

1.1 “Kulturvermittlung” as a collective term in German-speaking areas

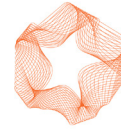
The less-than-precise umbrella term “Kulturvermittlung” encompasses a very wide range of practices and is continuously being redefined. Generally, the word is applied to situations in which people receive information about the arts (though sometimes about scientific or societal phenomena and discoveries), enter into an exchange about that information, react to it – whether orally or through other forms of expression.

Accordingly, in addition to encompassing the education and engagement programmes of cultural institutions, such as guided tours, public discussions, workshops or pre-performance offerings at venues for theatre, opera and dance, concerts or literary events, the term “Kulturvermittlung”, when used in a broader sense, also covers school-based instruction in art subjects and theatre education projects and artists in residence programmes in schools. By the same token, it encompasses such activities which take place outside of schools, such as → instruction in artistic techniques and forms of → socio-cultural animation. Forms of knowledge transfer relating to natural sciences and technology which take place outside of schools – in science centres, for instance – are also included in the greater scope of Kulturvermittlung activity.

In some contexts, offerings specifically aimed at children or young people – musical, literary, theatre or dance productions, or exhibitions, are identified as forms of Kulturvermittlung. One also finds the term used in connection with presentation of the arts: for instance, people or institutions hosting exhibitions have described themselves as Kunstvermittler_innen [people who engage in Kulturvermittlung] on the grounds that showing art in combination with the communication processes associated with that activity already constitutes a form of Kulturvermittlung. Moreover, by some definitions, dissemination, promotion and marketing in the arts and cultural sector can also overlap with the semantic field of Kulturvermittlung, which, thus defined, extends to advertising theatre programmes, the hosting of festivals by concert halls or literary organizations and even to the sale of catalogues, merchandising products and souvenirs from exhibitions. Similarly, writing about culture or the arts and media criticism in the various artistic fields have also been considered by some to fall within the semantic field of Kulturvermittlung.

→ Instruction in artistic techniques
see Section 3.2

→ Socio-cultural animation
see Glossary



So far the use of the term "Kulturvermittlung" in the open-ended meaning described above has been fairly specific to German-speaking Switzerland. In Germany and Austria the term "kulturelle Bildung" (cultural education), in which the aspects of learning and education are more pronounced, has become more prevalent as an umbrella term, though increasingly one hears the word "Kulturvermittlung" in those countries as well. There are also terms which demarcate activities based on their setting or genre: "Museums-pädagogik" (museum education) applies to Kulturvermittlung-type of work in any type of museum; "Kunstvermittlung" (essentially arts mediation outside of museum education contexts) with a focus on transmitting knowledge about contemporary art, music, theatre, dance or literature; and "Wissenschaftsvermittlung" (science education and engagement activities).