Time for Cultural Mediation

9.0 Intro

Working together, adolescents and authors from Switzerland wrote texts and then read them aloud in a series of events across the country: the pilot phase of the literature mediation project is over. For those who are responsible for the project, a new phase is beginning, one focused on making people understand the cultural mediation project.

The various groups involved in the project harbour different expectations concerning its documentation: the young participants might like to see their texts published, and receive an album of photographs to remind them of an intense time. The funding source(s) needs a project evaluation written in the style they are accustomed to and applying their criteria, plus an overview of press reports. The institutions which hosted the readings want pictures and short texts which will work well on their websites. The authors might initially express indifference as to how the project is presented, but complain afterwards that their contributions were not adequately acknowledged. Last but not least, the project's designers need documentation demonstrating the success of their approaches to help establish them in their professional field. If, despite the tight budget, they do manage to produce some form of documentation, the variety of differing expectations and needs will result in contradictory presentations of the same project (see the project "Schulhausroman" in Case Study 1).

The texts in this section examine certain important aspects of the documentation of cultural mediation and discuss some of the problems associated with it.

The first section ends with a brief discussion of how cultural mediation is depicted in this publication. The "For Reading at Leisure" text explores the advantages associated with a reflective approach to the challenges posed by the processes of presenting cultural mediation.

9.1 Guiding questions for use in the documentation of cultural mediation

The introduction to this section might create the impression that a coherent and appropriate documentation of cultural mediation is nearly impossible given the variety of interests held by the various stakeholders. In the following we will provide a set of questions intended to guide and encourage a reflective approach to this complexity.

Before preparing materials that are intended to present a project, one should ask oneself about the influence the people or organizations commissioning them have. Does this influence necessitate conformance with a specific style of language, or might one deliberately omit the expected jargon, to offer a compelling contrast? Should certain details be skipped over in the presentation, or is transparency, even with respect to the project's problematic aspects, desired?

To make it easier for readers to get a sense of the project as a whole, certain central facts should be spelled out: What was done, how and by whom – and why? Who was involved? Where and when did the project take place? How long did it last and what phases were involved? How much did it cost and who paid for it?

It is also important to provide information about the conceptual basis of the project, not least because the position of the project's authors should be documented: Which theoretical approaches, cultural and educational policy requirements or good practice examples provided a rationale for the project? Which opened up points of criticism? Why was the project necessary and relevant today? What criteria are being applied to assess its quality?

In addition, the presentation should include a discussion of both the objectives and the results of the project. Did the objectives change over time? If yes, why? Were there any unplanned outcomes? Were the anticipated outcomes achieved?

Since cultural mediation is always about learning, the learning concepts underlying the project should also be discussed. What ideas about learning underlie the concept? What methods were used? Did, for instance, artistic approaches play a role at the methodological level?

One should bear in mind that the images used to document a cultural mediation project (and often used to announce future projects as well) are frequently recorded during the process. Who is responsible for documentation during each project phase should be clarified in advance. Participants or outsiders can serve as documenters. Usually, though, documentation tasks are done by the cultural mediators themselves. This sometimes causes confusion about roles and can lead to overwork, to the detriment of the documentation. There are pros and cons associated with every choice in this regard. An outsider might disturb the process, while pictures created
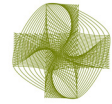
by participants will reflect their perspectives, not necessarily the one needed by the institution (and vice versa).

At this point one should also consider what type of professionalism one wants the documentation to have. Should documentation present the perspectives of the participants and reflect their desires regarding its design, or should it transform the project into a glossy brochure?

Author's rights are another question which must always be clarified: who holds the copyrights for photographs taken, and is the consent of people in photographic material required for its reproduction? Parental consent is always required if the subjects are minors. However both ethical consider-ations and the aspiration to transparency require that participants of any age always be in agreement with the use of their images and the way they relate to the accompanying text.

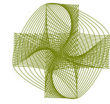## **9.2** Challenges in transmitting cultural mediation

A museum's website promotes its cultural mediation programme. Two images are shown. On the left is one showing an older couple, leaning towards one another and looking at a painting on the wall of the museum. Both man and woman are → _white_, thin, dressed in simple but elegant clothing and very well-groomed. The way the light falls lends an extra shimmer to their silver hair. The picture speaks of cultivation, permanency, bonds between people and bonds between people and art. The link under this picture reads "For Adults". The picture on the right shows a woman in profile, seated at a table in a room with a workshop atmosphere. The lighting is diffuse, probably from a neon source. The woman is overweight; she is wearing a headscarf and a beige coat. Her features, combined with the clothing, suggest that she is an immigrant from Turkey. The way she is seated at the too-low table exaggerates the thickness of her figure. She is unpacking a box with crafts supplies evocative of a kindergarten. The link under the picture says "For Special People". The combination of text and imagery on this webpage is more than simply an announcement of a cultural mediation programme. It is also a narrative about who is seen as the natural museumgoer and who is not expected to be found there. Though perhaps well meant, the categorization of the woman in the coat as a "special person" sets her apart from the "adults". Had the picture's caption had read "an arts mediator prepares for the family workshop", the page would have had quite a different message: it would have spoken about the museum's interest in diversifying its staff. This example effectively illustrates one difficulty associated with the presentation of cultural mediation, in connection with both its promotion and its documentation. Wherever different audiences or interest groups are depicted, implicit attributions and dominant interpretative frameworks inevitably come into play.

However, it is possible to → _address this problem consciously_ – for instance, by having the group of people being depicted collaborate in the documentation and rendering transparent the confrontation with the attributions in the depiction.

Another phenomenon associated with the depiction of cultural mediation is the repetition of a type of imagery which says very little about the process, and thus the actual substance of the cultural mediation work. Laughing or bored children sitting at a crafts table, group photos taken in a museum or theatre space, a circle of people around an individual who is explaining something: imagery like this, used to document cultural mediation for the past century or so, seldom says anything about the social energy or the complexity of the content, let alone the intriguing field of

→ _white_ see Glossary

→ _consciously addressing_ see Text 9. RL

tensions and processes of recognition which take shape during cultural mediation.

On a practical level, it must be noted that usually little in the way of time and staffing resources are available for careful, imaginative documentation of cultural mediation, due to the usually quite tight → *cultural mediation budgets*. Therefore, thus far the image archives of cultural mediation have tended to be fragmentary and spotty – particularly in comparison with the extensive archiving of cultural production.
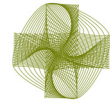
## **9.3** Cultural mediation in this publication

This publication contains very little in the way of documentary pictures or project descriptions. In other words, it does not depict cultural mediation as a practice, in the ordinary sense of that term: as a space for action in which specific, even quite literally corporeal and material practices unfold at the intersection of the arts, education, the sciences and daily life.

Instead, this publication approaches cultural mediation by way of the questions and tensions that arise when people engage with cultural mediation. These "ramifications" of cultural mediation constitute a discourse which is described in this publication.

The graphic design of this publication picks up on the ideas of fields of tension and intertwining, both of which, in the view of the editor, constitute defining aspects of cultural mediation. Spirograph figures are geometrical images, playful, multifaceted and at the same time governed by strict rules. They suggest clarity, like the manual character of this publication.

Things get complicated from there however. The perfect spirograph forms lose their shape, get tangled up, fray, blur, implode. In a complex field shaped by complex and varied interests and histories like cultural mediation, creating order and describing "what is what" can never be more than a snapshot taken from one specific angle. Fortunately so, because that gives us a reason to keep working, keep thinking.

This publication seeks to inspire readers to pick up the frayed ends and reweave them, and thus contribute further toward clarifying – or, when necessary, complicating – this professional field.
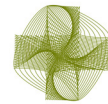
CHANGING PERSPECTIVES   Nicole Grieve: Kuverum's Annual "London to Go" Cultural Mediation Trip

The trip constitutes an inventive response to the question "How should cultural mediation, in all of its polyphony, its tensions and its potential, be shaped?" The trip offers participants an opportunity to immerse themselves in the cultural mediation methods used in London's museums and other cultural facilities, which are doing pioneering work in this area. The annual trip evolved out of a trip to London arranged by Pro Helvetia in 2008 and carried out by → _Kuverum_, an organization founded by Franziska Dürr. Two versions were offered: one, a trip for experienced cultural mediation supported by → _mediamus_; the other, for students in the Kuverum training programme.

The itinerary is designed by Kristen Erdmann, who is active in cultural mediation in the Swiss canton of Aargau. She assigns great priority to close contact with the "key players" in London to facilitate frank and open exchange.

The trip, which is modified to reflect the group of participants, has the following characteristics:
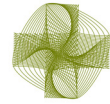– 15 participants from various sectors of cultural mediation
– 5 intensive days
– 10 museums selected for the diversity of their collections, their size and their funding, encompassing a wide spectrum of structural conditions, positions, missions and mediation practices.
– 12 – 15 meetings with experts representing a range of orientations and levels within institutional hierarchies
– includes cultural mediators responsible for general programming, one particular sector, workshops, or supervising volunteer mediators
– addresses 5 types of cultural mediation, which can be combined with one another: programming with marketing-like dimensions, cultural mediation, socio-cultural and digital mediation
– delivered through a programme that rotates between presentations, discussions and workshops
– experienced in a format that provides large scope for mutual exchange, in order to present the various views, reveal tensions and facilitate individualized acquisition of content.

Like the orientation circuit in the world of maps visited during a workshops on → _Visual Literacy and Critical Thinking_ at the British Library, the trip

→ _Kuverum_ http://kuverum.ch/
moduldetails.php?sid=295
[2.1.2013]; http://kuverum.ch/
angebote.php [2.1.2013]

→ _mediamus_ http://www.
mediamus.ch [16.2.2013]

→ _Visual Literacy and Critical
Thinking_ http://www.bl.uk/
learning/tarea/primary/
mapyourworld/maps.html
[2.2.2013]

invites participants to engage actively and critically with the challenges and trends of cultural mediation.

With an accompaniment in French and Italian, this trip represents a national offering for mediators and directors of institutions and cultural funding organizations to expand their horizons or learn more about the diverse field of cultural mediation.

The trip shows that professional cultural mediation does not simplify cultural processes, but rather "disseminates" a way of engaging with continually new experiences and meanings, as Emily Dickinson[1] once described in a poem about the poetic process and its reception:

The Poets light but Lamps —
Themselves — go out —
The Wicks they stimulate
If vital Light

Inhere as do the Suns —
Each Age a Lens
Disseminating their
Circumference —

Nicole Grieve *is responsible for cultural mediation at the Department of Education, Culture and Sports of the Swiss canton of Valais. She served as co-administer of mediamus and is a founding member of Schweizerische Dachverbande für Kultur-vermittlung, the Swiss Association of Cultural Mediation Organizations.*

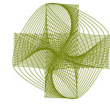1   Emily Dickinson: Poem no. 883, ca. 1865.

CHANGING PERSPECTIVES Sara Smidt: The Art Museum has Become My Power Station

Is arts mediation an art?" That was the title of a conference held in Vienna decades ago. Yes, it is. Cultural mediation is, by its nature, process-oriented: it does not write down pre-existing knowledge and then present it. Quite the contrary, cognitive processes are set into motion only upon engagement with the audience.[1] It is in the nature of the activity that this exchange is not perceptible to external parties. Even when, for instance, a workshop produces tangible outputs, a piece of woven fabric, a drawing or a rehearsed dramatic scene, the most important moments remain ephemeral and invisible.

However it is important that we find ways to present cultural mediation – or should we make do without statements like "the art museum has become my power station"?

We need tangible materials so that professionals can share their experiences and insights with one another. Not everyone should have to invent everything anew every time. Concepts which have proven effective can be modified and re-modified for use in new contexts. Documented cultural mediation is inspirational.[2] Documented cultural mediation also supplies arguments for stakeholders and facilitates resource optimization. To improve structural conditions, we should not argue with numbers but with impacts on people.[3] Then too, documentation is at least equally important as a resonance chamber. People involved in projects can take a look back, make certain specific aspects visible, ponder further, create linkages between what they have learned and their lives and experience the power of creativity.

But how is this to be done? Joy, doubt, inspiration, these are often personal and not intended for publication. Insights are often slow to take shape and can do so without our being aware of it. How is this to be revealed and presented? On the one hand, we could develop the processes in cultural mediation anew every time and enjoy them without having to make anything visible. Enough pixels and paper have been put out there already. On the other hand, we do need trails to follow. For me, there is only one conceivable approach: the trails are an independent element of cultural mediation and take forms which are suited to the subject, people and location. That means that documentation should be part of the planning and concept from the start and resources should be allocated

for it. I sense an enormous difference between projects for which I do this,
or – very often – do not. If we all documented the projects we cherish,
for whatever reason, in an exciting way, the result would be a marvellous
archive that inspires and does not obstruct. Our young professional field
of cultural mediation needs a tailwind in the form of eloquently documen-
ted cultural mediation!

Sara Smidt Bill *lives in Jenaz (GR) and Thun (BE) and is in charge of arts mediation
at Kunstmuseum Thun; she also offers consultancy and training services through her
firm MuseVM Beratung und Ausbildung; Co-president of* → *mediamus, the Swiss
association of cultural mediations in museums, she is also a Lecturer in Certificate of
Advanced Studies in Museum Work Programme at the University of Applied Sciences
HTW Chur*

1   This applies to both face-to-face and digital mediation.
2   C.f. for instance the project database at → http://www.kultur-vermittlung.ch [16.2.2013]
3   More than 15 years ago, a beautifully designed photograph box with quotations from
a wide variety of people involved was created during the first year of the arts mediation pilot
project in Kunsthaus Aarau. It won people over. Since then, arts mediation has established
itself and grown there successfully.
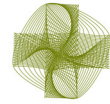
CHANGING PERSPECTIVES Ruth Widmer: Theatre in the Local Shop: Touching People's Everyday Lives with Theatre Education

There are essentially three different strands of theatre mediation: a pedagogical approach to the experience of art (educating through theatre), an instructional approach to art appreciation (educating to appreciate theatre) or a general educational approach to perception using theatre-relevant instruments (cf. Hentschel 2010).

These ways of linking theatre work and education can be put to use anywhere where people gather, to work or spend time. Theatres are one venue, but so are neighbourhood squares and streets, factory buildings available between tenancies, schools, museums, or the shop on the corner.

Theatre mediation often uses space deliberately in a way that is designed to engage the perception of participants subversively and thus encourage reflection and new insights. Thus the space becomes one of the methodological instruments, used for two purposes. One purpose is to cause the person on the other side to become active. The other is to build a bridge, so that I, the initiator and moderator of this cognitive and perceptual process, can enter into a dialogue with the widest variety of people and bring together the most diverse groups to engage in a dialogue about the widest variety of topics.

To mark the 25th anniversary of TheaterFalle [Theatre Trap], we carried out several projects in a series called "Schaufalle in Folgen" [Series of Traps on View], which illustrated the objectives and methods described above. The first project was called "Die Familie lässt bitten" [The Family Invites].[1] The second took place in Kunstmuseum Basel and was called "Die Bürger von Calais sind los" [The Burghers of Calais are unbound].[2]

The title "Die Familie lässt bitten" is a reference to the family of people who have worked in Theaterfalle for the past 25 years, but also to the classic situation at the start of a family festivity and, thirdly, to the venue: the familial atmosphere of a corner shop in a working class district, which is currently caught up in the early stages of a turbulent gentrification. We drew on a variety of methods in order to adequately accommodate and bring to life this multilayered meaning of the term family, and to combine entertainment with stimuli triggering reflection and new insights. The audience received headphones and was able to watch the scenes from outside and inside, some scenes were set in the street, others inside the shop. At times the public was directly drawn into the action. This made it possible for them to experience a shift between being directly involved and an almost purely voyeuristic watching. The production was not based on a play and did not even have a script. Specific themes provided its
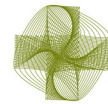
starting point and leitmotif: for instance, the European football championship which underway at the time. The set-up was simple: a man had invited his mates over to watch television but their wives show up instead. However, there were also some other unexpected people among those who really did show up. The circle of audience and the participants expanded to include neighbourhood residents, who joined in spontaneously, out of curiosity, as observers or active participants. We used a somewhat unconventional cooking studio and we broadcasted the evening as a show on Internet radio to encourage this shift between inside and outside, from observer to active participant, further. So we combined space, a blend of media, everyday actions and theatrical improvisation to give the audience new ways seeing themselves and their neighbourhood. That is cultural mediation: working with people where they live so that they can experience the fact that theatre does relate to them and can be for them. We turned a living space into a stage.
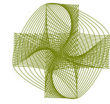
Ruth Widmer *is the founder and Artistic Director of* → *TheaterFalle Basel and the President of the theatre education association* → *tps – Fachverband Theaterpädagogik Schweiz.*

1   The trailer on the production → http://vimeo.com/44470609 [2.1.2013]
2   The audio guide → http://www.medienfalle.ch/newsletter/SchauFalle_2_alle_Episoden.mp3 [2.1.2013]

→ *TheaterFalle Basel* http://www.theaterfalle.ch [18.2.2013]

→ *tps – Fachverband Theaterpädagogik Schweiz* http://www.tps-fachverband.ch [18.2.2013]

CHANGING PERSPECTIVES   Mediation Working Group,
Pro Helvetia: Transmitting Cultural Mediation

The "transmission" of cultural mediation has dual significance for Pro Helvetia: in its role as a funding agency, receiving funding requests for cultural mediation projects, and in its role as a disseminating body, feeding insights and knowledge acquired back into practice. Both roles are still in flux at the Swiss Arts Council, because the funding of arts mediation is a relatively new area in the promotion of culture.

Pro Helvetia's primary aim in crafting funding criteria specifically for cultural mediation projects was to not to exclude any format that could contribute to improving cultural mediation practices. The guidelines for use by applicants in writing their project descriptions are designed to be open, so that innovative project ideas can be presented in the application submission, while ensuring that a comprehensive picture emerges. This balancing act sometimes means that one side or the other, the applicant or Pro Helvetia, has to request supplemental information. In the ensuing dialogue a mutual "communication" of the way each side conceives the subject emerges.

Cultural mediation projects are process-oriented. A look at the implementation process is often more revealing than the perusal of a project's outputs. Project blogs, for example, come into play here, by allowing running documentation of the project as it unfurls (e. g. → *kidswest*). Social media instruments of that kind can also help increase the degree of dissemination the project by creating networks of people engaged or interested in the project early on and seeking contact with the public.

Pro Helvetia is aware of the necessity for further action in the area of evaluation and documentation to ensure that knowledge gained in projects can flow into the developments within cultural mediation circles. In this context too, the Swiss Arts Council wants to build on its Arts and Audiences programme and cultivate an exchange of knowledge at the national level, involving both practitioners and funding bodies. This publication, and the many perspectives presented within it, represents one step in this direction. The website → *www.kultur-vermittlung.ch* and the newly established cultural mediation association Kulturvermittlung Schweiz also hold potential for the discourse on all aspects of knowledge related to cultural mediation.

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

→ *kidswest* http://kidswest.
blogspot.ch [25.1.2013]

→ *www.kultur-vermittlung.ch*
http://kultur-vermittlung.ch
[16.2.2013]
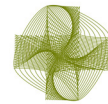
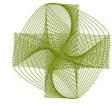**FOR READING AT LEISURE**   Working in a Field of Tensions 9: Documentation of Arts Mediation and its Challenges

"What has always been key with respect to representation is how and why someone is being 'represented', 'depicted', 'presented' or 'rendered', what purpose that represen-tation serves and what remains excluded, i.e. what has been rendered invisible through visibility. It is a question of the power inherent in the act of putting forth to be seen." (→ Sturm 2001)

Documentation of cultural mediation activities often falls within the re-sponsibility of cultural mediators and causes them, willingly or otherwise, to engage with questions of modes of representation and their effects. To depict an occurrence, one is forced to come to terms with issues relating to what description or which photograph is "eloquent", "appropriate" or "good enough". However, one can always adopt a more profoundly reflexive approach to documentary practices by asking oneself certain questions: Who makes decisions about the forms used to render things visible? What interests underlie those decisions? Who is being depicted and identified, and how? What is shown repeatedly and what is left out completely? Who, or what, remains invisible and unidentified due to the method and style of the documentation? And how does that which is shown become "evident" and acquire the force of proof? Fundamental to this → *critical perspective on representation* is the awareness that documentation does not directly depict cultural mediation. Instead, it shows and produces objects, persons and projects in a certain way. Documentation is based on the active process of selecting, designing, and showing, and thus places a powerful and challenging responsibility in the hands of those doing the documenting.[1]

　　To explore the production of meaning and normality in the depiction of cultural mediation, we will start by looking at an example of the docu-mentation of a family day of the kind featured in the cultural mediation programmes of many museums. Certain motifs appear pre-ordained and appropriate for the documentation of such events, others seem inappro-priate and remain undocumented. For instance, the pre-event preparations and post-event clean up seldom figure in the pictures taken of family days, one seldom sees impatient or quarrelling children, very rarely do we see the tears spilled after an unsuccessful creative attempt, interruptions and waiting times, bored parents or stressed mediators. The omission of certain aspects is a central part of the representation work and production of meaning, in the same way that the repeated depiction of other aspects is. Which motifs are selected for a documentation, and shown over and over again, is primarily a question of institutionalized rules and routines of showing which aim at suitability for a specific purpose. The purpose may be that of

→ *Sturm 2001* http://kulturrisse. at/ausgaben/022001/ oppositionen/in-zusammenarbeit-mit-gangart.-zur-frage-der-repraesentation-in-partizipations-projekten [21.9.2012]; see Resource Pool MFV0901.pdf

→ *critical approach to representa-tion* see Glossary

233

addressing the "family" as a target group, that of framing the museum as a venue for a special type of recreational activity, or that of testifying to the successful implementation of a project for its sponsors. These depictions, normally intended to be clearly recognizable and devoid of ambiguity, build a limited repertoire of standard motifs shown over and over again with slight variations. [2]

In the context of a family day, we might find the depiction of two adults and two children standing next to each other, their backs to the camera and their bodies and eyes directed toward a large painting. It might be a guided tour for children and adults with a mediator pointing to a work of art; or it might be a studio scene, showing a child and an adult sitting at a paint-stained table and concentrating on an object they are making. These depictions are easy to decode as "art mediation" and "family" and they are often found as representations of a family day in the documentation of arts mediation. Yet the repeated display of the expected reinforces again certain meanings and conceptions.

The image shown here is a common way of representing art mediation and museum-goers in general, an appropriate caption to such an image would be: "from youngest to oldest, an entire family is engrossed in art." But the preservation and presentation of this scene evokes other imagery as well. For instance, viewing a work of art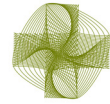 in the original in a contemplative stance like this is one of the ultimate → *classic symbols* of cultivation, education and bourgeois comportment (see Bourdieu 1982), and people will associate this too with the selected image as an additional level of meaning. Thus the depiction highlights a specific type of audience and suggests a specific mode of behaviour in museums.

Even when this typical art mediation image is not explicitly labelled with "family day", there is no question but that this "is" a family. The group of people is identified as a family automatically. The fact that we perceive and recognize groups in this way is not inherent to human understanding though, it is the effect of powerful processes at play in repeated identification in the same style and manner in a wide variety of settings. [3] This repetition establishes the perception of certain constellations of people as families and by doing so creates images of "real" and "proper" families. [4] However, this also results in the creation of boundaries defining what is normal, and thus certain constellations of people and behaviours are made identifiable as abnormal families or even denied that identity altogether – which can have serious consequences for their social, societal or legal recognition and thus the stability of their future. [5]

The depiction and identification of families in the context of cultural mediation documentation is thus tied up with the powerful and, at least

potentially, harmful re/production of normality, which must be taken into account during the documentation process. What can one safely do to depict cultural mediation? Would it be better to stop showing people at all in the context of family days? Selecting images showing only tools, rooms, products or the traces of cultural mediation work would certainly be one option. That would not stop the normalized depiction of families from continuing elsewhere. However, taking this perspective further, the documentation of art mediation represents a field of opportunity for disrupting the dominant practices of showing and labelling. For example, one can show people in the context of a "family day" who "normally" would not represent a family or one can develop alternative depictions to which the label is not obviously attached.[6] Yet many images are more ambiguous than the depiction of a "normal family", for instance, which is why captions are often added to the photographs selected for use in documentation. Captions are placed above or below the pictures when the authors want to highlight or clarify something. What is important or significant about the picture is made explicit: who or what are we supposed to see in the picture? When and in what context was the picture taken? What is it intended to show? This restricts the flux of meaning; the ambiguity of photographs is limited, certain ways of reading them are reinforced and certain statements highlighted. A specific visibility and identity is thus attributed to the people and situations that are shown and named.

One could see the photograph below and the comments written on it, which were created in the context of the cultural mediation project "microfiction" – Ist Demokratie gerecht?" [Is democracy fair?] (2009) as an example of an alternative approach to captioning.[7] The cultural mediators came up with the idea of having the participants write comments on the photographs taken during the project. Participants could fill in aspects which were missing or invisible but which they thought were significant.

Foto © Henrike Plegge, Stephan Fürstenberg

This assignment to add comments represents an attempt during microfiction** to integrate the people depicted within the documentation process for "their" project. At the same time, documenting an event collectively offers a potential way to counter the unequal distribution of power between documenters and their subjects.[8] Instead of concentrating only on unilateral statements about the project and its participants issued by the representatives of an institution, one can create conditions and structures which open opportunities
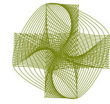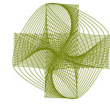
for creativity and for transferring the power to decide to all of those involved, thus allowing multiple voices to express themselves in the documentation. This could be done by passing the camera around within the group to document the course of a project, or meeting to review and select the pictures to be used in a publication at the project's end or – as in the example above – collectively discussing and appending comments to the photographs which have been produced.

Having participants write comments on the photographs created some scope for them to contribute or register objections at the documentation level and in doing so created a place for brief moments of friction (see Mörsch 2005) which are often omitted in documentation and which make cultural mediation the unique processes that they are. In this example, these moments are the stifling heat in the trailer during the audio editing, the names of the young people or the joking reference to discipline added by the students. These aspects do not enter into the "anticipated" depiction of the project, as, they do not obviously serve a representative function.

Intervention into the photographs like this should not be done in the pursuit of making visible all that is unseen. That would be impossible, if only because documentation is not a synonym for transparency: documentation is always a process based on the interplay between visibility and invisibility. However the addition of comments in the micro-fiction** project can be understood as a direct reference in the document to the fact that some elements are left invisible and unidentified in the project documentation. Thus the very style and form of the project documentation encourage people to think about documentation.

It would not be at all accurate to say that the scope for alternative approaches and creative activity in documentation work is so restricted that it permits only the recording, selection and (again) presentation of what is expected[9], however it is true that the power to make decisions about what aspects of cultural mediation are put forth to be seen lies only partially with those who do the documenting. The repeated lacunae in what is visible and repeated failure to identify certain details in documen-tation processes can often be traced to the various interests, representatio-nal standards and institutionalized rules as well as routines associated with the presentation of cultural mediation. This also emerges in the presenta-tion of micro-fiction**: on the project initiators' webpage only photographs, without the comments, are shown.[10] In this form of depiction, the "brief moments" remain invisible to the viewers. Visualizations there function more as a sort of "photographic evidence", furnishing evidence that the project has taken place by providing a photographic record of the people and their activities. The use of photography, an "objective" documentary medium, furthers this purpose of documentation by conveying the im-pression of that events are being depicted directly as they occur.

A glance through the archives of cultural mediation departments makes it clear that documentation is an area in which the mediators engaged in documentation work can input their own ideas and interests and that it is one which leaves scope open for transformative modes of representation, using experimental recording methods, participative documentation processes and a project- and process-oriented selection of documents along with a representation-critical depiction. Beyond the "documentarist" approach of legitimization and repetition of expected content, the documentation area offers the possibility of designing surprising and challenging modes of representation that tap into the potential of the medium being used and combine it with other recording processes. However, "other" representations can also be created by shifting the focus onto the ostensibly inappropriate or insignificant motifs and moments outside of the realm of the anticipated, which have gone undocumented up to now.

Inadequate access to financial or personnel resources and insufficient authority to determine design or make decisions on the part of the mediators engaged in documentation work certainly put limits on the methods they can use to creating transformative documentation, but these are not the only factors at work. The conflicts of interests and aspirations associated with the depiction of cultural mediation manifest in their documentation also play an important role.

For instance, the desire to work with participants to produce a challenging and reflexive documentation of a project can collide with the desire to lodge evidence which testifies to successful work, in order to justify a past expenditure and future resource allocation. It may collide with the representational aspirations of one's own institution, which is also interested in using the documentation of "its" cultural mediation work as a vehicle to present itself in the appropriate light. In this field of tension, furnishing documentation that is transformative will continue to pose a challenge, both daunting and worthwhile, for cultural mediatiors.

1   Sociologist and art theorist Stuart Hall describes representation as "active work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping: not merely the transmitting of an already-existing meaning, but the more active labour of making things mean." (Hall 1982, p. 64).
2   See also the findings of the SNSF research project "Showing Gallery Education" 2011 – 2013, → http://iae.zhdk.ch/iae/deutsch/forschung-entwicklung/projekte/ kunstvermittlung-zeigen-repraesentationen-paedagogischer-museumsarbeit-im-feld-der-gegenwartskunst-laufend [22.2.2013].
3   E.g. in the spheres of the mass media, medicine, politics, science, the arts and culture or law – what Stuart Hall calls the "regimes of representation".
4   See the poster "When they say family" of the public art project "Hey Hetero!" (2001) by Deborah Kelly and Tina Fiveash, which frames characteristics like whiteness, absence of disability, middle-class or a peaceful togetherness as attributes of the standard image of a family while critically underlining the normality and regularity of a heterosexual couple in a family setting. See → http://tinafiveash.com.au/hey_hetero_when_they_say_family.html [21.9.2012]
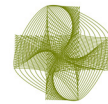
5   For example, teenage mothers and fathers, parents with physical or cognitive impairments or non-heterosexual partnerships.

6   For an inspiring example of cultural mediation work that challenges normality and assumptions about "families" see the project "Familienstudio Kotti – oder die Möglichkeit sich gemeinsam neu zu erfinden" [Family studio Kotti – or the possibility of reinventing ourselves collectively] realized by Bill Masuch as part of the Kunstcoop© group of projects. The project challenged and shifted the dominant images of families by creating photographic portraits of new "families" which were formed spontaneously on a sidewalk in Berlin, made up of people who happened to pass by; its effectiveness is in great part due to the use of painted backdrops emphasizing the artificial nature of "family situations" and their depiction (see NGBK 2002, p. 131 f.).

7   A partnership between the art and media technology centre in Karlsruhe, ZKM | Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie and the secondary school Windeck Gymnasium Bühl under the initiative "Cities in the Year of Science". Concept, realization and photo rights: Henrike Plegge, Stephan Fürstenberg.

8   Questions associated with a critical approach to representation in this context: "Who represents and who is represented? Who is visible and acknowledged? Who is not visible? Who is entitled and able to represent herself? Who is entitled and able not to represent herself? Who is authorized to speak for others and represent others? Who is considered the legitimate spokesperson for a group? Who is considered not to be a legitimate spokesperson?" (Broden, Mecheril 2007, p. 14); → http://pub.uni-bielefeld.de/download/2306439/2306444 [2.1.2013], see Resource Pool MFV0902.pdf.

9   In this context the conditions can be far less restrictive than, for instance, would be the case in connection with "reports" for sponsors, who often insist on fixed report formats.

10 See → http://www.staedte-im-wissenschaftsjahr.de/2009/tp_karlsruhe_schuelerrecherche.html [21.9.2012].

Literature and Links

Literature:

– Bourdieu, Pierre: Die feinen Unterschiede. Kritik der gesellschaftlichen Urteilskraft, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1982
– Broden, Anne; Mecheril, Paul: "Migrationsgesellschaftliche Re-Präsentationen. Eine Einführung", in: Broden, Anne; Mecheril, Paul (eds.): Re-Präsentationen. Dynamiken der Migrationsgesellschaft, Düsseldorf: IDA-NRW, 2007
– Hall, Stuart: "The Rediscovery of Ideology: Return of the repressed in media studies", in: Gurevitch, Michael, et al. (eds.): Culture, Society and the Media, London: Methuen, 1982, pp. 56 – 90
– Mörsch, Carmen: "Application: Proposal for a youth project dealing with forms of youth visibility in galleries", in: Harding, Anna (ed.): Magic Moments. Collaborations between Artists and Young People, London: Black Dog, 2005, pp. 198 – 205
– NGBK Berlin (pub.): Kunstcoop©, Berlin: Vice Versa, 2002
→ Sturm, Eva: "In Zusammenarbeit mit gangart. Zur Frage der Repräsentation in Partizipations-Projekten", in: Kulturrisse no. 2, 2001, not paginated.; http://kulturrisse.at/ausgaben/ 022001/oppositionen/in-zusammenarbeit-mit-gangart.-zur-frage-der-repraesentation-in-partizipations-projekten [21.9.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0901.pdf
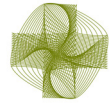
Links:

– Year 11 of Windeckgymnasium, Karlsruhe; ZKM Karlsruhe: "Ist Demokratie gerecht?":
http://www.staedte-im-wissenschaftsjahr.de/2009/tp_karlsruhe_schuelerrecherche.html
[21.9.2012]
– Kelly, Deborah; Fiveash, Tina: "Hey Hetero", 2001: http://tinafiveash.com.au/hey_hetero_
when_they_say_family.html [21.9.2012]