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Dissent and Disruption:
How Artists Redefine Museum Spaces and Audience Engagement

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While studying abroad in January 2018, I visited the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem, the Netherlands, to see the Art of Laughter exhibit, and I experienced the most unexpected, yet memorable and wittily disruptive intervention by Bulgarian artist, Nedko Solakov (1957–) (figure 1). Solakov created drawings of little monkeys and people and wrote narrative on the walls and other surfaces in order to provide counterpoints to the humorous Dutch Baroque paintings on view.\(^1\) Although I initially believed that someone desecrated the space—I soon realized it was intentional and was intrigued by the potentialities of the interventions to expand or counteract the established narratives in the didactic labels. Historically, and in our time, artists capitalize on the power of intervention art in order to foment discourse on the hierarchical museum structure and the types of art, artists and authoritative narratives it privileges. While some artists aim to explicitly delineate the faults, they find with museum narratives and disabuse perpetuated scholarship related to the chosen topic—such as the later discussed instance of Fred Wilson (1954–) and racism in America—so that new and sometimes radical perspectives might be considered. At the same time, however, the intervention appeals to other artists because they may alternatively be playful and suggest a new approach to interacting with art, culture, and history—such as Nedko Solakov, Jenny Holzer (1950–), or Donald Judd (1928–1992).

Historically, curators disseminated knowledge within the sacralized space of the museum,\(^2\) but the artistic intervention of Solakov at the Frans Hals Museum subverted the single, dominant and authoritarian voice of the curator. In this case, The Art of Laughter (figure 2), a temporary exhibit which highlighted the humorous side of Dutch Baroque art, often referred to

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as the Dutch Golden Age of the 16th through 17th centuries, included comic depictions of drunken revelry, lewd couples, quack doctors, and happy individuals, such as Gerard Van Honthorst’s (1592-1656) *The Merry Fiddler* (1623) (figure 3). This painting features a man gaily gazing toward the viewer holding a drink in his outstretched arm. Art in the Protestant Netherlands functioned as both entertainment and a teaching agent to demonstrate proper versus immoral behavior, because paintings sought to elicit a “moralizing message.” Dutch Baroque art reminded patrons and audiences of their faith, the fleeting nature of beauty, youth, and life, and encouraged proper behavior despite temptation. For example, *The Licentious Kitchen Maid* (1665) (Figure 4) by Gerrit Pietersz Roestraten (1566–1612), which as the title suggests, depicts a kitchen maid coyly tempting a man with her leg lifted, resting on his lap, and consequently raising her skirt. Her erroneous actions, however, are seen. In response, an elderly man outside a window sternly lifts his finger as a warning against this salacious behavior.

The curator wove the art works together according to common thematic threads that emphasized various characteristics and life motifs in art works—such as the role of animals, love, and fools. Through such an approach, the audience understands the function of the works in their original socio-cultural context, but also engage contemporary viewers in contemplating the relationship of their own experiences to those of the past. The use of didactics, curator guided labels and texts (figure 2) explained the overall significance of the artworks and the socio-cultural realities of the Dutch Golden Age.

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Alongside the officially sanctioned explanatory narratives, Solakov’s art appeared like banter, both augmenting, but also undermining the meaning of both the art works and the labels. Against the uniformity of the typed didactics, Solakov’s black pen doodles and scribbles, which were a distinctly individualistic style, appeared beside and underneath the official curatorial inscriptions (figure 5), (figure 6). Drawings also appeared on the walls and mirrors seeming like graffiti, although the plastic covering over some of the words suggested the intentionality of the intervention. Solakov disrupted the typical routine, of the museum visit, because the visitor sought to decipher the tension between the official narrative and the artist’s interventions (figure 7). In retrospect, however, knowing that the curators staged this collaboration, although the artists’ words were entirely his own, contributed to the experience by highlighting irony and the fun of inside jokes—one of the unique hallmarks of the Dutch Golden Age.

His work falls under a larger project by the Frans-Hals Museum to celebrate the union of the classical museum with De Hallen Haarlem, the museum for contemporary and modern art in Haarlem. In this initiative the museum invited a series of artists to perform contemporary curatorial interventions and interact with Dutch Baroque art. Solakov’s commentaries bridge the past with the current perspective through his insertions of contemporary interrogations of history. For example, he doodled on a didactic explaining the role of animals in Dutch art as both humorous and moralizing components (figure 8). The museum’s interpretative panels and didactics changed for each room, indicating a new aspect of Dutch art that would be discussed, and they drew attention to the specific theme of that section of the gallery. Some of the themes were trompe l’oil, animals in art, the role of love, as well as fools and trickery. In the room that related the function of animals in art as envoys of comedy, but also moralizing agents, the curator included Children Teaching a Cat to Dance by Jan Havicksz Steen (1629-1679) (figure
Steen’s painting was a lively image of children playing with a cat by lifting its paws upward to make it stand like a person. At the time of its creation, this action was seen as innocent fun, but nowadays such behavior might not be condoned. Solakov’s joke written directly below the word “animal,” states “an animal with an animal rights’ lawyer,” (figure 10A and 10B), which subtly suggests that the animal’s portrayal occurred without its consent and that perhaps the animal has an animal rights’ attorney who might act on his mistreatment. He thus projects 21st century values onto 17th century practices and points to ideological shifts, engendering tension.

Conversing with the theme of animals as agents of humor, Solakov plays a joke that builds on the current conversation about animals. He leads the viewer to question whether the curator and painters would have considered such issues themselves—that the animals might be offended or unsupportive of their portrayals.

The Dutch also depicted erotic scenes to remind the Protestant viewers to conduct themselves scrupulously by controlling their desires. To illustrate the point, The Unequal Couple (1614) (figure 11) by Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617) hangs on the wall next to the curator’s plaque which discusses Baroque era sexual innuendos and the prevalent iconography related to chastity, sexuality, and virginity (figure 12). Goltzius depicted an elderly woman caught greedily yearning for a younger man who, in return, disgustingly rejects her sexual advances. Responding to the differences and simultaneous interconnectedness of love and lust, Solakov wrote beneath the didactic that love “is a well behaving lust,” while lust “is a love on drugs” (figure 13). Thus, Solakov highlights the timelessness of love and lust, and the transcendence of human concerns beyond time and place.

Solakov, a Bulgarian, postmodernist artist, creates conceptual art largely in the form of installations and artistic interventions that seemingly contradicts the classical academic art he
once practiced. Many of Solakov’s early works express his attitude during the post-communist era, addressing Bulgarian politics and exploring his past. With the collapse of communism and the formation of a democratic Bulgaria in the 1990s, Solakov emerged into a new art world of opportunities and freedom of expression. His interventions began in the early 1990s, with subtle forms of narrative additions that appear like accidents. Solakov states that he “tell[s] stories within space.” In his first project, “Nine Objects,” he placed contemporary items, such as a plastic coffee cup, within the permanent collection of the National Museum of History in Sofia. The intervention caused great consternation to unsuspecting visitors who witnessed the anachronistic, modern contraptions contrasted with the old and historical. His goal was a disruption that resulted in a forced contemplation, as visitors struggled to fathom the reason why a modern object might be mixed with the museum’s permanent collection.

Solakov’s commentary, forces the viewer to stop and scrutinize both his written words and the printed words of the curator (figure 7). The viewer faces a dilemma—should s/he trust the curator or the interventionist, in this case, Solakov? To the unaware viewer, the intervention may seem like a distraction, but Solakov’s intention is to compel a reaction and urge further contemplation of the instructive voice of the curator, as well as the known history, context, and meaning of the art itself. Solakov’s artistic contribution is conceptual and based on the curator-defined, museum spaces; therefore, he requires the framework of the museum space and curator generated arrangements and comments in order to present his artwork effectively. His work functions in tandem with the curator’s work—which he expands, but also, often contradicts—confusing the viewer and prompting the distrust of the master narrative. He challenges the

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6 Nedko Solakov, interview with the author via email, March 2018.
7 Ibid.
knowledge provided by the museum’s expert, the curator, which places the viewer in a compromising position—they must determine themselves which account to believe.

When asked in a personal interview, whether the curator influenced his decisions to comment on particular artwork, Solakov stated that he received “no influence at all” and “would not tolerate this.” He also explained that the textual based intervention at the Frans Hals Museum, like his other sites of intervention, occurred naturally as he interacted with the artwork and space. His commentary works appear like “street graffiti,” because of its tendency to read like a stream of consciousness as well as his use of figures and mini sketches. In fact, the little drawings of spiders, stick figures, and other tiny creatures that can be quickly sketched are a characteristic of Solakov—appearing almost everywhere including secluded areas of museum spaces. Furthermore, his label as a conceptual artist encompasses his unique formatting of displays because he derives his inspiration from the space and artwork itself. Solakov’s creative process occurs as he interacts with the environment and comments on the curatorial practices on-site.

Other contemporary artists like Solakov employ the museum as a site for expanding the narrative or upsetting the formality of curatorial installation practices. The Museum of Applied Arts (MAK) in Vienna, whose emphasis is decorative arts and design, boasts many collections related to artistic movements in Vienna particularly, such Rococo, Biedermeier furniture, art nouveau, Asian porcelain, and textiles. Beyond the collection of art and historical objects, however, the museum also welcomes and encourages the artistic participation of contemporary artists.

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8 Nedko Solakov, interview with the author by email, March 2018.
11 Boettger.
artists to further add to the exhibit. Minimalist artist, Donald Judd (1928–1994), as well as neo-conceptual artist, Jenny Holzer (1950–) both contributed to recent exhibits by interacting with the permanent collection of the MAK.

Exhibits at the MAK demonstrate the intersectionality of artistic interventions and curatorial practices. Curator, Christian Witt-Dörring, invited Donald Judd to collaborate in the museum and create a space filled with Rococo style furniture, (figure 14), the highly ornate style of design of the 18th century. The style earned its name from the excessive decoration and intense theatricality, created by dynamic forms and contrasting lights and darks. Examples of Rococo style can be seen in Shönbrunn, the palace of Maria Teresa, the Habsburg empress of Austria, that features exquisite Rococo style elements, particularly the rooms adorned with Chinese porcelain and exotically styled, lacquered woods. Furthermore, the dynamic movement appears in furniture with cartouches as well as in the construction of the walls, which employed various carved elements portraying different scenes that still come together to create a unified sense of space and a complete work of art in each room.

In fact, Dörring knew about Maria Teresa’s collecting habits and wrote extensively about the period, so the collaboration with Judd proved even more ingenious because Judd’s creations revolved around geometric pieces of art modified to their most basic element. Essentially, the drastic contrast between the ornate work of Rococo, that emphasizes craftmanship and individuality, and minimalism that focuses on uniformity and stylistic anonymity, forces a unique understanding and interaction with the art. Minimalism stressed geometry and artists

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divorced their pieces from the emotions and personalization that dominated a concurrent movement, Abstract Expressionism, in the twentieth century.\(^{14}\) Judd’s *Untitled* (1973) (figure 15) a series of linear blocks, uniform in color, shape, and size appears to be the opposite of Rococo. The partnership between Judd and Dörring seemed to provide order to what might appear as unrestrained art. Many meanings could be derived from the display, which is one of the greatest functions of the artistic intervention; it allows people to reengage with art in a unique or unconventional way.

The Dubsky room, a Rococo interior originally from a palace, had to be reconstructed in a much larger room in the museum along with other furniture (figure 16).\(^{15}\) Many of the pieces of the room included elaborately decorated furniture, quite different from minimalist art, Judd’s dominant aesthetic. In organizing the layout of the room, Judd aimed to establish rationality, symmetry and balance rather than the idea of dynamic movement and drama of the Rococo period. Judd continued this format when arranging the objects in the larger room of the museum which housed all of the Rococo furniture (figure 17). He stated that he placed the room in the center and balanced the other pieces of period furniture and art in a symmetrical layout.\(^{16}\) This layout created order and followed the rational formation Judd preferred to the excessively dynamic Rococo.

Beyond minimalist art, Judd produced factory-made furniture, forging a striking contrast with the intricate, individually crafted artistry of the Rococo period. Judd’s work is reminiscent of other artists in the 20th century who devalued and diminished the artist’s presence by using

\(^{16}\) Ibid.
already manufactured, utilitarian objects, or readymades, most prominently among them Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968). Taking heed from its predecessors, minimalist art aims to focus solely on the object’s characteristics and not the author or the artist.\(^\text{17}\) Judd wanted the emphasis to lie with the logical and balanced forms of the art and furniture rather than with him. Judd’s furniture, such as *Wooden Bed and Metal Table*, (1978) (figure 18), showcases the reductive style Judd employed. It follows the empirical style demonstrated in his earlier piece, *Untitled* (1973) (figure 15), by applying the same principles to furniture. Judd enlisted the assistance of local artisans and craftsmen to forge the metal and carve the wood he needed to prepare his furniture, but he still maintained the industrial appearance because he preferred factory production, an idea that proliferated in minimalism, and that was initially introduced by Duchamp.\(^\text{18}\)

Judd studied empirical philosophy so he preferred to present his objects in a “matter-of-fact” way to “[elicit] immediate comprehension among viewers of his work instead of trying to prompt a metaphysical process of perception and interpretation.”\(^\text{19}\) Similarly, Judd's furniture mimics the same kind of empirical experience found in his artwork.\(^\text{20}\) What makes Judd’s curatorial assistance at the MAK significant is the complexity of his relationship with Rococo art. Judd represents artists who obliterate the presence of the maker’s mark, focusing simply on the basic principles of what constitutes a particular object and then representing it in the most basic elements with a series of rigid horizontals and verticals. In contrast, Rococo art relies on curves and dynamic diagonals, and the name of the famous artist or crafter remains connected to

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\(^\text{19}\) Ibid., 52.
\(^\text{20}\) Ibid., 52.
their particular work. Therefore, he provides the order of minimalism to the formerly ostentatious and excessive art style.

Another artist, Jenny Holzer (1950 –) also staged an intervention at the MAK. Holzer creates conceptual art using video projections with profound and poignant texts that literally illuminate surfaces and move across buildings so that people can clearly see them. An example of her work is *Truisms* (1984) (figure 19), which flashed the aphorisms “good and evil,” “nothing to lose,” and “sign of maturity.” She applied this practice to the MAK’s exhibit focused on Biedermeier furniture, that became widely available to the Viennese population as the bourgeoisie and consumerism grew. Holzer plays with the typical curatorial practices of placing didactic labels next to the showcased art, by instead using electronic signs like *Truisms*, placed above the artwork on the ceiling. She stated that “some people hate to read in museums,” which is why she opted to exclude the large didactic texts unless viewers intended to read them.

Like Judd, Holzer is a neo-conceptual artist and many of her art installations involve projected texts on walls and buildings. At the MAK, she also provided a metal, “Biedermeier” couch that appeared like a plush, resting place, to allow museum-goers to stop and read her signs, should they choose (figure 20). Ironically, the visitor thinks that this is a plush, comfortable couch, only to encounter the hard, cold surface of the metal material. Moreover, instead of printed didactics, she places texts about the furniture—such as memories and information about its creation—at the top of the ceiling to be read as it trails across the electronic

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23 Ibid.
Holzer creates a more interactive experience that allows the visitor to choose—they may either engage or disengage with the narrative, rather than requiring them to read and internalize the words of the curator to understand the art. Her creation of a couch and alteration of the didactic location, as well as the information that flashed across the screens, clearly pointed to issues of production and patronage, which places Holzer’s seemingly playful intervention in the position of a political commentary of 20th century Vienna.

The practice of interventions often moves beyond the aesthetics and into the political realm. Artist Fred Wilson (1954–) intervenes in historical museums with the intention of arousing emotions and offering alternative, albeit, radical reinterpretations of history. At the ground-breaking exhibit, Mining the Museum, held from 1992–1993 at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore, Wilson, an African American artist reconsidered the museum’s collections and retold the neglected past of Maryland as a slaveholding states, by repositioning the permanent collection to highlight the forgotten voices of the blacks in the white dominated space. In this exhibit, Wilson manipulated, and recontextualized extant objects in the museum’s collection to draw attention to the implicit racism of American material culture in the 18th and 19th centuries. He thereby constructed a political arena, inviting debate and contested the idea of the museum as the site of dominant, unquestionable knowledge. His intent was to disrupt the prevailing historical narratives of western imperialism, and white hegemonic perspectives.

Wilson’s Modes of Transportation (1992) (figure 21) capitalized on the rich array of vehicles for transportation, including a baby pram, carriages and ships used in the 19th and 20th century. Wilson incorporated a wooden, slave ship model (figure 22) that reminded audiences of

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the way that blacks were forcibly transported to the New World—experiencing dehumanizing conditions and violence. Further establishing the position of blacks in American history, Wilson included an oil painting, *Annapolis in 1750* (1865) (figure 23) by Frank B. Mayer (1827–1899), that depicted a white woman being waited on by black slaves and servants in the comfort of her caravan. He also incorporated images of black nannies caring for white children. Wilson’s interventions comment on the forced labor and enslavement of African Americans in the antebellum era and their continued exploitation and victimization in the 20th century. To punctuate his point, Wilson adjoined two unlikely objects—a baby carriage (c. 1800) with a Ku Klux Klan hood (c. 1900) (figure 24). The stark contrast unfolds when the viewer approaches the pram, intended to hold a child or infant, but instead cradles a KKK hood, a blatant symbol of white supremacy. Other aspects of the museum remain relatively orthodox—such as the featured historical items and didactics, but the formatting of the display through blunt juxtapositions, shocks the unsuspecting visitor. Wilson’s inclusion of the KKK hood and pictures of blacks in the context of the white narrative illustrates the suppression of black memory. His interventions express his social and political views regarding the exclusion of black perspectives in curatorial practices and his advocacy for their inclusion.

Wilson utilizes spaces that traditionally display artifacts within a top-down, knowledge-based institutional setting such as a historical museum. In his interventions, Wilson “used devices of restaging, reconfiguring, and adjustment to challenge preconceptions and to ask viewers to think about what we take as given.”

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must decide what aspects of history should be presented. Curatorial decisions depend on either aesthetic of socio-cultural statements that the curators aim to cultivate. Certain details when relating their narratives are sometimes omitted for the sake of clarity. Today, political and cultural shifts have identified the necessity of more diverse and inclusive narratives, and museums are at the forefront of addressing such omissions. Aiming to make these biases obsolete, artists like Fred Wilson expose the racialized prejudice and violence that has defined much of American history and continues to dominate the conversation today.

According to Wilson, "museums [do not] collect 'things,'” instead, they “collect memories, meanings, emotions, and experiences. Without the ‘things,’ the [physical] collections would not exist, but without the memories, meanings, emotions, and experiences, museums would not exist.”  

Historical objects and art serve as literal manifestations of memory, but the meanings ascribed to them are what Wilson probes with his explorations of history. Rather than presenting all perspectives, museums typically select one specific narrative or association for the art works or artifacts in their collection and foreground that particular viewpoint. Instead, Wilson attempts to coax the covert memories contained within the objects and present them to his audience, often striving to elicit deliberate shock. Instead of accepting the permanent exhibitions at the Maryland Historical Society, Wilson opted to transform the galleries and created a dialogue that allowed the visitor to reconsider the function and meaning of the pieces, as well what they signified in history. He states that he feels successful when the audience pauses to contemplate and take a second glance at his work, scrutinizing its historical implications.

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27 Graham, 215.
28 Ibid., 215.
29 Ibid., 216.
While I aim to discuss contemporary artistic interventions, the practice can only be understood by acknowledging its binary opposite, the sacred museum space. Understanding the way that the museum typically arranges its contents and objects explains why the form of intervention art works even more powerfully. Visiting the museum can be likened to worship because the space promotes both knowledge and ritual. In the ritual sense of experiencing the museum, the visitor enters a liminal dimension allowing them to engage with the artwork in a proscribed ritual. Curators guide visitors through worship that centers around the artifacts and art on display and provide new knowledge to participants. Following this time-honored practice, the museum circulates knowledge that the curator finds important and the viewer becomes enlightened and accepts it as infallible truth.

Public museums, a relatively modern concept, came into existence only within the past two hundred years, but have since paved their way into modern culture as teaching institutions. The mere display of an artifact in a museum alters its status. Removing the piece from its traditional location obscures its earlier meanings and intentions and assigns new ones. Lost layers of meanings that objects previously held, are replaced by new associations that the curator assigns the objects. Viewers accustomed to this type of ritualistic presentation in museums will experience the work of conceptual artists like Fred Wilson as a disruption of the ritual. The intention of the artist is to move beyond simply creation and into the museum realm, by using the artifacts in unconventional placements. Arranging these objects in such a manner temporarily removes them from the ritual aim of the museum by reinforcing their role in daily life, outside

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30 Duncan, 11-12.  
31 Ibid., 12.  
33 Ibid., 15-16.
the museum. Their situation back in their original setting or in Wilson’s case in their broader socio-cultural context, produces confusion in the audience which indicates that their position in a museum isolates the object from its original context, and situates it exclusively as an object of aesthetic contemplation and appreciation. Although this theory applies toward politicized art interventions like Wilson, not all interventions function in this manner, and many installations simply attempt to broaden the current discourse of a topic or perhaps play with curatorial displays.

If both curator and artist work to create meaning for the art in the art museum, then the intervention in a historical museum allows for the complete artistic liberty to question and contradict common curatorial practices. Artists have advantages in history museums because they “assert their own artistic authority.” Since postmodernism, which divorced the museum from modernism’s emphasis on objects, innovation and artistry, many museums now emphasize on site-specific renditions which engage the viewer and remove the emphasis on the artist’s association. With the museum facilitating new freedoms for the artist, artists may utilize the museum in a new, unique way to express their ideas. Artists now cultivate their ideas and art within the museum by literally using the museum as a medium—the same way they might use a canvas or clay.

While museums conserve history and educate the public, sometimes their collections and exhibits contrast with the personal views and experiences of its visitors, especially in the case of marginalized groups. The idea of distorted experience at the museum occurs when the museum

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fails to meet the expectations of the viewer.\textsuperscript{36} Specifically, the distortion derives from the “excess of memories” brought forth by the public; these memories form the foundation for the clash with historical narrative.\textsuperscript{37} Personal memories derive from a combination of individual experiences and other ideas cultivated in spaces of institutionalized knowledge, such as libraries, museums, or schools. Memory is highly individualistic; the way visitors interact with the museum space differs because of their varying levels of exposure and knowledge—as well as their subjective thoughts. Museums present the collective, curator selected identity regarding history, and whenever that narrative contradicts the unfolded individual memory, issues may arise as result of the individual memories’ interaction with the national anecdote. “Excess memory” can be both beneficial and problematic. Positively, it assists contemporary museums by fostering inclusivity by shifting the focus to known histories. Conversely however, as patrons understand the museum as an authoritative and educational resource that produces an accurate account of history, trust easily breeches when they suspect the museum misconstrued history or presented wrong information.\textsuperscript{38} While helpful, sometimes excess memory can also threaten the validity and authority of the museum if not all perspectives are offered.

Given the prevalence of excess memory, modern museums must now face the reality of their sometimes-exclusionary foundation and promote a positive environment to share formerly forgotten voices in history. Customary practices developed with the western museum, which coincided with imperialism and expansionary practices. The Eurocentric, Anglo-Saxon emphasis of many museums demonstrates the entity’s entrenchment in colonialism. For example, the

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 45.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 51.
colonial past of the museum projects western history onto Native Americans who, as result, find themselves marginalized by the museum because they are not the explainers and interpreters of their own past.\textsuperscript{39} Today, museums instead attempt to navigate and correct formerly prejudiced pasts with sensitivity to alternative narratives. It is becoming a more common practice to invite these individuals into the museum space with the aim of learning from the groups themselves on how to properly profess and represent their history. With these initiatives, museums now are more representative of their country’s populations and additionally cater more to the interests of visitors.

Interventions often pinpoint perspectives a museum ignores. Michel Foucault designates spaces as social constructions—they are locations that dictate identity.\textsuperscript{40} According to Foucault, institutionalized knowledge presents a particular outlook regarding what information should be known and learned. Often, that is the perspective that prevents “others,” such as non-Western artists, from articulating their history.\textsuperscript{41} In the case of marginalized, “other” artists, the intervention acts as a powerful avenue to call into question the disparities of fact and also highlight oppressive ideas that were perhaps perpetuated in the museum, a public space.\textsuperscript{42}

Interventions are helpful, because they call attention to areas of history that the museum might want to further highlight. Controversial and triggering histories may rely on an outside source, the artist, to intervene and reconstruct the framework in a more liberating way than the

\textsuperscript{40} Gerald McMaster “Museums and Galleries as Sites for Artistic Interventions” in \textit{The Subjects in Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 250-251.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 251.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 252.
Within this context, the artist works inside the museum rather than as an external force. A museum might stage this sort of display to demonstrate its acceptance and confrontation of the past, in the case of Wilson. Using this technique, museums harness the emotional energy and memorial capacity that visitors bring to the museum. New methods have been adopted that stress the emotions and memories of those in the past or collide different viewpoints, such as those in the MAK with Holzer and Judd.

Confronting their past, museums now engage with their exclusionary practices or missing voices by fostering an environment that allows artists to express creatively their opinions and recognize the shortcomings of the museum. The “inclusive museum” emphasizes performance art and intervention art that represents alternative perspectives, allowing for discussions of the varied interpretations of the past. No longer are the opposing “excess memories” seen as negative—instead they become positive avenues for contributing to the individual’s personal understanding of history. Museums are moving away from their position as authoritative, top-down disseminators of knowledge toward horizontal, peer-to-peer demonstrations. A horizontal museum encourages an interactive experience with audiences that apply their knowledge and memories in their engagement with the art and objects. This invites visitors to apply directly their memories and experiences regarding the traditional museum discourse—transforming the space into one that allows for healthy conversation of opposing views.

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44 Ibid., 107.
45 Andermann, 1.
46 Ibid., 1.
47 Ibid., 2.
Overall, museums enlist the aid of the audience and the public to generate a dialogue on museum practices and art. These re-imagined collaborations between artists and exhibition sites allow artists to both effectively expand and contest the views of the curator and methods of remembering the past—which can take many forms such as informative yet playful in the case of Nedko Solakov or Jenny Holzer, aesthetically contrasting and insightful in the case of Donald Judd, or highly politicized in the instance of Fred Wilson. Unlike the museums of the past which professed more racialized or hierarchical disseminations, the current museum aims to address the missing pieces of history within an inclusive and receptive environment.
Figures:

Figure 1: Nedko Solakov, Intervention in the *Art of Laughter* exhibit, 2018, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
Figure 2: *Art of Laughter*, 2018, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
Figure 3: Gerard Van Honthorst, *The Merry Fiddler*, 1623, oil on canvas, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
Figure 4: Gerrit Pietersz Roestraten, *The Licentious Kitchen Maid*, 1665, oil on canvas, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
Figure 5: Nedko Solakov, Intervention in the *Art of Laughter*, 2018, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
Figure 6: Nedko Solakov, Intervention in the *Art of Laughter*, 2018, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
Figure 7: Visitors contemplating the intervention in the *Art of Laughter*, 2018, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
Figure 8: Nedko Solakov, Animals Intervention in the *Art of Laughter*, 2018, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
Figure 9: Children Teaching a Cat to Dance, Known as The Dancing Lesson, Jan Havicksz Steen, oil on panel, h 68.5cm × w 59cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
Figure 10A: Nedko Solakov, Intervention Animals in the Art of Laughter exhibit, 2018, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
Figure 10B: Nedko Solakov, Intervention *Animals* in the *Art of Laughter* exhibit, 2018, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
Figure 11: Hendrick Goltzius, *The Unequal Couple*, 1614, oil on canvas, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
Figure 12: Nedko Solakov, *Intervention Love and Lust in the Art of Laughter* exhibit, 2018, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
Figure 13: Nedko Solakov, Intervention *Love and Lust* in the *Art of Laughter* exhibit, 2018,
Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
Figure 14: Donald Judd and curator, Christian Witt-Dörring, Baroque and Rococo Intervention in the Permanent Collection, Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna.

Figure 15: Donald Judd, *Untitled*, 1973, brass and red fluorescent Plexiglas, six units with 8-inch intervals, Guggenheim Museum, New York.
Figure 16: Donald Judd and curator, Christian Witt-Dörring, *the Porcelain Room of the Dubsky Palace*, Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna.
Figure 17: Donald Judd and curator, Christian Witt-Dörring, Baroque and Rococo Intervention in the Permanent Collection, Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna.

Figure 18: Donald Judd, *Wooden Bed and Metal Table*, 1978, Donald Judd Foundation.
Figure 19: Jenny Holzer, *Truisms*, 1984, metal, light emitting diode units and plastic, 169 x 1539 x 162 mm, Tate Museum of Modern Art, London.
Figure 20: Jenny Holzer, *Intervention* at the Museum of Applied Arts, MAK, Vienna.
Figure 21: Fred Wilson, *Modes of Transportation*, 1992, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.
Figure 22: Fred Wilson, Slave Ship in *Modes of Transportation*, 1992, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.
Figure 23: Francis Blackwell Mayer, *Annapolis in 1750*, 1876, oil on canvas, 32 in x 47 in, Maryland State Art Collections, Annapolis.
Figure 24: Fred Wilson, *Modes of Transportation*, 1992, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.