Reconsidering the exhibition When Attitudes Become Form curated by Harald Szeemann: form versus “anti-form” in contemporary art

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ABSTRACT
This article examines the problem of determination of form in contemporary art and its aesthetic evaluation. Harald Szeemann, curator of the exhibition When Attitudes Become Form (1969), presented a conception, in which “anti-form” symbolically complemented the traditional idea of a valuable artistic form. Szeemann not only tried to comprehend and interpret the metamorphoses of art form in his texts (especially in the collections of essays Individual Mythologies and Museum of Obsessions), but also consciously mastered these tendencies in his curatorial practice. His conception of aesthetic evaluation of contemporary art—theory of “art of intensive intentions” was not based on opposition to the classical criteria of aesthetics, but on absolutely another principle: as an artwork expresses some spiritual, metaphysical problems or values, and as its form, regardless of its visual qualities, serves this purpose. When Attitudes Become Form became one of the first European exhibitions illustrating metamorphoses of contemporary sense of art form.

Introduction: contemporary art and aesthetic judgment

In attempting to evaluate contemporary artworks in the context of art theory, we come straight to the problem of aesthetic judgment. According to Ralph A. Smith, “when referring to aesthetic education, we may associate the expression with the aesthetic perception, experience, and judgement of the arts”. The notion of judgment, though standing in the third position, has obviously the most controversial and intensive meaning in relation to aesthetic appreciation (or unappreciation) of contemporary art. But what are the criteria of this judgment? The Kantian definition of judgment, based on taste, does not look applicable to works of contemporary art with its formlessness and obvious lack of “beauty” and “harmony”. Instead of artistic form we tend to analyse “idea” or “concept”. In this case, as Stuart Richmond argues, “The idea of aesthetic interpretation does not sound quite right, as the aesthetic relates more to taste than concepts. Understanding includes interpretation, as in the interpretation of a painting’s iconic meaning and the interpretation of rules, but understanding is a more commodious concept in that it incorporates the aesthetic with all its implications of feeling, judgment, imagination, and sensibility.” A conception of a big exhibition project gives sometimes more possibilities to evaluate aesthetic qualities of contemporary art than aesthetic judgment related to a certain artist or art direction. The problem of artistic form, in particular, had been considered in the conception of the exhibition When Attitudes Become Form (1969) of Harald Szeemann, on which this article is focused, in the context of modern and classical aesthetics. The curator here had the multiple roles of an aesthetic educator, philosopher and art critic.

One year before the exhibition of Szeemann took place, the philosopher of art, Bazon Brock, tried to explain to the public the content of the first notable show of postmodernism art—documenta 4 (1968). Brock’s pedagogical innovation, School for Visitors took the form of performance with elements of theatre, lecture on aesthetics and art event. Assuming the role of curator–educator in the process of the “action teaching”, Brock became a mediator between the public and the art. The active communication with the viewers allowed him to discuss his own aesthetic attitudes on the demonstrative content of the artworks present.

The intention to suggest an aesthetical, social or philosophical context for contemporary artworks leads to the prevalence of the context or concept over the art itself. It is notable that the increase of didactic techniques in explaining the aesthetic value of objects on exhibitions reflects a turn to pedagogy, which is obviously present in curator’s work and might be regarded as a “need for commentary”,

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According to Arnold Gehlen’s thesis, according to Paul O’Neill and Mick Wilson, “Contemporary curating is marked by a turn to education. Educational formats, methods, programmes, models, terms, processes and procedures have become pervasive in the praxes of both curating and the production of contemporary art and in their attendant critical frameworks.”

The problem of aesthetic judgment about artistic form in contemporary art might be regarded in the curatorial–educational practices as the logical sequel of discussion on the “death of art”. According to Gordon Graham, “It is now possible to see why Hegel thought that the modern period would witness ‘the end of art’. The development of human understanding consists of a move from art to philosophy. The development of art forms consists of a move from the most material (architecture) to the least (poetry). These two developments lead to a convergence. Poetry completes the movement from the perceptual to the conceptual that is to be found within art; philosophy completes the movement within human understanding to a wholly conceptual form of knowledge; the result is that art is finally sublimated in philosophy.”

As we try to show in relation to the concept of Harald Szeemann’s exhibition project, the notion of form had been reflected in the exhibition conception under the influence of modern thought on “after art” in Hegelian sense, i.e. in the theories of T. Adorno’s “de-aring” or Arthur C. Danto’s “death of art.” We should stress the role of exhibition conceptions’ analysis in aesthetic evaluation of contemporary art, as it helps to create a more holistic view on the evolution of aesthetic judgment.

**Conception of When Attitudes Become Form exhibition**

The exhibition *Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form. Works, Concepts, Processes, Situations, Information* (Figures 1 and 2), organised by Harald Szeemann at the Bern Kunsthalle in 1969, became one of the first large-scale demonstrations of contemporary art practices: Conceptual Art, Op Art, Minimal Art, etc. The curator’s conception determined not only the structure of the exhibition, but also, to a certain extent, the ideas and symbolic–allegorical meaning of the artworks, which in a different context would have a completely different meaning.

Considering the significance of artistic and critical discussions about this exhibition’s conception and the number of imitations of its curator’s radical methods in the subsequent exhibition practice, *When Attitudes Become Form*, undoubtedly, belongs to the most important artistic events of the twentieth century.

![Figure 1. Installation view of When Attitudes Become Form. From left to right: works by Alighiero Boetti, Mario Merz, Robert Morris, Barry Flanagan and Bruce Nauman. Kunsthalle Bern, 1969. Photo: Balthasar Burkhard © J. Paul Getty Trust. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute (2011.M.30).](image)
The proof of the latter is the fact that in June 2013 the Fondazione Prada opened at Ca’ Corner della Regina in Venice an exhibition entitled *When Attitudes Become Form: Bern 1969/Venice 2013* (curator Germano Celant in dialogue with Thomas Demand and Rem Koolhaas), which reconstructed Szeemann’s project, maintaining its visual and conceptual totality in an unexpected space of the Venetian palazzo (Figures 3–5). The main reason for re-enacting the Bern exhibition at the Fondazione Prada was to highlight the contribution made by Harald Szeemann’s project in the field of curatorial practice and theoretical assessment of contemporary art. The exhibition in Venice included not only the original works of artists, loaned by private collectors and museums, but also photographs, videos, documents related to Szeemann’s work on the exhibition and unpublished materials from the Harald Szeemann Archive and Library acquired by the Getty Research Institute in 2011. The Getty Research Institute made a substantial contribution to the project in Venice. Glenn Phillips, the curator of the Institute, his colleagues and collaborators from the Fondazione Prada analysed photographs of the exposition at the Bern Kunsthalle and at the secondary curatorial project’s space Schulwarte. They also studied documents, drafts of the conception and letters in relation to the exhibition, to make it possible to identify the artworks and the space where they had been displayed. All these efforts were aimed at the achievement of the most holistic repetition of the Bern exhibition project in contemporary Venice.

*Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form* in 1969 (later presented in the Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld (Germany) and ICA, London) became a final event of the Bern period of Szeemann’s work. In the decade of his work as a director of the Bern Kunsthalle he opened every year between 12 and 15 exhibitions: from thematical *White on White, Forms of Colours, Marionettes, Puppets, Shadowplays: Asiatica and Experiments, Light and Movement: Kinetic Art, Science Fiction* to personal exhibitions and retrospectives.

The exhibition of 1969 saw the participation of representatives of the new directions in art. Szeemann described the idea of the exhibition in the interview with the curator H.-U. Obrist in the *Artforum International*: “We visited the studio of a Dutch painter, Reiner Lucassen, who said, ’I have an assistant. Would you be interested in looking at his work?’ The assistant was Jan Dibbets, who greeted us from behind two tables—one with neon coming out of the surface, the other one with grass, which he watered. I was so impressed by this gesture that I said to Edy [Eduard de Wilde, then director of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, with whom
Szeemann visited the workshops of artists], 'Okay. I know what I’ll do, an exhibition that focuses on behaviors and gestures like the one I just saw”.”

The main idea of Szeemann’s exhibition was the fragility of formal expression of intentions and meanings—the idea, which became actual at the end of the era of modernism: plans and purposes of artists, according to Szeemann, might or might not take material form—might stay intangible, non-incarnate. According to the artist Lawrence Weiner, “It

Figure 3. Installation view of When Attitudes Become Form: Bern 1969/Venice 2013. From left to right: works by Eva Hesse, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Gary B. Kuehn, Keith Sonnier, Bill Bollinger. Fondazione Prada, Ca’ Corner della Regina, Venice, 1 June–3 November 2013. Photo: Attilio Maranzano. Venice, Fondazione Prada.

Figure 4. Installation view of When Attitudes Become Form: Bern 1969/Venice 2013. Works by Sol LeWitt and Carl Andre. Fondazione Prada, Ca’ Corner della Regina Venice, 1 June–3 November 2013. Photo: Attilio Maranzano. Venice, Fondazione Prada.
was a moment of great intensity and freedom, when you could either produce a work or just imagine it. Szeemann wrote comments about the exhibition, in the form of a diary, which thoroughly documented the details of his visiting the studios of artists, conversations with them and construction of installations. In the diary, in addition to meticulous comments about the visits to workshops, Szeemann gave brief characteristics of various artists’ works and descriptions of the process of creation:

“Dec. 15. 10 a.m. Richard Serra. There are always chances, that, visiting an atelier, one can meet a good artist. I greatly appreciated Serra’s Floor-, Splash-, Lead-Pieces already by Castelli. He [Serra] wanted to know all about the exhibition and with his direct approach puts many things in a new light. I will try to get a ticket for him in order to enable him to make new works directly in Bern, especially The Splash-Piece (210 kilo of hot lead). From Cologne I took a big Belt-Piece as a signboard for the exhibition. 2.30 p. m. ‘Water-and-Wind’ evening by Hans Haacke. The new snow spoiled somehow the demonstration on the roof of the atelier, but a new art work was born: WIND AND WATER: SNOW. 8 p. m. Keith Sonnier. Together with Serra he forms the new tendencies . . . All by Serra is strength, all by Sonnier is brilliant, playful elegance.”

The diary shows the curator’s interest in the ideas of the artists. It is remarkable, that many of the artists, who became subsequently key figures in the art of the second half of the twentieth century, had been little known even to specialists in art history then. Ivan Gaskell, in the article “Being True to Artists”, proposes to consider the relation of a curator to artists as “curatorial responsibility”. The most important is “the question of artists’ intentions”: “Curators would be remiss were they not to take artists’ points of view into account when they decide...
upon the various uses to which they put those artists’ creations. In spite of difficulties, an artist’s intentions may be discoverable, and a curator may seek to honor them, or contrive the conditions in which the artwork best discloses those intentions”.

In the project of Szeemann, 69 European and American artists transformed the space of the Kunsthalle in their own way: Robert Barry occupied the roof, Mario Merz made one of his first igloo-objects, Lawrence Weiner took out a piece of the wall measuring a square meter (Figure 6), Joseph Beuys made *Die Fettecke* (Figure 7)—an installation made of fat and Richard Serra—two lead sculptures (Figure 8).

The list of artists includes Daniel Buren, Carl Andre, Claes Oldenburg, Bruce Nauman, Eva Hesse, Giovanni Anselmo, Hanne Darboven, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Walter De Maria, Alain Jacquet, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Keith Sonnier, Ger van Elk, Lawrence Weiner and Jan Dibbets. They represented numerous movements (Land Art, Conceptual Art, Process Art, Minimal Art) inside the global context of contemporary art which main characteristics is a shift in focus away from visual impression to the underlying idea of the artwork. Szeemann as an author of the curatorial conception was able to give a structure and sense to these different artworks, not at all resembling “art” in the common sense of the word. According to Jeffrey T. Dean, one of the main questions of the theory of art is to formulate a definition of art: “There are a variety of ways in which definitions can be constructed but, typically,
philosophers of art have been concerned to offer essentialist definitions by way of adducing a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for an object’s being a work of art. These efforts have relied on a particular (if implicit) view of concepts, namely, one that assumes concepts are characterized by a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for their application, where these conditions define the concept. Harald Szeemann put forward a set of such necessary conditions in form of his conception of hypothetical “museum of obsessions,” which objects were chosen according to his own taste. This imagined institution

Figure 7. Joseph Beuys working on Fettecke, 1969. When Attitudes Become Form, Kunsthalle Bern, 1969. Photo: Balthasar Burkhard © J. Paul Getty Trust. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute (2011.M.30).

Figure 8. Installation view of When Attitudes Become Form. From left to right: Shovel Plate Prop, Close Pin Prop, Sign Board Prop (1969) by Richard Serra. Kunsthalle Bern, 1969. Photo: Balthasar Burkhard © J. Paul Getty Trust. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute (2011.M.30).
represented an aesthetic ideal of Szeemann, and all his exhibition projects were in varying degrees practical approaches to this ideal.

“Live in your head”: aesthetic value of idea

Contemporary art and, more specifically, Conceptual Art are widely discussed in the context of aesthetic opposition of “form” and “idea”. Speaking about “the dematerialization” of Conceptual Art, Lucy R. Lippard and John Chandler argue that: “A highly conceptual art, like an extremely rejective art or an apparently random art, upsets detractors because there is ‘not enough to look at,’ or rather not enough of what they are accustomed to looking for. Monotonal or extremely simple-looking painting and totally ‘dumb’ objects exist in time as well as in space because of two aspects of the viewing experience”. These aspects are “more participation by the viewer” and “the time element—the time spent looking at an ‘empty’ work”. The curator must provide these aspects or conditions, which might as well be called “context”, “conception” or “idea”.

If the idea can be clearly explained orally (for example, in a lecture of an artist) or in written form (for example, in a catalogue of an exhibition or in a manifest of an artist), the form can stay unclear and aesthetically miserable. The concept idea idea of Peter Goldie and Elisabeth Schellekens might be regarded as an attempt to establish a close contact between content and form regardless of the art qualities of the latter. In general, the idea idea concept means that “the medium of conceptual art is ideas, and any physical presence is merely the means by which the artist lets us gain access to his ideas” (emphasis of the authors). However, Wesley D. Cray disagrees with the authors of idea idea, rejecting their thesis stating, “in conceptual art, there is no physical medium: the medium is the idea” and arguing that “without offering something to say about what ideas are, it is hard to know what to make of such claims”. Wesley D. Cray demonstrates a row of views showing somewhat unsure attitude of art critics and artists to the meaning of “non-perceptual idea” in contemporary art. For example, Timothy Binkley’s suggestion that, “to know the art is to know the idea”, and Joseph Kosuth’s saying that “the ‘art idea’ (or ‘work’) and art are the same” followed by Robert C. Morgan pointing out that, “[to] say that art is about ideas is a problematic and misleading assertion. It is misleading to the extent that the question of ‘ideas’ is too general, too open-ended, and without an appropriate context it means nothing”. Instead of doubtful intentions of looking for “context”, Wesley D. Cray offers “a new ontology of conceptual art, according to which such artworks are not ideas but artifacts imbued with ideas.” Aesthetic qualities of art form are no longer actual if the “idea” exists “outside” form, only in mind, imagination or intention of an artist or a viewer.

Harald Szeemann also tried to find a subtle connection between contemporary artwork and content (or idea) in his exhibitions, as well as in the collections of essays Individual Mythologies and Museum of Obsessions, struggling to avoid the opinion that “Conceptual Art is routinely held up as a paradigm of the inadequacy of aesthetic theory to art after modernism”, as Diarmuid Costello put it.

Is contemporary “idea” really ignorant of the burden of traditional strategies in art? This is the most important problem in the context of Szeemann’s aesthetic views. His suggestion was that formless objects of Conceptual Art might be “the shortened forms of images of the past” or “the first links of iconological chain”. To “live in your head” means to maintain these subtle connections between the traditional and the contemporary, the visual and the non-visual.

Form and anti-form: from G. W. F. Hegel’s idea of imperfection of art to Theodor Adorno’s de-arting

The corpus of aesthetic views on the art of the 1960–1970s, the concept of which is often summarized by what is actually a philosophical term “postmodernism”, shows that a problem of formlessness or absence of art form (in the traditional sense of the word) can be considered the most important in aesthetic evaluation of this art. Harald Szeemann, in his theoretical work, never tried to disengage himself from contradictions and inner conflicts with the traditional history of art but, on the contrary, was aware of the dialectics of the contemporary art situation in its opposition to classical art and modernism. The curator tried to give a distinctness and inner ground to the newest phenomena in art. Szeemann’s intention was to comprehend and interpret the metamorphoses of Western sense of form. The programmatic exhibition When Attitudes Become Form posed a concrete question: whether contemporary art needs form, or form, already going out from the range of visual phenomena (carried out, in this case, by “intention” or “attitude”), is something more (or less) than image, style, composition and other qualities of traditional artwork.

Sometimes negative attitudes of theorists of art to art practices of the post-war period were expressed by epithets with prefixes no-, anti-, post-, etc. “Anti-art”, “anti-form”, “post-culture” and other similar descriptions incarnated this contradictory and often antagonistic relationship. For example, Theodor W. Adorno used the term Entkunstung (de-artification or de-arting) in the article On Jazz (1953) and later in his Aesthetic Theory, where he noted that
contemporary artwork had lost its sacral place among ordinary things. As Stuart Richmond puts it: “There has been, undoubtedly, a kind of antiform, anti-aesthetic attitude in contemporary art, partly as a reaction against the art of the Academy, with its allegedly privileged aesthetic taste cultures, and partly because beauty and form are seen as distorting grand narratives to be deconstructed”. Even Szeemann, during the preparation of the exhibition, considered as variants of its title Anti-Form, Micro-emotive Art, Possible Art, Impossible Art, Concept Art, Arte Povera or Earth Art, which “met always only one aspect: the seeming opposition to form.” The title When Attitudes Become Form was suggested by Nina Kaiden, art director of Ruder & Finn, an advertising firm of Philipp Morris which sponsored the exhibition.

Nevertheless, a concept “after art”, so similar to Adorno’s Entkunstung or “de-arting”, existed as early as in G. W. F. Hegel’s aesthetics and did not have a pejorative character in relation to the phenomena of art corresponding to it. Hegel defined the ideal state of art, risen to such a high spiritual level that it no longer required a visual form. A work of art manifests itself solely through the inner essence—as the true form to express the truth. The problem of art form for Hegel stays in close connection with the need of spirit or idea. According to Hegel: “Imperfection of the artistic form betrays itself also as imperfection of idea. If, then, at the origin of art, we encounter forms which, compared with the true ideal, are inadequate to it, this is not to be understood in the sense in which we are accustomed to say of works of art that they are defective, because they express nothing, or are incapable of attaining to the idea which they ought to express. The idea of each epoch always finds its appropriate and adequate form, and these are what we designate as the special forms of art. The imperfection or the perfection can consist only in the degree of relative truth which belongs to the idea itself; for the matter must first be true, and developed in itself before it can find a perfectly appropriate form.”

For Szeemann, the formal qualities of artworks ceased to have significance in the sense which they had in the works of old masters or the works of modernists, but, paradoxically, they were of great importance, not in terms of craftsmanship, technology or style, but in their ability to fit into the unity of the exhibition. Later, preparing documenta 5 (1972), Szeemann used some aspects of Hegelian theory for the conception of the exhibition and selection of art objects. In the sense of the so-called “triad” (Dreierschritt) based on the dialectical reasoning of Hegel, thesis—antithesis—synthesis, Szeemann invented a formula of the exhibition concept: reality of image (Wirklichkeit der Abbildung); reality of prototype (Wirklichkeit von Abgebildeten); identity or non-identity of image and prototype (Identität oder nicht-Identität von Abbildung und Abgebildeten). The last aspect demonstrated an attempt of synthesis of the two previous provisions in the context of the curatorial conception.

“Art of intensive intentions” versus classification of forms

After the closing of When Attitudes Become Form, Harald Szeemann resigned from the Bern Kunsthalle, starting another kind of activity—as an independent curator and a representative of “Agentur fuer geistige Gastarbeit” (“Agency for spiritual guest work”), developing his own vision of the curatorial practice. He created the conception of aesthetic estimation of contemporary art—theory of “art of intensive intentions”, based not on the opposition to traditional criteria of aesthetics, but on a completely different principle: as artwork expresses some spiritual, metaphysical problems or values, and as its form, regardless of its visual dignities, serves a purpose of expression of this meaning (or is related to it). This conception reflects Hegel’s words about the significance of “symbolic form”. Hegel names “symbolic form” the first principal form of art: “Here the idea seeks its true expression in art without finding it; because, being still abstract and indefinite, it cannot create an external manifestation which conforms to its real essence”. The exhibition When Attitudes Become Form became one of the first European exhibitions to illustrate metamorphoses of Western sense of form from the point of view of intensity of meaning—not requiring a detailed technical perfection in the context of strong realization of tradition.

G. W. F. Hegel noticed a tendency of art forms’ changing in favour of spirit already in the art of the nineteenth century, and precisely this view is enough to see the value and consistency in contemporary art. Thus, as applied to the contemporary situation, even on the basis of Hegel’s aesthetics one can develop a concept and aesthetic assessment, which is based not on the opposition to classical criteria of aesthetics, but on a completely different principle: how a work of art expresses some spiritual, metaphysical essence or values, and as far as its form, regardless of its visual advantages, serves the purpose of the expression of the idea, or refers to it. Rossen Ventsislavov suggests that: “Selecting art and incorporating artworks into various narratives are activities that presuppose the presence of curatorial ideas. A curatorial idea—an exhibition theme, a mode of spectatorship, a single artwork placement, and so on—is a genuine contribution to the life of the artworks involved.”

Szeemann’s conception did not limit determination “weak” form as an incomprehensible, unfinished
form, a conceptual form such as “intention” or “attitude”. It wasn’t the classification of forms that became the task of him, but the demonstration of their capacity for expressing spiritual realities, for giving them the value of “meaning”. Contradictions of art criticism in 1960s–1970s and negative estimations of “absence” of form, or of the presence of “empty”, parodying figurative form (as in Photorealism), demonstrated the need to estimate contemporary art from positions other than formal ones. The theory of “art of intensive intentions” of Harald Szeemann appears in this connection one of the most adequate in consideration of art in the second half of the twentieth century and later and can be effectively used in university and museum educational programs on contemporary art.

Already in the period of work in the Bern Kunsthalle, Szeemann was disappointed with a “linear, positivistic art history”, by which he understood the history of art in the manner taught in the art institutes—as a history of styles and “great artists”, who are capable of creating masterpieces. Instead, Szeemann suggested his own idea of art, based on the sublimation of the phenomena of a certain historical moment, which shows some kind of spiritual “intensity”. From this point of view, it is senseless to filter out “masterpieces” on the formal principle. Even a formally poor object can take a significant place at an exhibition, if its presentation is connected with the main idea of the curatorial project.

Conclusion

Forms of Arte Povera, Conceptual Art, Minimal Art and Actionism, presented by art critics as anti-forms or “banal, boring forms”, 31 needed a completely different interpretation than the traditional theory of art could offer. Szeemann emphasized the significance of the following dilemma: what is best for the current art situation—fine, but empty, form or “weak” form that has an intense spiritual depth, presented symbolically, allegorically or metaphorically? Szeemann especially stressed this problem in the exhibition project, which became a result of his thoughts about the essence of art—The Beauty of Failure/The Failure of Beauty (Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, 2004). Here, externally impressive forms, which had, nevertheless a “rotten” context (in the art of the Third Reich, for example), contrasted with not so advantageous forms of avant-garde and contemporary art, behind which stood a more humanistic attitude. It is impossible to determine precisely the extent to which the “guest spiritual work” of Szeemann assumed intention of substitution of “archive” of the past culture and link with the ages of European artistic tradition. However, his interest in exotic, remote, primitive forms in the Western art of the twentieth century (painting of mentally ill persons, kitsch objects, etc.) might be considered an intention to find “empty places” free from tradition. It seemed that they offered opportunities to create new art, ignorant of the burden of the past; demonstrating definite, though negative, connection with tradition.

The repetition of traditional forms in the contemporary art situation would make them banal, empty and false. The increased role of art criticism and aesthetics in the interpretation of contemporary art phenomenon and the emergence of a new form of art practice—autonomous exhibition activity of a curator—was connected with the fact that the understanding of the above-mentioned limitations in art implies a considerable knowledge of art history in general. It is indeed a problem of curatorial studies to establish a methodologically clear link between new art practices and traditional art and aesthetics.

One of the main features of contemporary art is a painful break with tradition, nevertheless implying a profound inner connection with it. Laconic contemporary art objects are, in fact, an homage to the classics and tradition. Curators, as opposed to artists and viewers, assumed the burden of interpretation of these intentions and the indistinct forms of art referring to them. From the 1960s it was a time for “curators–artists” and “exhibitions as artworks”, 32 as suggested the artist Daniel Buren in the catalogue of documenta 5 (1972).

The impact of Harald Szeemann’s When Attitudes Become Form project lays in the field of the curatorial theory and practice, which not always involves aesthetic analysis, but uses different contexts and ideas to make art more attractive and understandable for a viewer.

The results of Harald Szeemann’s curatorial project are follows:

- Integration of theoretical views and the exhibition content
- Focus on the theoretical value of the curatorial conception
- Symbolical connection of different artworks in the context of the curator’s conception
- Emphasis on the underlying context or idea
- The idea of anti-form is considered in the context of the postmodern art paradigm
- Increasing the aesthetic appeal of the artworks

It seemed that history of art in the second half of the twentieth century had rejected forever the category of taste and the clear criteria of evaluation. Sense of form was lost, visual methods of expression were exhausted and art images were no longer clear. The value of individuality of an artist, in a high degree sublimated in the period of modernism, was discounted by “the cult of personality” in the epoch of totalitarian regimes and in the post-war era was
replaced by other intentions. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of large thematic and programmatic exhibitions as *When Attitudes Become Form* shows that a clear curatorial conception can preserve all the aforementioned categories, only in a more refined and sublimated form. Interpretation and understanding of these curatorial efforts in the context of aesthetics are difficult to imagine without adequate analysis of the dialectics of form and content in contemporary art.

Notes

1. See Leder et al., “A Model of Aesthetic Appreciation and Aesthetic Judgments,” 217–228.
2. Smith, *The Sense of Art*, 3.
3. See Danto, *The Abuse of Beauty*.
4. Schellekens, “The Aesthetic Value of Ideas.”
5. Richmond, “Art’s Educational Value,” 97.
6. Gehlen, Zeit-Bilder, Zur Soziologie und Ästhetik der modernen Malerei.
7. O’Neill and Wilson, “Foreword,” 12.
8. Graham, *Philosophy of the Arts*, 54.
9. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*.
10. Danto and Goehr, *After the End of Art*.
11. Obrist, “Mind Over Matter—Interview with Harald Szeemann,” 25.
12. Ibid., 24.
13. Szeemann, *Museum der Obsessionen von/uber/zu/ mit Harald Szeemann*, 55.
14. Gaskell, “Being True to Artists,” 53.
15. Dean, “The Nature of Concepts and the Definition of Art,” 29.
16. Szeemann, *Museum der Obsessionen*, 54.
17. Lippard and Chandler, “The Dematerialization of Art,” 46.
18. Goldie and Schellekens, *Who’s Afraid of Conceptual Art?* 60.
19. Cray, “Conceptual Art, Ideas, and Ontology,” 235–245.
20. Ibid., 235.
21. Ibid.
22. Costello, “Kant After LeWitt,” 93.
23. Szeemann, *Museum der Obsessionen*, 75.
24. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, 374.
25. Richmond, “Art’s Educational Value,” 95.
26. Szeemann, *Live in Your Head*, 3.
27. Bosanquet and Bryant, “Selections from Hegel’s Lectures on Aesthetics,” 4.
28. Ammann et al., “Befragung der Realität—Bildwelten haute.”
29. “Selections from Hegel’s Lectures,” 16.
30. Ventzislavov, “Idle Arts: Reconsidering the Curator,” 83.
31. Robert Jauß, *Die nicht mehr schoenen Kuenste*.
32. Buren, *Exposition d’une exposition*, 17.

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