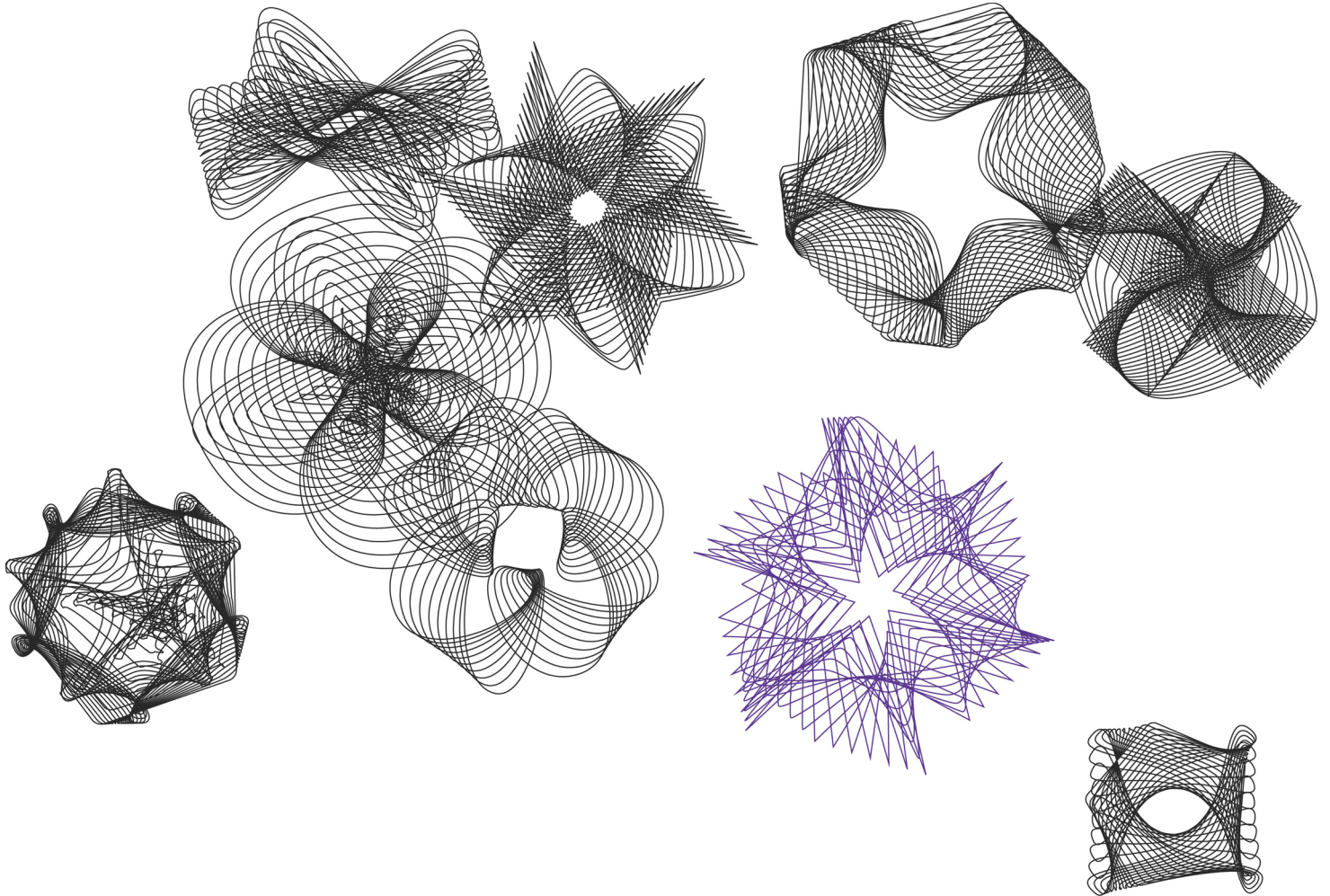


# Time for Cultural Mediation

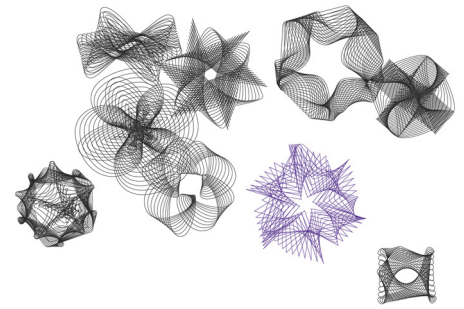
- 1 What is Cultural Mediation?
- 2 Cultural Mediation for Whom?



- 3 What is Transmitted?
- 4 How is Cultural Mediation Carried Out?
- 5 What Does Cultural Mediation Do?
- 6 Cultural Mediation: Why (Not)?
- 7 Who "does" Cultural Mediation?
- 8 Good Cultural Mediation?
- 9 Transmitting Cultural Mediation?

## Time for Cultural Mediation

- 1 What is Cultural Mediation?
- 2 Cultural Mediation for Whom?



## 2.0 Intro

The justification, planning, publicizing and implementation of cultural mediation activities all hinge on the question of whom they are intended for. However, questions of audience definition have consequences for an institution's self-image and its staffing as well. An arts institution which offers only lectures, film series and symposia for experts will staff its cultural mediation department (assuming it has one) with people who have a very different set of professional qualifications than will an institution whose programme is aimed primarily at children and school classes. By the same token, the institutions will publicize their programmes differently, and justify them on different grounds. In the former case, the stated aim will be the advancement of discourse in the field; in the latter, the cultivation of the → next generation of visitors or a more broadly framed educational mission might be cited.

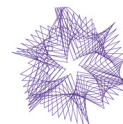
This chapter provides a brief introduction to the concept of the target group, a tool used by most institutions to define their audiences. It explores some of the consequences and critiques of thinking in terms of target groups and puts forth some suggestions for other approaches which might help institutions get past some of the negative aspects. The text for reading at leisure addresses problematic and yet frequently used categorizations attributed to target groups, such as "disadvantaged", "with little exposure to culture" [kulturfern] or "[im]migrant". It points up the dilemma of targeting: the dangers associated with the use of → attributes when defining the group of people to whom an invitation being issued vs. the difficulty of issuing an invitation without addressing it to someone. And finally, the text opens up perspectives for a constructive approach to this opposition.

→ next generation of visitors see Text 5.2

→ attributes see Text 9.2

- 3 What is Transmitted?
- 4 How is Cultural Mediation Carried Out?
- 5 What Does Cultural Mediation Do?
- 6 Cultural Mediation: Why (Not)?
- 7 Who "does" Cultural Mediation?
- 8 Good Cultural Mediation?
- 9 Transmitting Cultural Mediation?

→ [www.kultur-vermittlung.ch/time-for-cultural-mediation](http://www.kultur-vermittlung.ch/time-for-cultural-mediation)



## 2.1 Target group categories

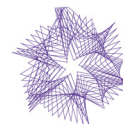
The arts provider tends to be the one who answers the question “who is cultural mediation for”. Only rarely does a group approach a cultural institution or individual artist to → request a cultural mediation programme on its own behalf.

→ request see Text 4.5

→ specialists in the arts and culture  
see Text 5.1

To define the audience or public for their cultural mediation activities, cultural institutions draw on a market research tool, the definition of target groups. Target groups are traditionally defined in terms of socio-demographic traits. Normally, the category of age or generation is the primary focus: children, young people, senior citizens, adults (less common though increasingly) are the most frequently defined target groups. In recent years, early development programmes (e.g. “theatre for toddlers”) have been seen in greater numbers, as have programmes for multiple generations. This last group brings us to another commonly used type of category: one based on societal institutions and groups, such as families, companies or occupations (e.g. managers or teachers). Alternatively, programmes can and often do identify target audiences by way of educational institutions, such as schools, universities and kindergartens. These invitations sometimes carry hidden target-group attributes, such as social status or educational background – an example of this would be offerings aimed at students in vocational programmes or at secondary schools which qualify for university admission. Target groups defined in terms of differentiation from the social majority, e.g. explicitly aimed at lesbians or gay men or at people of a specific ethnic origin, remain quite rare in the German-speaking world. There is a longer tradition of addressing audience groups with specific physical or mental characteristics – e.g. offerings for people who have learning impairments or impaired vision, hearing, or mobility.

A large proportion of the programmes offered by cultural institutions is addressed to an audience made up of → specialists in the arts and culture or people interested in the arts and culture. This group is almost never identified as a target group however. This is a case of an “invisible target group”, whose members are viewed as the obvious or natural users of programmes.

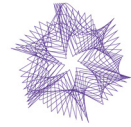


## 2.2 Critiques of target-group thinking

By using a market research tool, a cultural institution is assigning to itself the role of the goods or services provider; the users (institution-goers), thus represent customers or consumers. There are other ways of viewing the role of a cultural institution than one which places it in the market, subject to the whims of supply and demand. One could think of the cultural institution as a cooperation partner, for instance, or as a forum of public debate which is not bound to market logics and thus able to draw on other freedoms and take more risks than a business. Users, for their part, need not necessarily be seen as customers or consumers: they could be discussion partners and active participants in shaping the institution. That would eliminate, or at least put into perspective, inflexible arts mediation offered in the “we produce – you consume” spirit. Thinking in target groups does not prohibit this kind of thinking, but it does not foster it either.

Another critique has its origins in the field of market research itself, which recognizes that definitions of target groups tend to be conservative and oversimplified and to lag behind social dynamics and developments. As they generally lack the resources to conduct regular market analysis, cultural institutions tend to operate with insufficiently sophisticated definitions of target groups. For instance, the target attribute “family” refers to the heterosexual nuclear family, which has long since ceased to be the only mode of life in diversified societies and, indeed, may not even be the prevalent mode. Another example is the category of “seniors”: this target audience might prefer not to be addressed through that category because its members prefer to spend their time in mixed-age groups which share similar interests and educational backgrounds.

Target group definitions are also problematic when they contain attributes which describe deficits. Two attributes used frequently in professional discourse on cultural mediation provide good examples: “bildungsfern” and “kulturfern” [literally “remote from education” or “remote from culture” respectively, in similar English contexts one sees “with low exposure to education/to the arts”]. Inherent in terms like these is the unquestioned assumption that the meaning of “education” and “culture” has already been established, and that everyone knows who has them and who does not. Programmes for target groups defined in this way run the risk of exacerbating the inequalities they are intended to combat. On the other hand, simply ignoring inequalities in circumstances associated with the use of forms of culture and the arts causes people who are disadvantaged to be further excluded. There is no easy way out of this quandary.

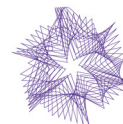


### 2.3 Other approaches to defining audiences

Moving away from the socio-demographic, socio-economic and psychographic attributes that traditionally define target groups, audience groups can be defined on the basis of interests shared by members of a range of conventional target groups. Thus, one can define the audiences invited in terms of the content of the cultural offering in question. For example, a performance with contemporary electronic music might be supplemented by a cultural mediation offering intended specifically for electricians and electric engineers or programmers which is designed to stimulate interaction between people with those professional viewpoints and the artistic approach. Or, one could invite young interior decorators to a Rococo exhibition to discuss current approaches to interior decorating and then take that further in a workshop based on the formal language of Rococo.

These examples point to the possibility of an imaginative approach to the target-group concept that plays with pre-defined categories. Cultural mediation can try to call preconceived notions into question or reinterpret and refresh them, just as the arts themselves do. Offerings that are unconventional – which do not quite fit with the self-image of the institution – are often those which generate the most attention.

A cultural institution can also open itself in other ways to active exchange with the surrounding community and develop programmes for the people who live or work there. It can also identify a problem in the community and use its cultural mediation programme to take a stance on that problem. This is another way to reach new users and co-campaigners within a local community – for instance by making common cause with activists working to improve living conditions in their district, who may initially have seen a cultural institution primarily as a factor contributing towards increased rents and evictions.



## 2.4 Cultural mediation for the institution's continuing development and renewal

Recently, there has been discussion of an enlarged role for cultural mediation. The aim is no longer (only) to expand access to cultural production to various new audiences. Now, the audiences themselves are being seen as possessors of knowledge essential to the development both of institutions and of art-making. Seen in this light, cultural mediation becomes a forum for exchange and interaction. The roles of teacher and learner slip their moorings.

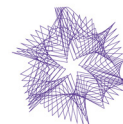
For example, the cultural mediation project with local residents proposed at the end of Text 2.3 entailed the possibility that the cultural institution would be encouraged to analyze its own local socio-economic impacts. The resulting awareness could, in turn, influence the institution's future programming decisions and internal policies – e.g. the institution might decide to hire locally and offer special training programmes for local residents, take an active part in the debates about changes in the district or host artists who address the phenomenon of → gentrification in their work. Or, in another example, a museum might engage in mediation activities intended for → people with impaired vision or mobility and use the knowledge it acquires through them to design accessible exhibitions and select exhibition objects with the needs of those groups of users in mind.

Here we see the understanding of cultural institutions shifting towards → performativity. In this view, institutions are not static but instead are capable of continual re-creation by means of the collective influence of the sum of the actions and perspectives of everyone who does (or does not) use them and / or perform within them: from the institutions' staff to their directors, to the various visitors and those who do not visit, the media reporting on them and the neighbours who walk right past without even seeing them. In recent years, new forms of public participation in social media have considerably encouraged this way of seeing cultural institutions.

→ gentrification see Glossary

→ people with impaired vision or mobility see Text 5.4

→ performativity see Glossary



## **CHANGING PERSPECTIVES** Corinne Doret Baertschi, Fanny Guichard: Two Concrete Examples of Cultural Mediation in Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne

Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne has been offering a cultural mediation programme for various target groups for several years. Classroom performances of “The Miser” and theatrical performances featuring audio descriptions are two examples.

### Classroom Performances of “The Miser”

In 2012, Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne and director Dorian Rossel developed a production of Molière’s “The Miser” for school classrooms. The play is performed in the classroom and the performance, which lasts two school periods, is regularly interrupted by discussion with the classes.

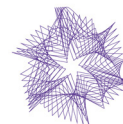
People do not automatically acquire an interest in theatre. There are many preconceptions associated with theatre. By reaching out to pupils and presenting them with a simple, easily digestible form of theatre, we hope to convey to them what is vibrant, direct and universal about theatre without the sometimes intimidating ritual associated with theatre as a social occasion. We believed Molière’s “The Miser” to be well-suited for this due to its humour and its theme of money, which is ubiquitous in our world.

The actors do not only act out scenes from Molière, they also interact directly with the classes. We believe that exposing the tricks of the theatrical trade causes the audience members’ powers of perception and judgement to be engaged differently and that the latter, paradoxically, is of advantage. The set-up in the classroom is almost unobtrusive, with no excessive scenery, costumes or lights, and the theatre unfolds gradually, only through the actors’ performances. The themes of the play provide aspects interesting for classes in subjects like economics, philosophy, sociology, history and psychology, as well as for French classes.

### Theatrical Plays Featuring Audio Description

Aware that disabilities render theatre inaccessible to part of the population, in March of 2011 Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne launched an innovative pilot project: the performance of a theatrical play featuring live audio description<sup>1</sup> for people who are blind or visually impaired. To ensure an appropriate reception for these theatre-goers, the theatre arranged to have a staff of volunteers on hand to greet them upon arrival or even provide transport from their homes and assist them throughout the evening.

People who are blind or visually impaired have an opportunity to move around the stage and touch the objects there to become familiar with the scenery and props before the performance. During the performance,



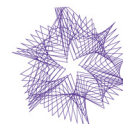
an audio narrator seated at the stage director's desk describes the visual elements of the piece. This description is transmitted via headphones, so it does not disturb the rest of the audience.

Due to the great response the pilot project received, we were able to continue with the programme. Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne now regularly offers plays with audio descriptions. In June of 2012 we invited children who have impaired vision or are blind and their families to a circus performance. A preparatory workshop which they could attend along with other children was also held.

Corinne Doret Baertschi *and* Fanny Guichard *are jointly responsible for public relations at Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne.*

<sup>1</sup> Audio-description is a technique allowing people who are blind or visually impaired to better perceive what is happening visually in films, theatrical plays or exhibition by hearing commentary describing actions as they unfold.





## CHANGING PERSPECTIVES Anina Jendreyko: Who is Foreign? Or, on the Art of Dissolving One's Target Group

The project → *fremd?!* [foreign?!] runs in Basel districts where social diversity has long been an aspect of daily life. The project concentrates on theatrical productions with young people between the ages of 12 and 15. It is tied to the classroom community and thus to the institution of the school. At the end of each 7-month rehearsal phase, five public performances are given in a Basel theatre. The work is led by theatre professionals, actors and actresses, musicians and dancers, representing a range of social and cultural backgrounds.

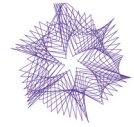
→ "*fremd?!*" <http://www.projektfremd.ch> [20.3.2013]

→ *inequalities* see Text 2.2

Clearly defining the target group at which the project "fremd?!" is aimed is part and parcel of the project. Because it is based in the field of interculturality, "fremd?!" has been accused of exacerbating the → *inequalities* it is intended to combat. Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that the project's name, "foreign?!", already casts doubt on the possibility of a clear target-group definition. The question mark and exclamation mark communicate the project's awareness of the ambivalence associated with these attributes and that it examines them with a critical eye.

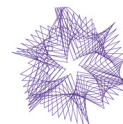
Usually the ambiguities of the project's name become clear during the first meeting with the young participants. The participants themselves do not identify with the theme of migration or the potentially derogatory attribute associated with it. The project "fremd?!" works with a target group which must first discover itself as such.

The impetus for "fremd?!" came from an individual rather than a cultural institution. With the eyes of someone returning home from foreign parts, I became aware quite quickly that Basel had failed to respond appropriately to the cultural diversity which had long been a part of daily life in its schools. Much was (and is) seen as problematic; having a native language other than the usual one was viewed as a deficit. I met classes in which as many as 15 native languages were spoken. Taking this diversity as a starting point, I launched an artistic process using the media of theatre, music and dance. Over the years, the idea underlying "fremd?!" has crystallized: by focusing on diversity of cultures rather than on migration one can expand the cultural landscape, open it up for new content and styles. The project "fremd?!" avails itself of the concept of transculturality, i.e. the mutual interpenetration of cultures. One could say that "fremd?!" took target-group thinking



as its launch point, and moved from there to its own ideological target: the dissolution of the target group.

*Anina Jendreyko is an actress and director. She returned to Switzerland in 2006, having lived for many years in Turkey and Greece. After returning to Basel, she initiated the transcultural theatre project "fremd?!", which now has over a dozen participating theatre arts professionals, and serves as its artistic director.*



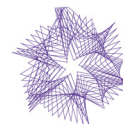
## **CHANGING PERSPECTIVES** Nadia Keckeis, Jeanne Pont: Disability, Culture and Cultural Mediation as a Chain Reaction

As one of the partner projects of Pro Helvetia's "Arts and Audiences Programme", the City and Canton of Geneva in collaboration with Comité franco-genevois [CRFG: French-Geneva Regional Committee] carried out a range of activities addressing the theme "Cultural Mediation, Arts and Disability". The project rattled the preconceptions of the participating cultural institutions and pointed to new ways of doing things.

To make cultural institutions accessible to people with disabilities is to uphold the democratic principle of equal opportunity. In Switzerland this principle is anchored in the Federal Act on the Elimination of Discrimination against People with Disabilities (BehiG 2002).

Taking specific cognitive capacities and behaviours of people with disabilities into account dramatically disrupts established ways of doing things. The more so because people with disabilities do not constitute a uniform group and because the requirements associated with some disabilities can conflict with those of others. A disability can be permanent or temporary; the range of possible disabilities is very large and extremely diverse. In Switzerland more than 1.4 million people live with a disability, i.e. 20% of the population.

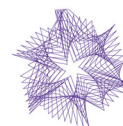
Taking accessibility into account when designing a cultural project creates an opportunity to rethink the encounter with the audience. The cultural mediator is not the only one responsible for this process: the entire cultural institution is involved, and interdependencies are created. The cultural mediator must adapt their cognitive approach to the cultural subject-matter, or even change it entirely, and in doing so react flexibly to particular rhythms and behaviours. The communications officer's job is to ensure that communication tools used are compatible with the aids and appliances used by people with sensory impairments or impaired motor function. The set designer has to make sure that the setting is accessible; people with reception duties have to have basic skills in non-verbal communication and assisting people who are blind. Everyone has to be ready to see situations through another person's eyes, demonstrate creativity and put aside any fear of trying new things. One has no option but to listen to what the other person has to say, whether the speaker is a visitor or another staff member.



No project can be realized without doing some basic analysis of the socio-cultural profile of the target groups or of their relationship to the cultural environment. And it is here that working within networks is so important, because the input of people directly affected is crucial to the ability to accommodate all aspects of their particular disability. This means that the target group itself acts as a co-designer of a specific cultural offering.

The experiments carried out in the project “Cultural Mediation, Arts and Disability” demonstrated that the change of perspective associated with examining both access to venues of culture and subject-matter can result in the creation of essential new forms of cultural mediation from which everyone can benefit.

*Nadia Keckeis is the Deputy Director of the Cultural Service of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports of the Republic and Canton of Geneva. Jeanne Pont is the Cultural Attaché of the City of Geneva, Cultural Promotion Service of the Department of Culture and Sports responsible for the development and / or coordination of innovative multi-discipline cultural mediation projects, development of tools for surveys on the arts and culture target groups and practices of the arts and culture.*



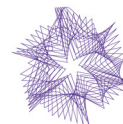
## **CHANGING PERSPECTIVES** Cultural Mediation Working Group, Pro Helvetia: Cultural Mediation for Whom?

One aspect of cultural mediation projects is that they tend to work with pre-defined target groups. Therefore those involved in promoting such projects need to take a position on the target-group question.

Pro Helvetia does not mention any specific target groups in its funding criteria for cultural mediation projects; instead, it speaks only in terms of aiming the cultural mediation projects at an audience. The choice of this very broad term “audience” was deliberate, and it was intended to leave the question of target group primarily up to the mediators or project directors.

The choice of a specific target group has implications for how the project is targeted, what cultural mediation methods are used, whether expert assistance will be required and, if so, what type. One of the questions Pro Helvetia considers in its qualitative evaluation is whether the project takes the specific requirements of a particular target group into account and whether it has the relevant expertise available (e.g. young people with migrant backgrounds, people with impaired vision, etc.) In Pro Helvetia’s view, a thoughtful approach to target groups is one of the qualities that high quality cultural mediation demonstrates. One indication of such an approach is the involvement of a project’s participants in its development; another is the use of innovative formats which integrate the relevant specialist knowledge about the target group selected.

Pro Helvetia’s interdisciplinary Cultural Mediation Working Group *was responsible for developing the promotion criteria within the framework of its Arts and Audiences Programme.*



## FOR READING AT LEISURE Working in a Field of Tensions 2: Targeting and the Paradox of Recognition

*“Like any social project, the project of recognition overall and specific projects of recognition individually have to be understood in relation to the specific ways they relate to systems of power. In the moment it manifests itself as a demand or intention, social recognition excludes [someone].”*

(Mecheril 2000)

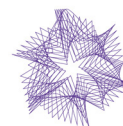
As discussed in Text 1.RL, one motivation for cultural mediation that has long been felt is the demand that the arts be accessible to all members of a society as a common good. In recent decades, publicly funded cultural institutions have come under growing pressure to demonstrate their achievements in this respect in terms of visitor numbers and broadly based audiences. Over the same period, competition with other offerings in the leisure and educational sector has heated up. One result is that cultural institutions, even those for whom democratization is not necessarily a priority, have adopted a → visitor-oriented approach and expanded their cultural mediation programmes to target specific groups, with the aim of expanding their audiences. In this context, institutions focus on groups within society which are not represented in their usual audiences; groups which are thought to require an active invitation. The sections of the population at issue possess relatively little → cultural and economic capital and are thus viewed from a privileged position as “disadvantaged”, [bildungsfern, having little exposure to education].

The targeting of these groups by cultural institutions entails a field of tensions which the scholar Paul Mecheril, an expert in issues of education and migration, calls the “paradox of recognition”, with reference to Hegel (→ Mecheril 2000). On the one hand, targeting of this kind is, allegedly at least, intended to result in the elimination of discrimination, or at least open up the possibility of eliminating it. On the other hand though, targeting implies an identification and thus a definition of the persons targeted as being different, “the other”, and as a consequence, not as equals. The identifications themselves, for their part, are neither random nor neutral: they are made from the points of view and in the interests of those who do the targeting. Thus they serve not only to create the “other”, but also to confirm the self as the standard to be aspired to. The terms “low exposure to education” or “bildungsfern” [trans. literally: “remote from education”], for instance, beg the question of how education can be defined in a way which allows people to be characterized as being located at distance from it. The latter term, “bildungsfern”, crops up often in the German-language debate about the use of culture and the arts and it refers (usually tacitly) to a lack of affinity with the recognized, bourgeois educational canon.<sup>1</sup> “Bildungsfern” is also used as a label placed on one group

→ visitor-oriented see Glossary

→ cultural and economic capital see Glossary entry on Capital, forms of

→ Mecheril 2000 [http://www.forum-interkultur.net/uploads/tx\\_textdb/22.pdf](http://www.forum-interkultur.net/uploads/tx_textdb/22.pdf) [14.10.2012]; see Resource Pool MFV0201.pdf



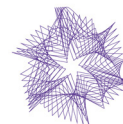
by another group of people who assume that the education they possess would be also beneficial for other people. Seen in this way, the “equality” being aimed at in the context of this and many other forms of targeting appears to be less the elimination of discrimination than the right (or the duty?) to assimilate to those doing the targeting. In the discussion about access to the job market, “bildungsfern” describes a person who has not undergone certified training or earned school leaving certificates. The scholar Erich Ribolits, an expert in the philosophy and practice of education, objects to this use, pointing out that “education” does not mean job market compatibility and suggests an alternative understanding of educated as having “the ability [...] to hold one’s own vis-à-vis the constraints in the system that result from existing power structures”. People “educated” in this sense would “oppose the totalitarian orientation of life geared at optimally successful employment and consumption” and see “nature as more than just an object to be exploited and other people as more than competitors” (→ [Ribolits 2011](#)). From this perspective, one would be forced to consider the majority of the population to be “remote from education”, according to Ribolits. He points out, though, that people who exhibit the relevant attitudes can be found in a very broad range of groups in society and that there is no causal association between a high-level school or vocational degree or bourgeois conceptions of culture and those attitudes. In Ribolits’ view, his concept of education might even allow the knowledge and skills possessed by people with little cultural or economic capital (who as a result have an enhanced ability to improvise and subvert) to be interpreted as the mark of an educated elite.

The terms “bildungsfern”, [low exposure to education] and their ilk are often used to identify target groups, but they are never used explicitly to communicate with them, as it is unlikely that anyone would feel that they were being addressed in a favourable light with such terms. The same does not apply to another form of address which is no less problematic and ever more common: “immigrants and their families” or, in EU-speak, “people with migrant backgrounds”. In the first decade of the 21st century (more precisely: since the attack on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001), the question of the position and principles forming the basis for the activities of cultural institutions in the → [migration society](#) has taken on great importance, as a great many projects, studies, handouts and conferences have borne out.<sup>2</sup> Targeting of people with “migrant backgrounds” by individuals and institutions engaged in cultural mediation – associated in no small degree to funding policy requirements – fails to reflect the enormous diversity and complexity of identity constructs in a migration society. This is because such programmes are targeted at a very specific group, which is marked ethnically and nationally as “other”. Specifically: cultural mediation programmes are not intended to bring high-earning → [expats](#) into the art world, they are aimed at people “remote from

→ [Ribolits 2011](#) <http://www.gew-berlin.de/blz/22795.php> [16.8.2012]; see Resource Pool MFV0202.pdf

→ [migration society](#) see Glossary

→ [expats](#) see Glossary



education” who have “migrant backgrounds”. Mecheril and other authors make it clear that this form of identification constitutes a “culturalization” of structural and social injustices. Rather than examining the effects of social, legal and political discrimination caused by the structures of the → majority society, the pre-defined cultural differences attributed to the people who are invited become the most important model for explaining their absence in the institutions. Thus it is hardly surprising that people are increasingly loathe to be addressed with such terms (Mysorekar 2007), an issue explored for instance, in a workshop held by → Tiroler Kulturinitiative [Tirolean Initiative for Culture] in the autumn of 2011 under the title “Anti-racism and Cultural Work”:<sup>3</sup>

In ‘critical’ or anti-racist contexts there is a fairly solid consensus that the focus of public debates about immigration should shift their focus from the immigrants to society’s problems: they should address the education system’s ineffectiveness and racist structures rather than speaking of immigrants with little exposure to education; mechanisms which result in exclusion rather than immigrants who exploit the social system, etc. Moreover, the debate on immigration has shifted dramatically to concentrate on immigrants from Islamic countries: whereas a few years ago people spoke about immigrants whose parents or grandparents were Turkish, now they speak about Muslim immigrants.

Questions based on the fact that cultural work shapes discourse:

- What contributions does free cultural work make to the debate on immigration?
- How can one do anti-racist cultural work without getting into in the current immigration debate?
- Is it possible to submit grant proposals, e.g., without getting caught up in this debate?
- Can one avoid “migrant” \*? Or: AntiRa work beyond identity attributions.

In addition to these questions, the workshop will address the following issues:

- How do people deal with forms of racism within and outside of their own activities in independent cultural work?
- Is there a link between anti-racism work and resource allocation?
- What criteria are used to define racism?”

A petition entitled → Stopp mit dem falschen Gerede vom Migrationshintergrund [Cut the Bogus Talk About Migrant Backgrounds] was started in 2012. It is rare to find host institutions which entertain the idea of creating, or rather, exhibit willingness to create space at the level of their programme design or job activities for the people they are targeting. Switzerland is not the only country where key positions in cultural institutions are filled almost exclusively by members of the → white majority.<sup>4</sup> Here we see another dimension of the paradox: targeting results in the creation of

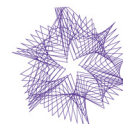
→ majority society see Glossary

→ Tiroler Kulturinitiative <http://www.tki.at/tkiweb/tkiweb?page=ShowArticle&service=external&sp=I363> [26.8.2012]; see Resource Pool MFV0203.pdf

→ Stopp mit dem falschen Gerede vom Migrationshintergrund <https://www.openpetition.de/petition/online/stopp-dem-falschen-gerede-vom-migrationshintergrund> [25.8.2012]; see Resource Pool MFV0204.pdf

→ white see Glossary





“other”, i.e. the manifestation of inequalities, but it is only by actively tackling these categories of inequality that existing inequalities can be redressed. Citing Simone de Beauvoir<sup>5</sup>, Mecheril (2000) emphasizes that pretending that differences do not exist cannot serve as a rational way of dealing with the paradox of recognition. Ignoring categories contributes to the continued existence of discrimination no less than codifying them does. Mecheril argues that although it is vital to avoid reducing people to affiliations, we must respect the human need to differentiate oneself and define one's position by way of affiliations. This is in no small part due to the fact that self-identifying through membership of a group can represent a form of psychological and physical self-preservation in the sense of → strategic essentialism (Spivak 1988). Moreover, identifications are the product of society as a whole: immigrant artists face expectations that their artistic output will relate to their ethnicity or origin (→ Terkessidis 2011). Reference to one's ethnic origin is the most frequent occasion for categorization created by the majority society and one that cannot be avoided. → People of colour are forced to answer the question “where are you from” throughout their lives, regardless of whether they hear it as expressing polite interest in themselves as individuals or as insulting and annoying. Simply responding “Switzerland”, “Bern”, or “Mummy's tummy” is very seldom taken as a satisfactory answer by the asker (→ Winter Sayilir 2011; → Kilomba 2006).

The absence of a way out is one of the defining features of a paradox. Contradictions are inevitably entailed in any endeavour to create fair access in the cultural field, in every effort to combat the creation of minorities, discrimination or exclusion through education. Yet some ways of coping with these contradictions are more appealing and better informed (more contemporary, more appropriate) than others. Mecheril proposes “communicative reflexivity” as a professional approach for acting within the paradox:

*“Professional activities and structures are scrutinized to determine the extent to which they contribute to exclusion of the “other” and / or a reproductive creation of the ‘other’. [...] Communicative reflexivity – as the medium in which an education of recognition can develop [...] also means that change-oriented consideration of conditions impeding or producing the other should characterize a communication process which [...] should involve the ‘others’ [...]”* (Mecheril 2000, p. 11).

Thus Mecheril's communicative reflexivity entails not only a capacity to analyze one's own vocabulary, structures and courses of action, but also connecting with the people being targeted to analyze and take action together. What implications does this have for cultural mediation invitation policies i.e. if the aim goes beyond generating higher audience numbers (while having as little impact as possible on the arts and their institutions), and the creation of fair access is a declared objective? First, it becomes clear that the language of target-group communications is insufficient for

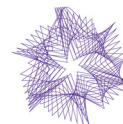
→ strategic essentialism see Glossary

→ Terkessidis 2011 <http://www.freitag.de/autoren/der-freitag/im-migrations-hintergrund>; see Resource Pool MFV0206.pdf

→ people of colour see Glossary

→ Winter Sayilir 2011 <http://www.woz.ch/1131/antirassismus-training-fuer-europa/wo-kommst-du-her-aus-mutti> [16.8.2012]; see Resource Pool MFV0207.pdf

→ Kilomba 2006 [http://www.migration-boell.de/web/diversity/48\\_608.asp](http://www.migration-boell.de/web/diversity/48_608.asp) [16.8.2012]; see Resource Pool MFV0208.pdf



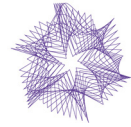
an approach based on communicative reflexivity. If we agree that reflection and cooperation with the people being targeted are basic prerequisites for the creation of equity of access in the artistic field, then the compilation of empirical knowledge about predefined groups can no longer suffice as a basis on which to design programmes for those groups. Under these conditions, the target audiences are no longer the potential consumers for a cultural offering: they are partners in a collectively shaped process of change which will not leave the self-image of those offering the cultural mediation undisturbed.

The audience development model of the “arts ambassadors” (→ [Arts Council England 2003](#)) proposed by Arts Council England is an example of a concept which builds on the approach described here. Arts ambassadors are people representative of local population groups that are of interest to an institution which wants to diversify its audiences. Arts ambassadors work to spread information about an institution's programmes by word of mouth. More importantly for this discussion though, they also communicate the perspectives and needs of the interest groups in question back to the institution. For the cultural institution, the idea is to use an approach to consumer research based on → [action-research](#) methods to acquire information about the interests and needs of the population group in question and to develop appropriate offerings within the framework of this consultation. The Arts Council notes that the approach can best reach its full potential when the relationship between the representatives of the institution and its ambassadors is based on an exchange of knowledge and information in which both parties are equally interested in what the other has to say. Arts ambassadors are representatives of their interest groups or social interest groups, and in the best case, they have an impact on practices in the artistic field. This form of cooperation concentrates on the needs of the interest group in question and thus on the potentials for changing the institution: “The ambassador approach requires commitment and can even bring about fundamental changes in the host organisation” (Arts Council 2003, p. 3). With respect to the function of the art ambassador as a representative of the institution to the outside world, the Arts Council expressly recommends that ambassadors be hired, i.e. provided with guaranteed remuneration and social security. The Council describes the use of volunteers, which only serves the purposes of stabilizing or reinforcing existing institutional conditions and the institution's self-image, as inadequate from the standpoint of reciprocity.

This last statement is intended to help avoid another problem that frequently arises, the exploitation of the knowledge and abilities of “others” for the continued existence and edification of cultural institutions in exchange for compensation which consists only of the symbolic value the institution has to offer. Thus, although the ambassador approach is more

→ [Arts Council England 2003](#)  
[http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication\\_archive/a-practical-guide-to-working-with-arts-ambassadors](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/a-practical-guide-to-working-with-arts-ambassadors) [12.10.2012];  
see Resource Pool MFV0209.pdf

→ [action-research](#) see Glossary



strongly rooted in the marketing area than in education, one key aspect of educational reflexivity is crucial to its success: knowledge about the → power to harm (→ Castro Varela, undated) which cultural institutions or even cultural mediators possess due to their symbolic capital, and a responsible approach to dealing with this power. To avoid paternalism, communicative reflexivity is again called for: working with the targeted population to identify mutual interests and clearly stipulate who is to benefit how from the collaboration. In addition, it is necessary to ensure that there is always space in which to forge this understanding and address conflicts – space for the “ability to let yourself be confused” (Castro Varela undated, p. 3). In this model, reflecting about power also leads to the questions of how and by whom the representatives of the community in question (who will serve as the interface with the cultural institution) are selected and what effects the selection process will have on the collaboration.

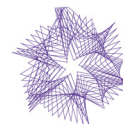
This approach does not sidestep the paradox of recognition, described above, which requires an identification and thus a definition: some categorization must take place in order to identify a group to contact about working together. Through the forms of address it chooses to use, though, a cultural institution can communicate that it is actively grappling with the problems of categorization and the definition of identity positions which are associated with defining target groups. This starts with the vocabulary it chooses to use or not to use. These choices can make it clear that the institution is aware of the dangers of → essentialization. A programme for “people with experience of life”, for instance, addresses anyone who identifies that way; the constellations which result might be more interesting than would be the case if only “seniors” were to participate. Attempts to reach people in terms that replace common categorizations with unexpected categories take a similar approach. For instance, potential interest groups could be invited on the basis of programme or cultural mediation content, rather than commonplace demographic traits (ethnicity, age, marital status), as was the case in the cultural mediation projects of the exhibition *documenta 12* in Kassel, including one in which people who are confronted with death in their professional lives were invited to a workshop about the motif of “bare life” in the exhibition (Gülec et al. 2009, p. 111 ff.).

A cultural institution which sees itself less as a producer of a programme to be marketed and more as one stakeholder helping to shape a collective endeavour – not only in the artistic field, but also in its local community – will need to find forms of address that go beyond a target-group orientation and aim at initiating cooperation between the institution and various different publics. The questions from the *Tiroler Kulturinitiative* workshop, cited above, clearly suggest that the most consistent and effective way in which an institution can cope with the targeting paradox in the case of “migrant background” is to shift the focus away from “immigrant

→ power to harm see Glossary

→ Castro Varela O. D. [http://www.graz.at/cms/dokumente/10023890\\_415557/0a7c3e13/Interkulturelle%20Vielfalt,%20Wahrnehmung%20und%20Selbstreflexion.pdf](http://www.graz.at/cms/dokumente/10023890_415557/0a7c3e13/Interkulturelle%20Vielfalt,%20Wahrnehmung%20und%20Selbstreflexion.pdf) [12.10.2012]; see Resource Pool MFV0210.pdf

→ essentialization see Glossary



others” and on to the cultural institution itself as part of a migration society, to the structural mechanisms of exclusion in it and to its potential for transformation. From there the cultural institution can move on to its role as a stakeholder in society that identifies with the concerns of the people it is approaching rather than expecting them to adapt to suit it or trying to inject a bit of “colour” into itself by way of the “otherness” of the people it invites.

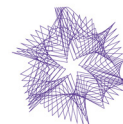
1 Here, one example among many, published while this text was being written: “Thus some German-speaking music conservatories offer training and continuing training programmes in music education designed to prepare [students] for the various activity fields for target audiences from young to old, from “locally born” to “post-migrant” and from *bildungsnah* to *bildungsfern* [italics added, low to high exposure to education]” (Wimmer 2012).

2 A few examples: *Conferences*: “inter.kultur.pädagogik”, Berlin 2003; “Interkulturelle Bildung – Ein Weg zur Integration?”, Bonn 2007; “Migration in Museums: Narratives of Diversity in Europe”, Berlin 2008; “Stadt Museum Migration”, Dortmund 2009; “MigrantInnen im Museum”, Linz 2009; “Interkultur. Kunstpädagogik Remixed”, Nürnberg 2012; *Research / development*: “Creating Belonging”, Zurich University of the Arts, funded by SNF 2008–2009; “Migration Design. Codes, Identitäten, Integrationen”, Zurich University of the Arts, funded by KTI 2008–2010; “Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue”, EU project 2007–2009; “Der Kunstcode – Kunstschulen im Interkulturellen Dialog”, Bundesverband der Jugendkunstschulen und Kulturpädagogischen Einrichtungen e. V. (BJKE), funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research 2005–2008; “Museum und Migration: Kinder und Jugendliche mit Migrationshintergrund als Zielgruppe von Museen”, Linzer Institut für qualitative analysen (LIQuA)[Linz Institute of Quality Analysis], on behalf of the City of Linz and the Province of Upper Austria, Department of Social Affairs and Institute for Art and Folk Culture 2009–2010. *Publications and handouts*: Handout on the Swiss Day of Museums 2010; Allmanritter, Siebenhaar 2010; Centre for Audience Development of FU Berlin: Migranten als Publika von öffentlichen deutschen Kulturinstitutionen – Der aktuelle Status Quo aus Sicht der Angebotsseite, 2009, → <http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/v/zad/news/zadstudie.html> [16.4.2012].

3 The workshop was led by Vlatka Frketic.

4 “People belonging to the majority” used in this text refers to Swiss citizens of any language region.

5 “To decline to accept such notions as the eternal feminine, the black soul, the Jewish character, is not to deny that Jews, Negroes and women exist today – this denial does not represent a liberation for those concerned, but rather a flight from reality.” Beauvoir 1953, p. 14.



## Literature and Links

The text is based in parts on the previously published paper:

- Mörsch, Carmen: "Über Zugang hinaus. Nachträgliche einführende Gedanken zur Arbeitstagung 'Kunstvermittlung in der Migrationsgesellschaft'", in: IAE, IfA, Ifkik (pub.): Kunstvermittlung in der Migrationsgesellschaft / Reflexionen einer Arbeitstagung, Berlin: series ifa-Edition Kultur und Außenpolitik, 2011, pp. 10 – 19

Further reading:

- Almanritter, Vera; Siebenhaar, Klaus (eds.): Kultur mit allen! Wie öffentliche deutsche Kultureinrichtungen Migranten als Publikum gewinnen, Berlin: B & S Siebenhaar, 2010
- Arts Council, England: A Practical Guide to Working with Arts Ambassadors, London: Arts Council, 2003; [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication\\_archive/a-practical-guide-to-working-with-arts-ambassadors](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/a-practical-guide-to-working-with-arts-ambassadors) [12.10.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0209.pdf
- Castro Varela, Maria do Mar: Interkulturelle Vielfalt, Wahrnehmung und Selbstreflexion aus psychologischer Sicht (not dated); [http://www.graz.at/cms/dokumente/10023890\\_415557/0a7c3e13/Interkulturelle%20Vielfalt,%20Wahrnehmung%20und%20Selbstreflexion.pdf](http://www.graz.at/cms/dokumente/10023890_415557/0a7c3e13/Interkulturelle%20Vielfalt,%20Wahrnehmung%20und%20Selbstreflexion.pdf) [12.10.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0210.pdf
- Gülec, Ayse et al.: Kunstvermittlung 1: Arbeit mit dem Publikum, Öffnung der Institution, Zürich: Diaphanes 2009
- Kilomba, Grada: "Wo kommst du her?", in: Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Dossier Schwarze Community in Deutschland (not dated); [http://www.migration-boell.de/web/diversity/48\\_608.asp](http://www.migration-boell.de/web/diversity/48_608.asp) [16.8.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0208.pdf
- Mecheril, Paul: Anerkennung des Anderen als Leitperspektive Interkultureller Pädagogik? Perspektiven und Paradoxien, text of lecture given at the IDA-NRW 2000 intercultural workshop; [http://www.forum-interkultur.net/uploads/tx\\_textdb/22.pdf](http://www.forum-interkultur.net/uploads/tx_textdb/22.pdf) [14.10.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0201.pdf
- Mysorekar, Sheila: "Guess my Genes – Von Mischlingen, MiMiMis und Multiracials", in: Kien Nghi Ha et al. (Hg.): re/visionen – Postkoloniale Perspektiven von People of Color auf Rassismus, Kulturpolitik und Widerstand in Deutschland, Münster: Unrast, 2007, pp. 161 – 170
- Ribolits, Erich: "Wer bitte ist hier bildungsfern? Warum das Offensichtliche zugleich das Falsche ist", in: HLZ, Zeitschrift der GEW Hessen, no. 9/10, 2011; <http://www.gew-berlin.de/blz/22795.htm> [12.10.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0202.pdf
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty: "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in: Nelson, C.; Grossberg L. (eds.), Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988, pp. 271 – 313
- Terkessidis, Mark: "Im Migrationshintergrund", in: der freitag 14.1.2011; <http://www.freitag.de/autoren/der-freitag/im-migrationshintergrund> [15.2.2013], see Resource Pool MFV0206.pdf
- Wimmer, Constanze: "Kammermusik-Collage oder Babykonzert – von den vielfältigen Wegen der Musikvermittlung", in: KM. Das Monatsmagazin von Kulturmanagement Network. Kultur und Management im Dialog, no. 67, May 2012, p. 15; <http://www.kulturmanagement.net/downloads/magazin/km1205.pdf> [25.8.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0211.pdf
- Winter Sayilir, Sara: "'Wo kommst du her?' – 'Aus Mutti'. Antirassismustraining für Europa", in: WOZ Die Wochenzeitung, no. 31, 14. August 2011; see Resource Pool MFV0207.pdf

Links:

- Petition "Stopp mit dem falschen Gerede vom Migrationshintergrund": <https://www.openpetition.de/petition/online/stopp-dem-falschen-gerede-vom-migrationshintergrund> [25.8.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0204.pdf
- TKI, Tiroler Kulturinitiativen/IG Kultur Tirol: <http://www.tki.at/tkiweb/tkiweb?page=ShowArticle&service=external&sp=1363> [25.8.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0203.pdf