' of the situation, the one that through certain forms of display is visually pointing to the artwork as well as to how to look at the artwork. In Bal's words expository agency "...includes practices like constative language use, visual pointing (display in the narrow sense), alleging examples, laying out arguments on the

basis of narratives, mapping and laying bare” (Bal 1996: 8). In the art museum setting, the ‘first person’ most often conceals itself behind ‘realistic narratives’ which appear to tell the ‘truth’ about the artworks through self-evident gestures of display. This self-determined ‘erasure’ of the expository agency as a visible component in the visual event becomes almost an act of violence both in front of the audience, who is deprived of the possibility to question the ‘expertise’ of the cultural authority, and in front of the artwork, which is silenced by the expository agency’s naturalized and universalized discourses.

The ‘second person’ is the visitor, the viewer, the imaginary reader or respondent implicit in the display. According to Bal, “This audience tends to go along with the assumed general meaning of the gesture of exposing: to believe, to appreciate and to enjoy” (ibid.). Unlike the artwork however, the viewer occasionally has the possibility of becoming ‘first person’: “The ‘second person’, implicitly, has a potential ‘first person’ position as a respondent; his or her response *to* the exposing is the primary and decisive condition *for* the exposing to happen at all” (op. cit.: 4).

The ‘third person’ in Bal’s analytical model is the object, the artwork, which is talked about, but not to, showing everything and receiving nothing back: “The ‘third person’, silenced by the discursive situation, is the most important element, the only one *visible*. This visibility and this presence paradoxically makes it possible to make statements about the object that does not apply to it [...]” (ibid.). Bal’s book includes a number of striking examples of the ways in which artworks are ‘silenced’ by the discourses produced by expository agency through gestures such as texts and hangings. A special focus in her analyses regards paintings and other representations of naked or half-naked women who have been ‘silenced’ through (male) art theorists’ objectifying discourses, but to whom Bal confers a convincing voice as active partakers and possible first persons in visual events (op. cit. chap. 6-9).

Bal’s analyses of the existing organization of the visual give us altogether an unprecedented understanding of power relations in art museum settings. Through her readings of positioning in visual events, Bal shows the dynamics between positions to be consisting mainly in fixed and hieratically ordered ascriptions: “...a ‘first person’, the exposor, tells a ‘second person’, the visitor, about a ‘third person’, the object of display” (op. cit.: 3-4).

Educational settings as visual events

While Bal’s analyses concentrate on what I define as ‘art museum settings’, meaning the visual events that take place between the anonymous ‘general public’ and the artworks displayed by the art museum, the term ‘educational setting’ indicates encounters between artworks and a circumscribed group of ‘learners’ organized and guided by a specialized staff within a defined frame of time. Thereby the educational setting, so to say, doubles the positions of the encounter between viewer and artwork within the art museum setting as analyzed by Bal, but with the important difference that in educational settings not only the artwork is visible but also the cultural authority, represented by the specialized ‘guide’ or ‘educator’, and the audience, personified by the group of learners. In fact, while the positions in traditional expository

practices tend to remain fixed because of certain institutional practices, it is my hypothesis that, because all the positions are visible, in the educational setting the positions are more open to negotiations, experiments and changes.

Even if of course it should never be forgotten that cultural authority, and thereby the ultimate 'first personhood', is held by the institutional framing, the educational setting is often characterized by a certain autonomy, made up of roles and rituals which historically speaking tend to become more and more detached from the art museum setting. Because the whole situation is so to say 'on display', staged by the expository agency but meant to function by itself, it seems as if there has been an increasing freedom to experiment with different viewing positions, and thereby with different educations of vision, in educational settings. Actually I think that it is exactly because educational settings, at least up till now, have been considered more or less as niches that were not truly a part of the gallery and its policies, that they have acquired a status as autonomous 'signs' which, when it comes to contemporary educational settings, could sometimes almost be spoken about as interactive 'performances' or 'artworks' in their own right (Illeris 2003).

Traditional education of vision in art museums: The disciplined eye and the aesthetic eye

To further explore the relationship between the visual event of the art museum setting and the visual event of the educational setting, I will shortly characterize two dominant vision positions in art galleries: 'the disciplined eye' and 'the aesthetic eye'.

The disciplined eye is the prevailing eye in visual events where the 'second person' unconditionally tries to adopt the practice of looking proposed by the 'first person', the expository agency, while looking at and pointing to the holder of the 'third personhood', the object. Historically speaking, the education of the disciplined eye is linked to enlightenment ideas of the museum as an educational institution where paintings and sculptures are selected because of their indisputable values as masterpieces and hung according to 'educational' principles taken from the logics of the new 'science' of art history: school, style, nationality and chronology (McClellan, 1994: 4).

The ideal educational setting of the disciplined eye is the one imitating the art museum setting most closely. In this setting first personhood will be held by *the guide* who will be expected to act as a representative of the institution and to transmit its views and values in an 'objective' and 'natural' way without asking questions or seeking a dialogue with the audience. Thereby the learner will be fixed in a second-person position and tend to consider herself as *a pupil*, an empty vessel who should be educated according to the rules of high culture, and who is therefore expecting to be taught how to look at art according to the rules and systems of the representatives of this culture. As in the art museum setting the third-person position becomes that of the artwork that is talked about, and not with or to.

On the contrary, *the aesthetic eye* is a practice of looking that considers itself connected to natural and innate faculties of the individual beholder. In fact the visual organization constructed to meet and stimulate the aesthetic eye is the white cube museum of modern art,

which is conceived to allow the visitors to contemplate the artworks without the disturbing interruptions of the openly educational measures of the educational galleries of the 18th and 19th centuries. In the museum of modern art the eye is freed from 'unnecessary' constraints to favour an unmediated and highly intensified encounter between a limited number of carefully selected artworks and the audience. In another sense, though, the artworks are silenced in a more subtle way by the expository agency, because, if we follow the prevailing discourses of high modernism, the scope of the hangings are not actually to establish an exchange between the work of art and the viewer, but are rather about the induction of a heightened state of intense absorption in the visitor, where the role of the artworks is not to 'speak' about anything, but only 'to be' (Duncan 1995:16-17).

The educational setting constructed to enable the aesthetic eye of the viewers is the *workshop*, a space separated from the exhibition where learners, considered as genuine creators, can experiment with the language of expression themselves, without disturbing the 'sacred' halls of the exhibitions. In the early workshops established during the seventies and eighties participants were asked to identify with *the artist*, and the workshop leader, often an artist herself, acted more as a *cooperator* than as a teacher. As a consequence in the education of the aesthetic eye the educator strives to negate her position of first personhood and to give it over to the learners, who, even if they might not understand the subtle expectations involved, are supposed to be the 'real' authority in creative matters.

New educational settings and the education of the desiring eye

During the last 10-15 years a new form of education of vision has begun to make its way into art museums both through new forms of spatial and visual organization of the museums themselves, and through new and experimental forms of educational settings, based on constructivist approaches to learning. Inspired by Michel Foucault and by Lynn Fendler from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1998) I have called the practice of looking based on individualized approaches to learning 'the desiring eye':

The educational aim of the 'constructivist museum' (Hein, 1998) is the desiring eye of individual involvement and presence combined with a willingness to share personal experiences in educational situations. From the perspective of the desiring eye educators will consider themselves facilitators of participants' own learning processes and they will expect the participants to engage in projects concerning not only the museum collections and exhibitions, but a range of topics and problematics related to their personal life experiences. (Illeris 2006:20)

The desiring eye can be viewed both in connection to the education of the disciplined eye and of the aesthetic eye. As in the education of the disciplined eye it is openly educational, meaning that the expository agency is considering the audience as learners, and similar to the education of the aesthetic eye there is a strong interest in the visitors' individualized relationship to the artworks based on his or her personal preferences. Nevertheless, unlike the other two practices, in the education of the desiring eye, the expository agency tries actively to stimulate the visitor's

first personhood by designing art museum settings and educational settings that aim directly at meeting the visitor's motivation and desire to learn.

The art museum settings of the desiring eye take their point of departure in the last two decades' recognition of the failure of the modern museum to meet the need of large groups of visitors, who were excluded by the elitist demands of the aesthetic eye. In fact the recently introduced notion of *difference* both at a sociological level between social groups and at a psychological level between different 'intelligences' and 'learning styles' became central in the development of the idea that every person has a natural desire to learn but that this desire should be met in personalized ways according to a range of social and psychological factors (Hein 1998, Falk and Dierking 2000). To strengthen this approach some socially engaged art museums have actually begun to think of themselves more as 'centres of learning' than as cultural authority, for example through the offer of a range of various approaches to the artworks, from experimental hangings and alternative forms of guided tours to community activities outside the museums walls (Hooper-Greenhill 2007:13). By adopting this approach, the independence of the visual events organized by the art museum settings from those organized by the educational settings is almost inverted. In contrast to 'educational' and 'aesthetic' galleries in the education of the desiring eye it is actually the art museum setting which can be said to adapt to and loan from the educational setting. In these cases the visibility of the 'first person' typical of the educational setting also becomes a goal of the art museum setting itself, which openly tries to expose and even problematize the kinds of reflections preceding hangings, material and sometime even spatial and visual organizations displayed by the cultural authority.

The kinds of educational settings which more specifically have been created for the education of the desiring eye take the form of open 'laboratories' or 'projects' where different groups of visitors (and former non-visitors) are invited to shape their own learning processes through activities that often challenge the traditional practices of looking of the museum (Rung 2008). In these settings the learners are asked to position themselves not only as viewers but as some kind of 'cultural authority', e.g. by making proposals for new hangings, texts or even art forms to be hypothetically included in the art museum. The point of departure is highly individual: through learner-centred and personalized exercises each learner is supposed to take the full responsibility of her own 'eyes' through an attentive registration and analysis of what she sees, what she feels and what she thinks, while less attention is given to the artwork's eventual responses. The role of the educator reconciles that of the midwife who helps the learners to 'give birth' to their individual learning desire and of the cultural operator who contextualizes the processes within the aim of the project.

In a larger perspective the education of the desiring eye can be connected to late modern educational ideals of 'lifelong learning' (Illeris 2006), 'identity production' (Hooper-Greenhill 2007) and 'self formation' (Rung 2008) through learning processes that reach far beyond learning about art into wider processes about how "... to shape ourselves as uniquely and original as possible" (op. cit.:5). In this perspective the presumed first personhood of the learner's desiring eye becomes an almost absolute requisite in museum education, while in the most radical cases the positions of the artworks, and even of the art museum institution itself,

becomes that of third person 'objects', visible, but not allowed to speak.

Back to the case study: Speak Up as a challenge to the desiring eye

In many ways the desiring eye can be said to adhere to neoliberal ideals of the ever-flexible individual, always ready to be creative, to learn and to change according to the prevailing needs of the market economy (Illeris 2006). When each learner is supposed to take the full responsibility of his or her own leaning processes and is considered a very special person with his or her particular personal interests, social situation, style of learning and prevailing intelligence, in fact the risk is that educators reinforce the individualism connected to this position by insisting that the only important thing when interacting with an artwork is what *she* sees, what *she* feels and what *she* thinks, independently of the artwork's eventual responses.

In contrast, in Speak Up one of the explicit goals of the classes was to urge the students to establish relationships with the artworks, where these were enabled to communicate on their own premises and thereby to challenge the desiring eye of learners through the introduction of perspectives highly different from the students' perceived individual needs for self creation. In fact if we look more carefully at the transcription of the soundtrack produced by the three boys, we gain a more concrete idea of the kind of learning processes that actually occurred in the groups of students. By giving voice to Duane Hanson's sculpture, the boys did not apply a disciplined eye from 'outside' like the art historian or even the semiotician might have done; neither did they turn to the subjective forms of viewing of the aesthetic or the desiring eye. They rather chose to explore the 'eyes' of the 'strangled' woman, whose 'diary' actually constitutes a vivid piece of female narrative, making the sculpture 'come to life' on what might call its 'own premises'. In this way the students actually succeed to enter a dialogue with the sculpture by creating a visual event based both on the communicative signs present in the sculpture and on the experimental employment of the sculpture's 'eyes', while reflecting upon her own life. I also find it particularly interesting that the boys chose to explore a first person narrative of a *female* figure, and thereby to seek a dialogue with an artwork representing something very different from their own life experience.

Altogether, the visual event created by the boys appears to be in clear opposition to the traditional visual events in museums analyzed by Bal. While the typical art museum event is that of a male viewer looking at a painting of a defenceless female figure without allowing this figure to speak or participate but on the contrary to be silenced by the authoritative first person voice of the man, in Speak Up the art work, an equally female and defenceless figure, is given a voice of its own and is thereby conferred with the right of entering into a dialogue with the viewer, who has in her turn changed position from a spectator to a partaker/constructor of the event.

Friendship as a practice of looking

“The mode of vision I am trying to describe is not an archaeology but an epistemology: a different way of getting to know” (Bal 1996:285). A crucial point in Mieke Bal’s analysis of museums, displays, and displaced objects is to find ways in which she can enter in a true dialogue with these through the application of dialogical modes of vision. Inspired by the feminist moral philosopher Lorraine Code (1991) Bal is interested in finding a way to overcome ‘third person narrative’ which positions the artwork as an object and introduce ‘second personhood’ as the central position both for the viewer and for the artwork, meaning that both reciprocally constitute and position each other through exchanges. Instead of the insistent focus promoted by most educators and philosophers upon autonomy and self-containment as the main goal of formation and thereby of a vision of the other, even family and friends, as a threat to that autonomy, which in the worst of cases has to be overcome or even eliminated, the second personhood sees human beings as positively relying on intimate relationships. Put in Lorraine Code’s words:

‘Second person’ thinking presupposes relationships qualitatively different from the ones implied in third-person talk about people. ‘Second persons’ engage with one another and care about that engagement – whether in fondness or in fury. A Sartrean constitution of other persons as starkly ‘Other’, as en soi, shows by contrast what I mean. (Code 1991:86)

Through second personhood the autonomous (male) subject of the first person as the ideal of education is substituted by a person constituted by and through sympathetic others, her friends:

Friendship requires getting to know other people in a dialogical mode. In the visual domain, this means a seeing radically different from the voyeuristic, asymmetrical mode that has for too long been hegemonic. The dialogical mode of looking in a nuanced way [...] calls for a suspension of what we think we see, for recognition of historical positionality, and for an appreciation of relations of reciprocity. (Bal 1993:400)

According to Sattrup, a key issue in the discussions with the learners that concludes each session in the Speak Up workshop is if it is “really allowed to look at art this way”, without being taught about art theoretical and historical facts, and without having to decipher and analyze the pictures’ formal elements, the artists’ intentions or their own personal reactions to the work. In her opinion the feeling of doing something almost forbidden has to do with the question of learning:

...if you ask them afterwards what they have learned, they have difficulties telling you. It is almost as if I should tell them what they learn [...] but the playful pleasure they experience is basically what motivates them to engage with the works. What we see is that they care about the work and that they use much more time to find out what it actually is about.

Even if Speak Up was not explicitly based on an idea of ‘the friendly eye’, I do think that the setting could be used as an example of how to engage and experiment with this kind of second-person looking. Furthermore I think that giving voice to artworks, whether this is done through sound, images, performance or text, can be a way to challenge the individualization of

the dominant education of vision, and especially that of the desiring eye.

Conclusion

The friendly eye as a yet another 'eye' in educational settings in art museums?

In conclusion I will briefly summarize what I find to be the most important answers found in my cases to my initial question: how do new educational settings in art galleries influence the eyes of the learners involved?

1) Differently from the educational settings of the dominant viewing positions, experimental educational settings insist on the construction of dialogues between positions through the creation of exchanges between learners and artworks. Thereby the assignment of first-, second-, and third-person viewing positions in educational settings is challenged through a continuous and ideally very open dialogue between positions where all participants are invited to exchange positions and where not only the learners, but also the artworks, are called to adopt second-person positions and to 'speak'.

2) The visual events constructed in the case studies challenge the practices of looking of the modern individualized learner, by offering settings that stimulate the exploration of a different mode of seeing: the eye of friendship. This means that distanced forms of viewing at least occasionally are substituted, not only by empathy in the phenomenological sense, but by *exchanges* in the form of questions and answers.

3) The experiments with the adoption of a friendly eye in educational settings can, I believe, have some important consequences when linked to the general formation of the subject. In experimental educational settings like Speak Up practices self-formation can occur through dialogue with the 'other', who may cease to be the other and to become a friend. This does not mean that power relations can or should be eliminated, but that it should be made clear to the learners, firstly how power relations are intimately related to the embodied senses, to be heard, to be seen, to be sensed, and secondly how power relations, at least occasionally, can be overcome by seeking equal forms of exchange, e.g. through the use of non-objectifying or non-subjectifying practices of looking.

Through this paper it is not my intention to work for a substitution of the three dominant practices of looking in museum education by the introduction of the friendly eye as yet another practice. My intention is rather to acknowledge the possibility, introduced by new experimental educational settings in art galleries, of working with the construction of alternative eyes *besides* the dominant ones. In fact in both case studies the friendly eye was not the only practice of looking adopted by the students; to the contrary this practice was flanked by the other eyes. Nevertheless it is my hope – and I am convinced so – that many more experiments will be made by art museums in the future, and that these experiments will contribute to an evolution of these institutions, not only to become centres of learning through the assignment of first personhood to the audience or learners, but through assignment of second personhood to both the art museum as institution, the visitors, and the works of art.

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