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

Recently, there has been discussion of an enlarged role for cultural media-tion. 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 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 pro-posed 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 exhi-bition 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