

1.3 English terminology

There is no umbrella term in general use in English-speaking countries or regions which corresponds closely to → *Kulturvermittlung* or → *médiation culturelle*. In legal English and in the area of social affairs, “mediation” is associated with conflict resolution, “cultural mediation” specifically with interpreting and negotiating activities in the context of migration. While artists and educators increasingly find themselves mediating between artistic and social contexts, there has been no widespread adoption of “cultural mediation” in this context. The term “art mediation” does appear in international English (“Global English” or → *Globish*), as a literal translation of “Kunstvermittlung” or “médiation culturelle” – for example, Manifesta, a European biennial of contemporary art, calls its arts education programme “Art Mediation” and the persons who work in it → *mediators*. However, in this context, “art” generally connotes visual art (and its multi-disciplinary off-shoots) and not other cultural fields of practice.

“Education” is the prevailing term used in institutions in all branches of the arts to identify programmes intended to transmit knowledge and promote engagement with the arts: the terms opera education, gallery education, museum education, dance education and concert education are in common usage. Of late one occasionally sees the word “learning” appearing alongside “education” or even replacing it in this type of context. Many institutions prefer “learning” because people associated it less with the idea of formal instruction and more with the process of knowledge production and acquisition. Both terms, “education” and “learning”, communicate that pedagogical and didactic issues are of central importance for the field of activities, more forcefully than the German “Vermittlung” or the French “médiation” does. However, neither “learning” nor “education” sufficiently describe the work of cultural and social negotiation that is commonplace in the work of arts education outside of exclusive work in the formal education sector nor the possibility for creative expression or commitment to democratization alluded to by the German and French terms.

Areas of overlap between the English terms and marketing, criticism and presentation are less obvious, though in practical terms, the expectations of marketing and education departments frequently coincide. Since the mid 1990s the term “audience development” has been cropping up in connection with education projects and programmes aimed primarily at reaching broader audiences and increasing audience numbers. The emergence of that term is associated with a policy debate about whether and how cultural institutions should become more visitor-oriented. Projects and programmes involving cooperation with schools, social institutions or other organizations in this context are often referred to as “outreach” activities.

One recent phenomenon is the use of “participation” or “participation manager” as a professional field and → *job description* in cultural institutions.

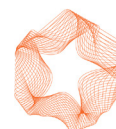
→ *Kulturvermittlung* see Text 1.1

→ *Médiation culturelle* see Text 1.2

→ *Globish* see Glossary

→ *Mediators* <http://manifesta.org/network/manifesta-art-mediation> [14.6.2012]

→ *Job description* http://www.birminghamopera.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=59:participation-manager&catid=24:latest-news&Itemid=31&Itemid=0 [21.2.2013]



This is symptomatic of the tendency towards active audience involvement in the production of art.

Since the 1960s, the term “community art”, or the analogous “community dance”, “community theatre” or “community music”, has been applied to projects in which artists work with the residents of one part of a city or with one particular interest group within the population, or projects in which amateurs organize and engage in artistic activities. However, unlike the term “participation” introduced by cultural institutions more recently, community art has historically been based on a deliberate policy of dissociating itself from “high culture” and its institutions.

Projects by artists with a strong cultural-mediation dimension are of growing significance, and have been since, again, the 1960s. In the early years, such projects tended to be of the “artist in schools” variety, but over the past five decades artists have developed a wide variety of mixed forms involving artistic, educational and social-activism activities, which, depending on their focus and emphasis, have been termed “new genre public art” (Lacy 1994), “socially engaged art” (Heguera 2011), “relational art” (Borriaud 2002) or “dialogical art” (Kester 2004 and 2011). Although these activities may not be seen by the artists themselves as vectors of “education”, they are often solicited and presented by cultural institutions as part of their educational programmes. As a consequence, these projects alter and expand the understanding of education at these institutions: the dividing line between “art” and “education” is obscured, partly consciously, partly incidentally as part of an evolutionary process.

Given this growth of activity extending beyond what is either discipline specific, or traditionally associated with the field of education, the term “cultural mediation” may offer another set of descriptive potentials for those working in the field of mediation in the English speaking context.