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## Reparative Measures for not Being Governed Quite so Much.

### Looks of Mediation, Gender Performance and Sexual Work in Art Education

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Nanna Lüth

In the following, I would like to examine how the feminisation and precarisation of the activity of art education are given to be seen in the materials of the Swiss museums of contemporary art that we looked at in the framework of the *Representing Art Education – Kunstvermittlung zeigen* research project. In doing so, I refer to the international structuring and neoliberal characteristics of this activity. Although art educators often complain about these aspects, this has not resulted in the creation of long-term, collective initiatives that would be suited to improve these structures and conditions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The protests against bad working conditions in this area in Europe that I know of have disregarded queer-feminist perspectives and thus decisive factors of the field (Graham 2010).

These observations and the resulting need for action to improve the situation, with respect to a critical approach to education,<sup>2</sup> is decisively shaped by the contrast between rare, male-coded and more common, female-coded educators in the corpus of materials, as well as the observation of an unusual absence of educational staff in representations of educational activities. At the same time, in line with the queer theoretician Eve Sedgwick (2002), I take a reparative perspective, aiming to set into motion perceptions and forms of representation that are conducive to the (visual) reflexivity and the status of current art education. Against the background of my own work experience as an art educator, I understand myself, in my researching position, as acting in solidarity with and with a bias towards the colleagues who move in the “embattled terrain” (Sternfeld 2010:5) of art education. At the same time, I see it as my duty to also articulate criticism, in the sense of a permanent questioning of the *Zurichtungsweisen* (ways of tailoring), normalisations and exclusions in my own field. However, I do so with a view to opportunities for action that can result from such a sceptical perspective. I aim, in line with Michel Foucault, to see representations as instruments of government, and to outline critical counter-measures (2007).

### Materials and method of *Kunstvermittlung zeigen*

In the framework of the *Kunstvermittlung zeigen* research cooperation, the research team, composed of Stephan Fürstenberg, microsillons (Olivier Desvoignes and Marianne

2 In line with Michel Foucault (2007:45), critique can be defined as “the art of not being governed quite so much”.

Guarino-Huet) and me, collected materials from 32 museums and galleries of contemporary art in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The corpus of materials for the study encompasses 712 documents with about 2,000 images from a period of seven years, including flyers, brochures, books and websites about art education.<sup>3</sup> Our analyses concentrated on the visual material, which mainly consisted of photographs that were digitised and cut out from the representations of the art education departments. Following the principles of Eva Sturm (2001), we assumed that there were mixed representation processes in which contradicting interests overlap. From a perspective critical of representation, the images that are published by education departments are not considered to be neutral, direct or purely documentary. This poses the challenge of making implicit models, presuppositions, exclusions and standardisations of representations explicit, and of putting them into historical, empirical and theoretical contexts.

After having thoroughly sifted through the details in the overview, the research team analysed the material from three complementary perspectives that concentrated on the portrayal of people, spatial structure and the role of art in the images (Fürstenberg et al. 2013). We initially aimed to recognise routinely repeated, missing or noticeably solitary visual messages, and to subject the pool of images to an analysis of the balance of power that thus manifested itself.<sup>4</sup>

3 Also see Fürstenberg et al. 2013, as well as the texts by microsillons, and by Carmen Mörsch and Stephan Fürstenberg in this volume.

4 “Our analysis of representation materials is guided by the thought of examining the balance of power, such as it is manifested in the patterns of representation and institutional routines of giving food for the eyes. The constant repetition of certain ways of representation develops potent effects, because specific

After having repeatedly looked through the material, all of the researchers involved noticed, despite their differing focuses of observation, that the images mainly showed exhibition visitors or participants in the educational offering. However, the educational staff quite often remained invisible. Towards the end of the project term, we held a discussion in Biel with the players of the educational departments who had provided the material to discuss the research results before the first publication. The debate aimed to differentiate and validate the findings (ibid:3).

In the contribution below, I once again take this visual material as a starting point. It only exceptionally depicts art education by means of media (e.g. audio guides or computer games).<sup>5</sup> This rare occurrence supports my own experience with institutional art education, for which the central form of production has, so far, been personal education, i.e. a talk or workshop with visitors. Compared to the work of curators, for whom the realisation of an exhibition usually results in the installation in a given space, art educators tend to use space in a more performative and communicative way. Given the financing by external donor institutions and programmes, and the reporting duty associated with it, this process-oriented and short-term production of talks, situations and workshops is particularly dependent on evidence through documentary photographs. One reason for the non-representation of art educators in the photographs of art education is the lack of human resources, which means that the documentation of the learning scenarios has to be done

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(introductory) pictures, meaning and positions of subjects can be both designed and established, as well as shifted in connection with art education." (Fürstenberg et al. 2013)

5 See the text by microsillons in this volume.

by the art educators themselves, while simultaneously being engaged in the production of the scenarios and their pedagogical accompaniment. Incidentally, this simultaneity and double role also account for a difficult and quite stressful situation when forms of reflective documentation are to be established.<sup>6</sup>

### **Ambivalences of making educators visible and invisible**

In the course of the research within the *Kunstvermittlung zeigen* project, it quickly became clear that only a small share of the documented guided tour and workshop situations showed educational staff.<sup>7</sup> Four fifths of the 770 photographs showing educational situations do not feature art educators. I would like to shed more light on this fact. In line with Johanna Schaffer (2008), I will do so by starting with a critical understanding of the way in which being made visible serves to gain political recognition and empowerment. Since the 1960s in particular, the invisibility of certain social groups of people in the media or in institutions symbolises injustice and a lack of public recognition. As a result, political movements that commit themselves to Black people, feminist or queer civil rights are repeatedly accompanied by campaigns which produce new images, demanding presence and recognition. It is mainly repeated

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6 See Fürstenberg et al. 2013:6 and my text Learning to document in this volume.

7 The nearly complete absence of people who represent the curatorial programme on pictures of exhibitions indeed corresponds to the professional self-image of the creators of exhibitions (see the text by microsillons in this volume).

pictures that are considered effective on an individual and societal level; they form “regimes of representation” (Hall 2004:115). I will continue this debate by taking a differentiated look at unnoticed (groups of) people when they are becoming visible. On the one hand, I still think that it is potent to represent and perceive minorised subjects, while on the other hand I will discuss disadvantageous forms of visibility. The latter includes stereotypical representations and detrimental visibility. A general problem lies in the fact that whether somebody is noticed depends on pre-existing paradigms of representation. Not only can no representation be read without reference to pre-existing images, but the reference to a field of visibility also affirms the pre-existing frame, in the words of Kaja Silverman, “*das Vor-gesehene*” (what is „given-to-be-seen“) (1996: 221).

Inasmuch as I aim to reflect practices of representation and perception, and that good reasons for and effects of invisibility are also conceivable in the field of institution-alised art education, I will use parts of the pool of materials to have a general look at who or what is made visible or invisible and how this is done. With these considerations, I aim to find out which gender patterns and differences are symbolised herein and what significance the educators have in their working context. In doing so, I consider gender in an intersectional way. On the basis of the reservations mentioned above against a principal euphoria about a plus of visual presence, I concentrate on “being more attentive to *the forms of representation*, much more attentive than to their quantities” (Schaffer 2008:23).

### Carriers of differences. Or: who and what does in fact disappear?

In order to thus judge the observed disappearance in a differentiated way, I will analyse which forms of representation are actually realised – in 159 photographs, i.e. the remaining fifth of photographed workshop and guided tour settings – and *what* therefore vanishes from the pictures. In order to do this, I will take a closer look at the “physical, linguistic and material symbols and carriers of differences [...] that fundamentally have a material and semiotic dimension” (Lindenhayn/Sties 2013:12) – so-called “markers”, i.e. clothing, physique, and body language of the educators that are given-to-be-seen in the photographs. Calling these elements markers aims to make them tangible as carriers of socio-cultural differentiations. Without visible or material symbols, such differentiations would neither have a noticeable reference point, nor could they be communicated. Markers identify differences between majorised and minorised people and support the attributions of “normal” and “not normal” (ibid:16). The marking of people is more or less intensive and can be influenced more or less easily. Nils Lindenhayn and Nora Sties (ibid:11f.), who discuss this term coined by George Spencer Brown, differentiate the levels of

conscious and self-chosen performance (e.g. outfit, hairstyle, way of speaking), [...] embodied difference (insignia of gender affiliation, skin colour, physical anomalies [or characteristics]) [and] forcibly allocated [...] markers [...] (identity card, school uniform, yellow stain/ring/star).

Given the serious effects of forcibly allocated markers in particular, it remains an open question as to whether it is tenable to equate the different groups of markers.

### Beauty and profession

The degree of freedom that individuals have when choosing their looks and behaviour is to be assessed as relative, given the governmental practices of subjectivation, notably in the professional environment. In Swiss and German schools, for example, for about ten years there has been an increasing debate on the admissibility of certain outfits which have been regulated by self-commitment and fashion advice (Beyer/von Festenberg 2003:124–137; Osel 2015; van Rooijen 2014). In this process, gender-specific body, behaviour and fashion norms for pedagogues are voted on and fixed among teaching staff. However, in most cases the students are granted more freedom, which is usually linked to the assertion that clothing is a medium of personality development. The standards that are negotiated and reproduced in this process are gender-coded and sexually charged: in terms of female fashion, there are extensive reports on crop tops and the covering of different body parts. The fashion of male teenagers is covered less intensively; when it is discussed, the debate is also about insufficient covering, but in their case because of low-rise trousers. However, these are presented not so much as sexualised outfits but rather as a sign of protest or neglect. The fact that the press does not consider personality development with regard to teachers suggests that their *Schönheits-handeln* (beautification practice, Degele 2004) is entangled in a professional exchange. Because of their exposition, they are

subject to more rigorous observation by their colleagues and students; the articles talk about body and clothing regulations which illustrate their generational specificity. Thus the increased demand for fashion know-how and looks that have become natural for the younger generation are being transferred to an older generation of teachers who have grown up with different standards.<sup>8</sup>

The communication scientist Angela McRobbie presents the pressure of adaptation by the “fashion beauty complex”,<sup>9</sup> in particular for (young) women, as a counter-movement motivated by patriarchy against contemporary demands of autonomy by women:

The power of patriarchy could be both fine-tuned and finessed by delegating authority over women to a field from which masculine domination appeared to be completely absent and instead where women self-regulated through a vocabulary of choice. (McRobbie 2015:10)

This training of the female body to use standardised beauty techniques prepares young women from the working class for a number of jobs that particularly value grooming and appearance: “beauty therapists, nail technicians or as personal assistants” (ibid:6). In line with Jasbir Puar, she puts these “heightened demands of bodily capacity” into a contemporary, neoliberal context (Puar 2012:149, quoted from McRobbie 2015:6). McRobbie goes into more detail:

Such control could be achieved precisely through the illusion of investing in the body beautiful as a perso-

8 The fact that too much sexiness among teachers is not discussed is due to both the fact that young teachers are ignored and that older objects of desire are inconceivable.

9 With this term McRobbie refers to Wolf 1991.

nal choice, and that such activities are pursued, not for the sake of male approval but for recognition within the terms laid out by the fashion-beauty-complex itself, and thus also for other women's approval. The irony here is that in complying with these demands, the Lacanian requirement that women per se give visual pleasure to men, is simultaneously fulfilled. (2015:10)

### Gender performance and related projections in the field of art education

The daily expectations with which art educators are confronted because of a job image at the interface of verbal and non-verbal communication that is characterised by feminine soft skills are also closely linked to body and gender norms. The audience is rarely aware of these expectations. Usually, they are only explicitly stated when a dissonance takes place between what is expected and what the art educator embodies, says and does.

In her reflection on the work as an art educator at the *documenta 10*, Carmen Mörsch wrote in 1997 that “there [was] hardly a female role cliché” which was not applied to her during *100 Tage Sprechen* (100 days of talking) (1997). In her text, she pinpoints these projections to: “representative of the ‘documenta as such’”, “ring girl and party gag”, “tamer”, “charlatan” or “canvasser”, “leisure animator”, “guide”, “angel of annunciation”, or “fairy godmother”, “sisterly accomplice” and “nurse”, “solo entertainer, specialist [...] or also prostitute”, “mirror [or] traitor”. In the course of the 100 days – besides distancing herself through her action research – she increasingly developed a tactic of staging herself and introducing herself “as an ‘oeuvre’ into the guided tours”

(ibid:51). In doing so, she aimed to “make it impossible to project female role clichés or to at least offer a rough projection surface on which the images were distorted” (ibid.).

Some years later, and after some more rounds in the discourse on art education, Bernadett Settele takes these social norms more seriously, with Judith Butler as a starting point: “Educators, as subjects and as service providers, come into conflict with existing norms when they do not fulfil the categories and are *painfully* measured by their gender, their origin, their mastery of *Kunstsprech* (artspeak).” (Settele 2010: 4) To be on display as an educator, which Settele also discusses, simultaneously demands a normalised performance of gender. An ambivalent gender performance can, in return, even complicate the readability and recognition as an art educator. Or, as formulated by art educator Nora Landkammer:

If we adopt Judith Butler's view of gender as a series of performative acts, then the question must be how (female) gallery educators play their role within this conflictive terrain and the historically given possibilities, how they can fall outside of the role, and which pitfalls await in the process. Ultimately, performing prevailing gender roles is, according to Judith Butler, ‘a project which has cultural survival as its end’. (Landkammer 2009:140)

### Looks of mediation

Looking at the material it is obvious that the female-coded mediators generally appear a bit older, make an impression of being well groomed, and correspond to the common idea of *white*, bourgeois (Rössel 2012:106) femininity (see Fürstenberg 2013: 4). Two dress styles predominate: one can be designated

as serious or elegant (the prevailing colour is black, it is characterised by a slender silhouette, typical articles of clothing are women's blazers, knee-length skirts or formal trousers, scarves); the second, more common style looks casual (pictures often show T-shirts with a round neckline or loose blouses, sometimes jackets, plus trousers). Both styles – presumably at summer temperatures – also allow bare shoulders. However, they do not permit tank tops or low necklines. Image 7, which is analysed below, shows an exemplary lineup of primarily the first variation. Given the rarity of educational staff in the pictures and in line with my interest in the representation of genders, I have compared the number of mediators read as male, which is 53 (i.e. half of the number of mediators that can be read as female), with the self-portrayals of educational teams on the websites.

In view of the male professionals mentioned on the institutional websites, male-coded educational staff are represented relatively often and in a different way. Differences exist mainly with regard to dress styles, physique and body language. Male-coded clothing can also be differentiated into casual and formal styles. It is striking that even in pictures with the more respectable outfit, comprising shirt and suit jacket, ties are not depicted, and that the outfits, in contrast to the feminine styles, can never be called elegant. Moreover, the casual style of the male mediators apparently allows more individual decisions, e.g. when the male mediator wears a big, striped bow tie, a ponytail, a cap or a woolen vest. This fancier representation of male players can be linked to artistic myths, such as non-conformance and uniqueness that are traditionally very much appreciated in the field of art.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For further information see Schade/Wenk (2005).

### Role play: Artist/educator

A photo series which can be used to thematise and reflect the gendered role allocation was provided by the *Kunsthalle Basel*. It shows two people who I read as mediators because they are placed vis-à-vis a group of visitors (image 1).



Image 1: Group exhibition *How to Work (More for) Less* (2012): Art education project art gallery without obstacles, *Kunsthalle Basel*, photograph: Zlatko Micic, © *Kunsthalle Basel*.

The group of visitors includes a person in a wheelchair; some other visitors have an appearance that is typical of people with Down's syndrome. Besides these aspects, it is mainly the clothing and body language of the educational duo that catches the eye. The masculine mediator is wearing a white lab coat over red trousers and a T-shirt, together with a hat, glasses and loafers (images 1 and 2). In comparison to the people grouped around him, these articles of clothing cover quite large parts of the body. The feminine mediator,

in contrast, is wearing a green, sleeveless shirt and tight jeans, with open toe sandals. I will refer to them as “male painter” and “female mediator” and “he” and “she” below.



Image 2: Group exhibition *How to Work (More for) Less* (2012): Art education project art gallery without obstacles, Kunsthalle Basel, photograph: Zlatko Micic, © Kunsthalle Basel.

The body language of the two also contrasts considerably; in the two photos from the series (images 1 and 2) the female mediator stands with her hands on her hips and in doing so inclines her head and even the upper part of her body towards the museum guests standing and sitting in front of her. Her body looks upright and slightly tense; the female educator takes up a posture of expectation. The posture of the male painter is turned less towards the audience in these photographs. In the second photo depicted here, in particular, his gaze is oriented towards the (art) object on the floor and his hands are in his coat pockets. The posture also appears upright, but more relaxed than that of the female educator. He seems to be less geared towards catching

attention or wanting to initiate a conversation. Because of the differing body language of the two, most members of the group are looking at the female mediator in the first picture. In a third picture in the series, which also shows the two next to each other (image 3), this stronger attention for the female educator is confirmed.



Image 3: Group exhibition *How to Work (More for) Less* (2012): Art education project art gallery without obstacles, Kunsthalle Basel, photograph: Zlatko Micic, © Kunsthalle Basel.

Their poses and the reactions to them thus correspond to the communicative and representative tasks that are, in general, intended for an educator. In one image, also part of the series, the male painter is portrayed to actively stage himself (image 4).



Image 4: Group exhibition *How to Work (More for) Less* (2012): Art education project art gallery without obstacles, *Kunsthalle Basel*, photograph: Zlatko Micic, © *Kunsthalle Basel*.

His pose in this picture is unusual. He is stretching his hands away from his body to the sides, holding two big paintbrushes in his hands and using them to prop his hands on his hips. The handles of the paintbrushes are hooked into the pockets of the overalls, which are covered in paint. With this gesture he takes up space, but he is still directing the observer's gaze towards the blurred person depicted on the right-hand side of the picture. The suspended display of the lab coat and the brushes confirms his staging as a painter, who is obviously communicating something in a team with the female educator. When taking another look at the first picture in the series, we notice the easel on the right-hand side of the photo, between the male painter and the female educator, which is being presented to the group. This easel, which might be assigned to the painter as professional equipment, just

like the paintbrushes and the white coat, thus legitimises the eccentric appearance of the masculine protagonist in the classical white exhibition room, the White Cube. His appearance as an artist redefines the exhibition room as an artist's workshop. If we assume that his task is to talk about something being exhibited on the easel, more specifically about his own artistic work, then his talk differs fundamentally from the one of a female educator, who talks about the art of other people.

This task sharing is linked to differing legitimisations. One of them is founded on production and authorship and thus individual knowledge (that cannot be denied), the other one rather relies on appropriation and connoisseurship (it can be measured in current discourse and disputed). These different legitimisations can, according to Sarah-Jane Leslie and Andrei Cimpian for the US-American context in 2015, be linked to "field-specific abilities beliefs" (2015:262), for example the cult of the genius. These beliefs characterise different subject cultures and leave their mark on the social structure of its representatives. The journalist Rebecca Newberger Goldstein summarises their results on ideas of innate "brilliance" (Kühne 2015) as follows: "[...] what Cimpian and Leslie found is that the more that success within a field was seen as a function of sheer intellectual firepower, with words such as "gifted" and "genius" not uncommon, the fewer the women" (Newberger Goldstein 2016).

The same prejudice of a lack of "innate mental talent" is also applied to African-Americans, who are also "underrepresented in the disciplines where it is believed that giftedness is decisive for success in the field, in particular in philosophy and mathematics" (Kühne 2015). In the face of the persistent idea of artistic genius in the fine arts, the continuing

professional discrimination against female artists can partly be explained by the genius-oriented subject culture in the art system. The two roles in the pictures correspond to the modern order of genders that divides labour into production and reproduction/distribution of knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

### Poses of *Für/Sorge* (Care) ...

Seen as a whole, the body language of the art mediators in the pictures of gallery education is also structured in a binary way. Educators with a feminine appearance keep their feet close together or lean or turn towards the people facing them. They use no vertical gestures to point at things. 19 percent of the female educators are sitting on the floor, whereas only 8 percent of the male educators represented are doing so. This position is convenient on the one hand because no additional seats have to be brought into the exhibition room. On the other hand, in the European context, it constitutes a compromise or disparagement for adults.

11 The higher value that is placed on cultural production and its producers, in comparison with reproduction, corresponds to a French tradition that formed the basis of the *Urheber\_innenrecht* (right of the author), e.g. in Switzerland and Germany. "At the end of the eighteenth century, there were two *Urheberrechtskonzeptionen* (concepts of authorship/copyright), that differed fundamentally in their principles. The copyright regulations that had been developed in Anglo-American law took the public interest in the production and distribution of science as a starting point for an exclusive right of copying works that was limited in time and scope. The model of continental Europe, the French model [the so-called *droit d'auteur*], however, took the creator and his personal rights as a starting point. The German-speaking countries, because of the historical development after the conquest of Napoleon's army, used the French model as a reference." (Gehring 2008:242)

For early childhood pedagogues, the advantage of making oneself comfortable on the floor is to move to a level where they are nearly at eye level with the children.<sup>12</sup> This movement towards the children is often equated with paying attention to their interests and needs. Another typical pose of child educators found in the pool of pictures from the galleries is their integration into a ring-a-ring o'roses. The adult leaders of ring-a-ring o'roses in the picture material here can exclusively be read as women (see image 5).



Image 5: Trimester Programme (2007): *Kinder- und Familien*, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, © Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, with thanks to Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein.

Both forms of body representation – sitting on the floor and participating in a ring-a-ring o'roses – are associated to the image of the educator in a kindergarten or nursery, which

12 Our thesis of loss of status therefore at first triggered scepticism at the meeting in Biel with representatives of some art education departments. See above under *Materials and method of "Kunstvermittlung zeigen"*.

as a paradigm refers to the feminised obligation of care, but paradoxically not of education (Dalton 2001).

The photographs shown, from the *Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein* (image 5), show such a ring-a-ring o'roses, or rather part of it: three children and an adult who hold hands and circle around a big, brown sphere. Their tops are striking because of their strongly contrasting colours: yellow, red, orange and turquoise. Right at the last moment before the picture is taken, the adult and the child holding her left hand look into the camera and smile (the head of the child in the yellow shirt also seems to want to turn in the direction of the camera but only succeeds partly because of the tug of the ring-a-ring o'roses). In form and content, this photograph thus combines elements that are often used in the representation of early childhood education. A geometric basic form and clear, bright colours are typical of the visual language of nurseries and similar institutions. They also often present smiling faces and play. In these pictures the female art educator is thus instead associated with acts that are motivated by caring for young people, which, in art, are positioned and arranged quite far away from, if not opposite, caring for art. In the logic of the art system, art educators who are pictured with such a habitus, including professional clothing, win no field-specific recognition for this specific look and the activities represented.

### ... and other *tasteful appearances*

An alternative habitus, which is solely reserved for female art educators, is carried to extremes in the following picture. Moreover, the observation of clothing and body language in the following group picture reinforces the symbolical hierarchy of genders.



Image 6: Art educators of the *Kunsthaus Zürich* (2012): *Die MittlerInnen* (Von links nach rechts: Sibylle Burla, Regula Straumann, Sibyl Kraft, Paula Langer, Kerstin Bitar, Hans Ruedi Weber (Leitung), Marianne Rione Fili, Marietta Rohner, Monika Leonhardt, Barbara Schluueb, Catherine Brandeis, Madeleine Witzig, Marion Bernauer, Nicoletta Brentano, Valeria Jakob Tschui), *Kunsthaus Zürich*, photograph: Markus Bühler-Rasom, © Markus Bühler-Rasom *Kunsthaus Zürich*, online: [www.kunsthau.ch/de/information/ueber-uns/funktionsbereiche/kunstvermittlung/](http://www.kunsthau.ch/de/information/ueber-uns/funktionsbereiche/kunstvermittlung/) (last access: 20.07.2012, no longer retrievable).

In a large exhibition room, fifteen people are distributed in such a way that nobody is hidden by anybody else and each body can more or less be seen as a whole (image 6). These

bodies give the impression of being dressed for a special occasion. About half of the people are wearing dark trousers with different tops, the other half are wearing dresses or skirts in grey or black tones or pastel colours. One can spot two long necklaces; on the outer right-hand side, a big, bright blue scarf is draped around the shoulders. The arrangement of the feet, in particular on the right-hand side of the photograph, gives the appearance of dancing: the heels are next to one another or behind one another, and the toes are often slightly turned outward. Some stand contrapposto. Together with the arrangement of the room, and the festive clothing, the group looks like a ballet ensemble.<sup>13</sup> The association with ballet is also created by the fact that most of the people are standing in a very upright way and have a slim appearance. Three people conspicuously fold their hands over their abdomen. Traditionally, ballet lessons did serve to physically train grace and discipline in girls and young women from (bourgeois) families who could afford this sport. Besides a feeling for rhythm, agility and expression, the lessons mainly inculcate posture, stamina and body control. It is/was this very combination of physical stamina and the appearance of lightness and flexibility that serves/served as preparation for the demands of *white*, bourgeois femininity. In light of the orientation towards the camera, in particular, one can talk of a conscious production of visual pleasure, which, according to McRobbie (2015), is still seen as a typically female area of responsibility.

I interpret all of the people in this picture as female, with one exception. This person is standing in the third row in

13 This association with dancing was made by the educators when we looked at the pictures in Biel. See above under *Materials and method of "Kunstvermittlung zeigen"*.

the left half, is wearing grey trousers, a light top and has placed a jumper on the shoulders. Both the posture of the body and the positioning of the hands differ from the rest of the models: the feet are far away from one another, the toes are clearly facing forward. The left hand is placed on the hip, the right one is held into the air in front of the stomach. I read this figure as male. Owing to the posture of the arms and legs this figure takes up more room and appears more self-confident than many of the feminised poses. The draped jumper also appears markedly laid-back and casual, in comparison with the rest of the outfits. This relaxed attitude could be read as a sign of (self-)confidence linked to privileges. This is why the unique style and body language in particular give this one person importance. There is also a comparable special role in ballet, for originally it was only men who were allowed to do the choreographic work, which was seen as creative. This special photograph – we did not find a comparable picture of an educational team in the research period – seems to confirm the rule that male-coded educators are granted more self-will in regards to their outfit, and they also use these possibilities. The historical parallel to the division of roles in ballet reinforces the idea that this greater stylistic freedom could be linked with both extended possibilities of action and more symbolic and material recognition.<sup>14</sup>

As regards the differences in the fashion of the other fourteen educators, the previously mentioned bright shawl remains to be discussed. I see two explanations for it. It is

14 When I looked at the context of the group picture later, I discovered that this person was designated as the director of education. This fact is a good reason for the more relaxed styling in comparison with the rest of the team.



either to be seen tactically, as proof of spectacular “over-identification” (Landkammer 2009:144), with the shawl reminding us of an outfit suited to a summer opera. (The two long necklaces could also be read in this way). At the same time, it covers a shoulder and part of the neckline. The latter is in line with the visualised dress code for educators in the entire pool of pictures that does not allow too much sexiness. This is thus where femininity reaches its limit.<sup>15</sup>

Elegance apparently marks educators as authorised speakers. Today, it mainly stands for “the fashionable, tasteful appearance of people and things”.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, until the eighteenth century, “*elegantia*, as a Latin term borrowed from rhetoric [stood for] ‘tasteful, fine choice,

fine in particular with regard to expression, decency” (ibid). Hannes Böhringer (2014) illustrates this meaning: “Noble people want to talk and act in a good and beautiful way. To talk is to act. This is how elegance pushes into the area of smartness.”

Choosing a stylish blazer for one’s outfit (see image 7) thus has more to do with the traditional core activity of an art educator – smart talking – than one would have guessed. The contradictory expectations towards today’s art educators, who should be both good speakers and good listeners and should stimulate dialogue, demand a great deal of flexibility and diplomatic skills that push to the (fashionable) surface here. It can thus be stated that the conditions under which art educators become visible differ between male and female educators.

One model of the femininity of art educators is illustrated by poses that caringly turn towards child visitors, and the comfortable, convenient clothing necessary for this (see images 1–5). The second, contrasting variation is characterised by a graceful and disciplined composure and an elegant and fashionable style (see images 6 and 7). Neither of the two cases crosses the line of the masculine model of the casual art educator who has a certain proximity to the figure of the artist and has a strong presence in the pool of materials. These forms of representation thus create a framework that defines which forms of personal education do not become visible or become less visible, and constitute the guideline against which *imperfect* and ambivalent pictures can be measured. For the definition of this framework, what is exemplified by and required from the individual genders plays a role, as do institutional hierarchies and class-specific or ethnicised affiliations. One could almost say that provided they have a caring and elegant appearance, female art educators are intelligible

Image 7: Flyer (n.d.): Art Education at the *Kunsthau Zürich*, photograph: Caroline Minjolle, © Caroline Minjolle *Kunsthau Zürich*.

15 By the way, the over-compliance, which Nora Landkammer, in the context of the *documenta 12*, describes as a way to undermine the role expectations which the often female educators are confronted with, is closely linked with the terminology of elegance: “this bit of *elegance* was an advantage to the job” (Landkammer 2009:142); “she [to no longer be perceived as a student] switched to a *more elegant attire*” (ibid:144); “enforce one’s authority through [elegant] clothing” (ibid:144).

16 <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleganz> (last access: 28.08.2017).

and also recognisable. The forms of appearance of masculinity in the field of art education are more diverse and appear less disciplined. Male art educators have a status of being special and are thus surrounded by original options as regards their physicality, outfits and styling. In these legitimate representations, in which invisibility can be found at the borders, general social expectations towards *women* and *men* interfere with activities, poses and expectations that are specific to the professional field of gallery education.

### Feminised service and sexual work in art education

In her book *The Gendering of Art Education* (2001), artist and theoretician Pen Dalton examined the function of art education for the socialisation of young women in the English context since the nineteenth century. In an approach that views classicism in a critical way, she takes a sceptical look at the post-modern feminisation of art and art education, and also their model character for the neoliberal economy. Supposedly female talents such as communication, understanding and flexibility have left their mark on the rhetoric of the post-Fordistic world of finance and work (ibid:110). At the same time, staff commitment, which is required to be flexible and intrinsically motivated, stands at odds with temporary and/or relatively low payment and no guarantee of support in case of illness or unemployment. Dalton emphasises that despite the extensive feminisation of a market strongly oriented towards services, the power of decision-making and the means of production are still in the hands of the patriarchy.<sup>17</sup>

17 Thomas Viola Rieske contradicts the supposed cultural feminisation of German educational establishments: "In the course of an

The emotional, cognitive and social abilities and the fitting embodiment that are seen as necessary for a successful dialogue on art<sup>18</sup> can thus be transferred to current employment conditions in general. Pauline Boudry, Brigitta Kuster and Renate Lorenz refer to them as "sexual work" (2004:9). It

is about the forms of self-presentation in dress and behaviour, about *how* people accomplish a certain task, *how* they conduct a conversation. That somebody manages different processes, remains calm when things get stressful and annoying [...], easily acquires new fields of knowledge, is open to new ideas and acquaintances – these are individual characteristics but at the same time constitute working demands that go beyond the individual person, such as they can be found in many job advertisements. (ibid)

This combination of organisational talent, ability to handle stress, readiness to learn and train, creativity and sociability sounds like any job advertisement in the area of gallery education. Due to the combination of the personal and professional sides of a subject, paid work is perceived as a place of individual fulfilment and self-affirmation, so part of it is "almost done for one's own pleasure [and in one's own interest]" (ibid). This blurs the borders between leadership and self-guidance, the working subject proves to be more easily and more extensively exploitable. The sociologist and

increased orientation of educational establishments towards the principles of market economy thinking and an increasingly popular understanding of education as the development of individual competitiveness, one could rather speak of a masculinisation of education, because the orientation towards competition and individual pursuit of achievement is mainly to be found among men, as is shown by surveys. 'In neoliberalism, the orientation towards competition forms a central resource, that is gender-coded. It therefore is to be expected that the cultural capital of woman and man will continue to drift apart.'" (Rieske 2011:55)

18 Carmen Mörsch (1997:50) also dealt with another term of success.

adult educator Stefan Vater has also posed the problem of “the invisibility of precarity” for freelance adult educators: “These people cannot become unemployed (in the sense of a right to unemployment benefits), to an extent they cannot even become sick, because they are not insured if they have not taken out personal insurance.” (2007: 6) The thesis that a comparable precarity in the specific case of art education could be linked to its *feminisation* is an insight that many gallery educators experience. While it has been described several times,<sup>19</sup> it has not been analysed in more detail so far. In other professional or technical fields, the importance and effect of feminisation has been examined more systematically. I will take up some of the insights gained below.

The feminisation of art education refers, on the one hand, to the association of the field of activity with supposedly “typical female” abilities such as the previously mentioned skills of communication and care (*Für/Sorge*), and, on the other hand, the majority presence of feminine players in art museums, both as regards educators<sup>20</sup> and visitors (Wegner 2010: 112f.). Both factors jointly contribute to a symbolic as well as economic assessment of the field.<sup>21</sup> Sociological stud-

19 For example by Schulz/Burmeier 1989; Mörsch 1997: 42; Kletchka 2010: 10f.; Mörsch 2013. The 2. *Salon für kritische Kunstvermittlung* (Second Saloon for Critical Art Education) also dealt with working conditions, 26 May 2013, Haus am Lützowplatz Berlin, concept: Nanna Lüth, Sandra Ortmann, and Maren Ziese, online: [www.hal-berlin.de/veranstaltung/2-salon-fur-kritische-kunstvermittlung/](http://www.hal-berlin.de/veranstaltung/2-salon-fur-kritische-kunstvermittlung/) (last access: 28.08.2017).

20 “Another requirement, certainly unofficial but fairly obvious nonetheless, is that in order to be an art museum educator, one should be a woman. Though there are no published statistics on the gender of art museum education practitioners, professional conferences, e-mail lists, informal networks, and museum directories are filled with the names and faces of female practitioners [...]” (Kletchka 2006: 3)

21 A third version of feminisation, that is, for example, debated for

ies have connected the symbolic and material assessments of certain professions and fields of activity to gender dynamics. Social pedagogue Catrin Heite summarises the results of several empirical studies: “Gender studies regarding the gender shift in professions show that the development of a profession from a male to a female profession is based on the devaluation of the corresponding activities and the skills regarded as relevant for it, and always reduces its recognition.” (Heite 2009: 51)<sup>22</sup> Statistical feminisation, for example in primary schooling as well as in professions involving social work or care, is thus accompanied by a worsening in working conditions, payment and status.

The [...] degradations and enhancement, gendering and hierarchisations of professions that compete for professional status are embedded in the macro-structural gender-hierarchic *division of labour between the work of production and reproduction* as well as between relatively better paid male-coded-professions that are seen as productive and efficient, and relatively less-paid (service) female-coded professions that are seen as caring, social and naturalised. [...] Both the marginalisation of women in the sciences and professions and the degradation of social work as a so-called ‘semi-profession’ are an expression of processes of social positioning, in which women or ‘female professions’ are not recognised as equal players, and access to speaking positions, instruments of power and privileges are limited. (ibid, my highlighting)

the field of school, in particular primary school, is political feminisation, which holds a supposedly overpowering feminism responsible for an anti-boy attitude or attitude that discriminates against boys. A critical reflection of this can be found in: Rieske 2011: 50 as well as Klingler 2015: 117.

22 In footnote 1 she refers to specific studies: “For the example of pilots and secretaries see Gildemeister/Wetterer 1992, Frevert 1979. For the case of typesetters see Kraus 1993, Maruani/Nicole[-Dran-court] 1989.”

There is no research on the percentage of female workers in art education. Sabine Klinger (2015:123f.) has had a look at the area of educational sciences that has a better statistical basis and observed that the mostly female students tend to resist gender issues.<sup>23</sup> The pattern of argumentation linked to this resistance relies on the idea that one can do without the discussion of gender and a gender sensible language because of the relatively homogenous female body of students. This ignores the fact that the share of women in educational sciences decreases significantly in jobs that demand higher qualifications. Career chances are thus not distributed in a gender-neutral way; moreover, the proportion of women is only higher in a certain phase of life, while studying. If a statistical study of genders were to be carried out for art education, it would therefore be necessary to take into consideration the different levels of hierarchies of function, such as the new study or training courses for art education/cultural education that have been founded in Germany in the past ten years.

In the face of these unknowns, paradoxes and rather difficult working relations in museum mediation/art education (Fürstenberg 2011) (freelance, badly paid, often without a guaranteed income or protection in case of unemployment) as well as the educational work that is designated as secondary, or even abject, in the art system (Mörsch 2011:27), it is difficult to take a neutral stance towards the disappearance of gallery educators from the pictures.<sup>24</sup>

23 A similar finding was made by Antje Kirschning in a study on gender issues in teaching at the *Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin*: "A high share of women must not be equated with open-mindedness for and a good imparting of women and gender issues." (2011:32)

24 In a later text, Carmen Mörsch, referring to Frigga Haug's wording of *sich selber widersprechen* (to contradict oneself), describes

### Precarious pedagogics / pedagogical paradox

The disappearance of the responsible personnel in the representation of educational work is indeed supported by the neoliberal idea that the – at best young – recipients should educate themselves and are thus subject to the paradigm of educational policy of lifelong *self*-educational processes. This paradigm is taken up in contemporary pedagogical theories and studies, and often confirmed. Pedagogical work, in this case, is not represented; it is degraded symbolically, and the workers make themselves invisible. Karl Josef Pazzini made a similar remark about the sense of self of German teachers. He writes that

"there [exists] a fundamental confusion in the image of the teachers of themselves that does not exist in this form in other countries: In Germany teachers are people who are superfluous, or when they are there, have to make themselves superfluous. This is confused with the mission to promote responsibility." (2015:56f.)

Here Pazzini pinpoints a principle that Freud had already posed as a problem by speaking of the "impossible professions".<sup>25</sup> Nora Sternfeld, for example, takes a closer look at this pedagogical paradox. She formulates that "the real goal of teaching is that the teachers provide the students with the means to make do without them", to thus "empower" them (Sternfeld

how pedagogues, by assuming the casualness and self-monitoring of the learning process, "are sawing off the branch" on which they are sitting.

25 These "impossible" professions, according to Sigmund Freud, encompass the bringing-up of children, government of nations and psychoanalysis (Sternfeld 2009:11).

2009:17). If art educators have a corresponding pedagogical self-image, it is evident that they will rarely put themselves in the limelight. If pedagogy, however, is simultaneously seen as a “practice for change” (ibid:19f.) and strives for a shift or a counterpoise in the balance of power, then it becomes clear that the task of the teachers, to provide means, and to do this by entering into a dialogue and unsafe territory, cannot be neglected. From this perspective, pedagogical practice is misunderstood if, out of fear of too much influence or resistance, existing conditions and pre-structured perceptions in educational contexts are not questioned, but simply reproduced and thus even reinforced. Consequently, a committed teacher or art educator practises a responsible activity and is not superfluous at all.<sup>26</sup>

The profile required and the quoted “impossibility” of the communicative and caring activity become even more of a challenge when superiors, colleagues or even the *learning* person refers to a romanticised term of art, and accordingly the possibility to learn or teach art is put into question in general. Under such conditions, art pedagogues are in the paradoxical situation of wanting to educate people about fields, phenomena and content that their environment thinks cannot be taught, or that even they themselves think cannot be taught. The strong paradigm of supposedly autonomous auto-education, with which the expendability of educational staff is connected, materialises in the corresponding working relations for most art educators in galleries.

<sup>26</sup> The educational scientist Gert Biesta (2012:35–49) also criticises the disappearance of teachers and their understanding of teaching as an effect of neoliberal shifts. He sees the emergence of constructivist learning concepts as a decisive trigger – which needs further discussion.

Sexual work thus cannot be reduced to a trade relation between one and oneself but highlights the relationship with third parties as well as the unreasonable demands and attributions that subjects have to endure at the workplace, but which they indeed also co-negotiate. (Mennel/Salzmann 2007)

The intensive examination of the reservations and expectations of third parties indicated here echoes Landkammer’s remarks on the challenge of maintaining conversational situations while also deconstructing the role of the speaker in the context of the *documenta 12*. The educators she talked to articulated that, in order to achieve this, they were wearing different kinds of “protection garments” to make the paradoxical demands tolerable. However, comparably formal outfits, such as the ones that can be found in the pictures from this study, never cross the border to male clothing (e.g. image 8). It thus fulfils the unspoken rule of delivering “a clear representation of gender as well as of heterosexuality” (Boudry/Kuster/Lorenz 2004:9).

### **Recognition through a refusal of visibility? Unsharpness and ambivalence**

Under the given circumstances, the withdrawal of visibility could be a smart tactic, given the described hierarchising and disambiguating scopic regime. For: “As we know, visibility not only means improved possibilities of action and articulation, but also an increase of control and regulation.” (Mörsch 2011:19) The repertoire of images from Swiss gallery education contains only rare instances of alternative fashion or styles that do not correspond to the norms of heterosexual

perfection.<sup>27</sup> The two exceptions in the pool of images that to some extent interrupt the binary pattern, and which I will describe below, are also exceptional in terms of the technique with which they were taken. Upon closer inspection, one wonders whether the described ambivalences of the depicted situations capture a different capacity of action and *form* of education than the rest of the observed images relating to museum education, and whether they might be able to deliver an impulse for a renegotiation of the recognition and the conditions of art education.



Image 8: Lookat (2002): Art Education at the *Kunsthaus Zürich*, photograph: Caroline Minjolle, © Caroline Minjolle *Kunsthaus Zürich*, online: [www.kunsthhaus.ch/de/kunstvermittlung/schulen/schulklassen/](http://www.kunsthhaus.ch/de/kunstvermittlung/schulen/schulklassen/) (last access: 28.08.2017).

<sup>27</sup> See “postfeminist masquerade” or “complete perfection” (McRobbie 2015:9 and 12).

One picture causes confusion owing to an interpretation that deviates from heterosexual perfection (image 8). Both the angle and the focus of the photograph seem to have been set in a more conscious way, in comparison with the other pictures. The picture shows the participants of a gallery tour. The camera is turned towards the educator, whose finger points towards a spot on a framed painting. This person is wearing a grey-blue shirt and black trousers, which, combined with the grey-brown short hair, add up to a rather androgynous appearance. In front of this person three children, who also have short haircuts, kneel with their back to the camera.

The child in the middle has raised its right hand, like one would do in class. The picture thus depicts two people using hand gestures in the foreground and the middle ground, which results in the picture being interspersed with gestures that have a strong link to the conventional form of a gallery tour. Because of the shallow focus, it is only possible to partially decipher the scene which is visible on the painting, in which naked child figures together with possibly an animal and two larger, adult persons can be seen in a landscape with trees. It is unusual that both the centrally set work of art in the background and the gesture of the educator are blurred. This also makes it difficult to attribute a specific gender to the person.

This picture can thus be understood as questioning certain demands on educators, both regarding the idea that they should explain and/or clarify the art exhibited, and the conception that they should deliver a clear gender performance.

A second picture also presents both sides of a gallery talk – educator and visitors – at first glance. However, this time the camera is placed behind the back of the educator and is turned towards the listeners (image 9).



Image 9: Group exhibition *How to Work (More for) Less* (2012): Art education project art gallery without obstacles, Kunsthalle Basel, photograph: Zlatko Micic, © Kunsthalle Basel.

The focus is lying on the rear of a female-looking figure on the right-hand side of the picture, who is wearing a white polo-shirt and black trousers (or a black skirt) as well as wrist warmer(s) and a studded belt. Moreover, the right-hand side of the picture shows part of a tabletop with various small objects, and next to this a section of a kind of white cage, which I read as a work of art. On the larger, left-hand side of the picture, this person is faced by a group of people who are wearing mostly dark clothes, but who are not really depicted sharply. Despite the slight blur one can see that the group members are of different heights and ages – some expressions can be interpreted as laughter or smiles. The majority of the visitors are directing their attention towards the person facing them, which makes this person readable as a guide. The imprint on the rear of the person's shirt confirms this function, as it says "I love Kunst"

(I love art).<sup>28</sup> There is a remarkably large distance between the educator and the audience, which is further accentuated by the decision to use a large aperture and thus produce a shallow depth of field.

The posture of the educator suggests that she does not necessarily seem to counteract this distancing; she is supporting herself on the table with both hands, her hips are slightly turned towards the right and the right shoulder is also slightly lower than the left one.

At the same time, the invisibility of the person's facial expression creates a non-decodable gap in a scene that is otherwise extremely determining and charged with meaning. Thus, the subject of the communication being presented remains incomplete; a more complete resolution is denied to those who take a look at the photograph. It is this very incompleteness that makes the viewer look further: the posture of the person whose back is in view and the cutting off of the picture at waist level turn the attention towards the studded belt. This belt is slanted from the lower left hip upwards to the right-hand side; two metal buttons on the trouser or skirt pockets and two further rivets on the wrist-warmers reinforce this detail. Brown strands of hair fall on the white shirt collar, which, in combination with the casually leaning pose and above all the studded belt, particularly stand out. This punk-inspired styling that is unusual for a museum context seems at first sight to contradict the assignment to embody the love for art as an authorised speaker (Sturm 1996:36f.). A studded belt that, due to its history, tends to send anti-bourgeois signals contradicts the average ideas of a decent educator.

<sup>28</sup> Carmen Mörsch – in line with Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel (2006) thinks that the love of art is one of the decisive requirements for access to an activity as an art educator (2012:61).

The educator Sandra Ortmann was also confronted with such ideas of normality during the *documenta 12*, by means of a letter of complaint about a studded necklace that she wore to her “mostly strictly gender-neutral outfits in black” (2009:245). In response to this letter (quoted *ibid*:246), Ortmann dealt with the gendered expectations regarding the performance and statements of art educators, and how these can be met from a queer perspective. She dressed in a way that is usual in the context of art, to avoid experiences of discrimination, such as the one mentioned, and to remain “emotionally and physically ready for work” (*ibid*). She thus counted on a “safety of invisibility”<sup>29</sup> that provides space for queering in speaking about the artistic works. When reflecting on her own tactics, she also refers to the concept of sexual work by Lorenz and Boudry and thus places this sub-cultural marker in a larger context of neoliberal working conditions. Transferred to the example depicted, and with respect to the “reparative reading” promised (Sedgwick 2002), I would like to claim that this example – probably unintended by parts of the museum’s chain of representation – also designs a visual version of resistance against feminised expectations. Through elements of dress and behaviour with regard to proximity and distance,<sup>30</sup> the picture shows a communication and approach that are not smooth – it does indeed keep a distance between art and the educator. This de-naturalises the myth that current art education

29 This decision can be linked to Johanna Schaffer’s remarks on the advantages of invisibility (2008), see above. Sandra Ortmann also discusses the problem that her strategy of invisibility exclusively works for clothing as a means of becoming invisible and refers to the fact that “hair color, accent, age, body shape, and body size are significantly harder to ‘standardize’” (2009:246).

30 In science, the behaviour regarding proximity and distance is defined as proxemics (Hall 1959).

is always and automatically capable of speaking a wide variety of languages and of integrating an unknown audience to bring it closer to art, and it shows some of the obstacles that are associated with this task, at least temporarily.<sup>31</sup> Based on Ortmann’s description, the mediality, i.e. the way in which gallery education is presented here, and the looks of the art educator, can be understood as a wilful performance and criticism of representation that, together with other resistant representations, would be capable of achieving a symbolic re-evaluation.

In both pictures, blurriness creates an ambivalence that concerns certain expectations towards art education, i.e. to introduce people to art or inform them about it. At the same time, the educators in the images cannot be fully identified and, at least in the first case, cannot be easily assigned to a binary gender category. This creates semantic gaps, which opens the probability of alternative readings, in particular in view of the photographic history of identification and categorisation (Sekula 1986). The gaps could easily house the unglamorous sides of educational work, the “small, tedious, unrepresentable, and strenuous aspects of the educational” that, according to Sternfeld, do not find their way into theory (2010:10). Janna Graham also calls the working conditions unglamorous (2010:3); they should also be debated, just like the norms of appearance and behaviour that are strongly marked by heterosexism, class and *whiteness* in this area.

Taking up the observation of the disappearance of the art educators, it can be said these pictures, with the help of blurriness and the exhibition of the non-visible *show the*

31 Carmen Mörsch questions “why [in art education] it is about ‘heranführen’ (introducing to something) or ‘Schwellen abbauen’ (lowering inhibitions and barriers)” (2012:62f).

*disappearance*, and that they can be used to pose the problem of the lack of representability of alternatives and visions. If you think about the economic, socio-cultural and educational conditions of this invisibility, it is easy to find measures to both start to change the professional field at the level of representation, and to also support measures that instigate change, such as the diversification of art education staff.

### Models and conditions for showing the disappearance

I would like to introduce two models that deal with the issue of how female care is made in/visible on the one hand, and with the *whiteness* of museum space on the other: the *Hidden Mother* book project by Linda Fregni Nagler (2013),<sup>32</sup> as well as the work *A Short Video About Tate Modern* (2003, 2005) by Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa. Both cases discuss and counteract the effacement of individuals working in care and reproduction. Fregni Nagler has accumulated an archive by collecting 1,002 studio portraits of small children from the time of the advent of photography (image 10). In order to get sharp pictures despite the slow exposure times, it was necessary to hold the children still in front of the camera. One parent, usually the mother, served to support the progeny, however was not to deflect attention from the “central subject” of the picture (Mackbooks 2013).

<sup>32</sup> Thanks to Nanne Buurman for the hint.



Image 10: Linda Fregni Nagler (2013: 184f.): *The Hidden Mother*, London: Mackbooks, © Linda Fregni Nagler.

This originated in different variations of being present in an invisible way: the parent would, for example, hide under a dark cloth, to offer a seat for the child, or a single hand that held the child would be stretched into the picture from off shot:

[...] Fregni Nagler has accumulated images that repeat a particular gesture – the negation of the parent in the interest of the legibility of the child. The many themes bubbling under the surface of her collection are unified by the singular principle of effacement – as if this gesture speaks of the nature of parenthood itself, or of women’s place in a patriarchal society, where she is figured without an identity of her own. (ibid)

While the critical meaning in this project only earns its intensity through the assembly of the pictures from a historical distance, the video work by Wolukau-Wanambwa is a contemporary answer to an experience with structural,

racist exclusions in an art institution. During a conference in the Tate Modern, to which she was invited as the only black female artist in 2003, she met other black people who worked in the kitchen, right next to the conference room. They were surprised by Wolukau-Wanambwa's part as an active participant in cultural activities.



Image 11: Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa: *A Short Video About Tate Modern* (2003, 2005), still, London, © Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa, Portfolio online: [www.wolukau-wanambwa.net](http://www.wolukau-wanambwa.net) (last access: 28.08.2017).

The artist developed a video on location during the conference. At first, she talks about the event, standing in front of a white wall. Then we are shown a long shot of one side the conference room, also a white wall, in front of which the artist stands, but this time she is hidden by an oversized sheet of paper, which has two holes cut out for the eyes; only the lower legs of Wolukau-Wanambwa can be seen (image 11). This shot creates ambivalent feelings. On the one hand, the obvious staging of invisibility appears absurd and

comical. On the other hand it seems threatening, because the artist is enclosed and held by the paper mask which covers the body and anonymises it and, moreover, reminds of the cowls of the Ku Klux Klan.

In order to undertake such work with the repertoire of images, additional resources are needed, in particular in the form of paid work for reflection, qualification and the conceptual and creative work on the representations (maiz 2014)! As long as these resources are not available, a complete refusal to perform visual and other representations of art education work would surely make an impression. To go on strike against representation, in order to change representation, would be a step towards the necessary reparative measures for not being governed quite so much as an art educator.

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