

Maria

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SPEAKERS

Maria Ptqk, Christina Stadlbauer

C Christina Stadlbauer 00:00
So Maria, you have a kind of a complicated last name, do you want to just say two words about where this name comes from this and pronounceable.

M Maria Ptqk 00:11
This unpronounceable name comes from my imagination, and from the computer, basically. So it's the name I started to use, back in 1999, when I got my first internet connection, and my first email. So in fact, it comes from petechiae. And petechiae is, as far as I know, a Greek name for small red dots you might have on your skin. Not a lot of them, but sometimes just one, which is like a tiny vein that has exploded, but it doesn't hurt or anything, it's just like, like a red dot, most people have this, in some place in the body. So at some point, I had some of these, and then I asked for the name. And they told me that's a petechiae. And I thought it was I liked how it sounds. And then I, I took the vowels out and start and started using it in for my first email, and then for my work for my blog, because I was blogging for 10 years and I started that in 2004. And we were not a lot of people blogging in Spanish at that time. I mean, we're, of course, a lot of people, but it was like, we were a minority. It was just starting at that moment. So we were like geeks. And so that's the name I was using in this community of freaks loving each other because it was not like it is now where there is this competition of who is the funniest and the most ironic and most, you know, mean, online, but we were more loving, I guess. Of course, they were chosen and so on. But it was a different atmosphere. So it's my name from back in these

digital early days. And, and then it's the name I kept, because it's the name which I used to write and to produce what I was producing, and my work. So I just kept it and I like very much the fact that it goes with this performative proposal of how do you pronounce it because there is not a proper way to say it. You can just say it as you like. And however you say it is fine.

C Christina Stadlbauer 02:58

Okay, so in that way it is on unpronounceable, because you can pronounce it in many different ways.

M Maria Ptqk 03:03

Yeah. And I like the fact that people call me differently in different languages, or even in one language people say it differently. Wonderful. Yeah. And it also creates for some people kind of obstacle but also this obstacle is very interesting.

C Christina Stadlbauer 03:23

Very nice. Petekuka.

M Maria Ptqk 03:24

Yeah, you can see it like that.

C Christina Stadlbauer 03:30

So you have - I stalked you a bit - you have a doctorate in artistic research I found, but you also have a graduation from law school and from economy. But in the end, you know, you're working in the cultural sector, you are curator, you are a critique, you are a producer, you published the book just now you're a cultural investigator. So maybe I start with kind of a personal question about your favourite museum. If you have a favourite Museum, maybe you want to tell me which one it is and why you like it, and how you like it, and what inspires you about it and what you feel when you go in there? And maybe you just describe it?

M Maria Ptqk 04:15

That's a very good question. I don't have an answer. But I'm going to share something I was thinking these last days as that when I walk my dog, there is a park close to my to my

house, to my flat. And during the confinement I was in, in Spain, with people with dogs we were allowed to go out. People without dogs couldn't go out at all. So I was very lucky. And as I was going into that park, in a different - with a different attitude, and looking more carefully at things and so on and this walks long, silent, lonely walks in the park because you're not allowed to go with someone else, You had to go alone. And I was. So this last month, I've been more and more thinking of when I go to the park, it's like if I was going to the museum, so it's like I'm going to a different museum every day. Because this started in and it was the winter, winter time in March was the early March. So just before the spring, so I have seen already the spring, summer and then Autumn in the park. So

C Christina Stadlbauer 05:33
it's beautiful. I love it. It's fantastic.

M Maria Ptqk 05:36
Can you imagine I mean, you see the trees, the flowers, the grass, the birds, the insects, everything is changing. And so

C Christina Stadlbauer 05:46
so now with this, with this new way of having to go by yourself and being concentrated just on the moment and the environment, you perceive it totally different.

M Maria Ptqk 05:55
Exactly. And you look at it with the eyes of a curious person, which are the eyes do you use when you look at art with these are not the eyes you use when you walk in the street or, or when you walk your dog in the park? It's not a very beautiful park even so that's even more interesting. It's a new park, it has like maybe 20-25 years. So you don't even have huge, magnificent trees. No. But there are still trees. And, and they're still very interesting, because they're all different. And so yeah, that's my favourite museum now.

C Christina Stadlbauer 06:38
It's a fascinating museum, I must say. And it fits very much to what we're talking about. So I like this answer very much. So do you want to tell us a little bit about your practice that you're doing because you're doing so many different things. So maybe you just yeah, share a bit of practice. And also what is fascinating you about what you're doing.

M

Maria Ptqk 07:01

And I find it very hard to put a word on what I do, because of course, we have to use words. So sometimes I use the word curator because I find, I sometimes curate projects. But what I most like is researcher, and producer. Because that says that I study, I look at things. And then I elaborate them and give them back in whatever form. So but I don't see, I am an artist, because what I do doesn't usually take the form of what we call art. And because this is such a complex discussion, so I don't even go there. So, so researcher works very well for me. And what fascinates me about it is first that I consider it a huge privilege to do what I do, and to keep doing it. So I am very lucky that I had the opportunity to meet people that gave me opportunities, and that I could work independently. So it's hard. It's very precarious. It's unstable. But as I said, I manage, I still manage. So I feel extremely privileged for that. And what fascinates me about it is that, but it's also a source of stress- And I am sure you can share that - is that we are always working on something different. It's always evolves. So it's always an adventure and going into an unknown territory.

C

Christina Stadlbauer 08:38

As you say, there's a beauty in it, because you always can dive into something new. But there's also the difficulty of always being a non-expert at the beginning. And then you just have to dive.

M

Maria Ptqk 08:50

Yes. And you meet new people all the time. You rebuild your intellectual family, and community every once in a while or you or you expand it, but it changes. And this is really exciting. But it's also very demanding. Don't you feel?

C

Christina Stadlbauer 09:19

I feel it's very demanding. And at times, I find it difficult to Yeah, because you just don't know what the next step is. And there are these gaps. And there are these moments where you have no clue in which direction it is going to go. And then suddenly a door opens and something totally new starts. And it's it's you Yeah, you just go into it as if it was the first time that you're researching something. So there is also this, - for me - the fascination of starting something that I've never worked with before. Also with people that I've never worked with before, but there's always - Oh yeah - as you as you describe it: there is this precarity and the unknown and the difficulty of..., it's like a tightrope that you are walking sometimes. And do you want to tell a bit about the book that you just published that I find

very intriguing, because it has a lot to do with Donna Haraway - already the title is very much connected with her trouble book. The species of the chtulucene.

M

Maria Ptqk 10:21

Yes. So this comes from an exhibition I curated at espace virtuel du Jeu de Paume, in Paris in 2017. They invite they have this online space, and they invited me to create a show there. And so it wasn't, it was online. And then at that, at that time, I was reading Haraway's last book. Well, it wasn't, it wasn't even published, I was reading fragments that were being published, and then it was published as a whole afterwards. And and so I wanted to, to make a show, that would be something like an open laboratory. I never say this word open laboratory during the show. But that's what it was for me, where I would go through the elements of this book, which is quite complex as all Haraway's work, and select some artworks that would help me to, not to understand but to explore this, this work,

C

Christina Stadlbauer 11:27

to reflect

M

Maria Ptqk 11:28

Yes. So I selected 10 artworks of different genre, and media and historical times, as well. And so yeah, it's like a personal journey through that book. And then from that exhibition, I edited the book of, *especies de lo chtuluceno* - species from the Chtulucene, and with more artworks, and then with longer texts, and also some invited authors that would come along with me and that were also involved in this similar play. Yes, playground because I take this book as a playground, in a way.

C

Christina Stadlbauer 12:16

Yeah. And the book just came out?

M

Maria Ptqk 12:19

it came out a year ago, in fact, already a year ago, and this book led to another exhibition, which I am curating for CCCB in Barcelona. That will be opening next year. So we'll be running from June to November 2021. And so it's the next step. So this is a real exhibition in the sense of a proper physical exhibition, and in a big space with big institution as the CCCB. And so it's, again, a new opportunity to go step forward in this

same curatorial research.

C Christina Stadlbauer 12:59

Yes. And so the pieces that you exhibited in 2017, where they kind of related to bio art, or did they have to do with animals or plants or the planet or what kind of artworks did you choose?

M Maria Ptqk 13:19

Hmm, interesting. Um, there was not a single artwork that was bio-art.

C Christina Stadlbauer 13:26

Okay.

M Maria Ptqk 13:29

Not for a particular reason. But as I told you, the choice was very subjective and, it was artworks that helped me make that journey. So you have joy in an illustration like Maria Sibylla Merian, which is from the nearest scientific illustrator, and entomologist from the 18th century. And she was very important in the history of entomology because she discovered the relationship between insects and flowers. But also very important in the history of illustration, scientific illustration. So you have things like that. And then an artwork like oestrogen farms by Mary Maggic, which is a tactical media, which is like a fake company, selling eggs with extra chance so that women or people that are engaged in hormonal therapy to get pregnant, can just have a couple of

C Christina Stadlbauer 14:48

sunny side up -

M Maria Ptqk 14:49

a couple of fried eggs and a dose of hormones. So there's also this video by Paolo Tavares, talking about the right price of nature, and the biocentric turn in the Constitution of Ecuador, so there are different, very, very different artworks.



Christina Stadlbauer 15:10

Yes. I was asking this because I think nowadays, the bio-art scene is very much relating to this book. But of course, the book is not only related to the bio-art, I mean, it's such a, it's addressing so many different things. And it's a very, very philosophical book, of course, also.



Maria Ptqk 15:28

Yes, I think you can reflect on life. I am myself very much interested in bio-art, but you can reflect on life from very different disciplines. Not only manipulating life itself. Yes. And you can be manipulating life itself in bio-art, and not have any reflection on the living matter or the life.



Christina Stadlbauer 15:58

Yeah. So when I was reading about the book, because I think it's gonna arrive in my postbox at some time, but it has not arrived yet - looking forward - one little quote, struck me and it was about plants that have rights. So I was wondering if this is a notion that is proposed for the future? Or is it rather a statement that is already valid? Or what can we do with this sentence?



Maria Ptqk 16:32

It's by a Spanish artist called Ernesto Casero. And it's a series and it's called, post human protests. And it's somewhere in the subtle line between serious and non serious. Because, of course, that's not serious. But then when you look at these biocentric movements, that especially in Latin America, but not only also in Asia, and New Zealand, in Australia are in the courts and in the legal texts, are stating that ecosystems have to be recognised, or are in fact being recognised as legal subjects. Or, a river, it's been granted legal subjectivity, or this is actually happening, because there is no other way to effectively protect them. So at some point, why not? plants have rights.



Christina Stadlbauer 17:41

Yes, I mean, I agree with this sentence very much. And I think, we should start taking this serious, although it sounds, of course, a bit absurd. But I think there is a lot to explore in this. And there's a lot to explore from a legal perspective, which you understand much better than me. But there's also a lot to explore from an agency perspective. Because I'm just reading the book by Emmanuele Coccia about the plants. It's so funny, because it starts with explaining that most people are plant blind. Yes. So if they come to a place,

they don't perceive the plant. Yeah. If you ask them later, they say there was a chair, and a table, but they didn't see that there was also a plant. So there is something in our - not everybody, of course, some people see plants very well - but I think in general, we we don't perceive them as being a life entity that maybe has to be respected.

M

Maria Ptqk 18:40

Yeah, exactly. It takes us to not see plants and not considering them alive when they are much more ancient organisms than we are, and most probably more resilient, because of their diversity.

C

Christina Stadlbauer 19:04

Yes. And, like in Coccia, it comes out very clearly. I mean, we would not be alive without plants. It's just impossible. They create our atmosphere. They make the soil come together. So wherever we're walking, and wherever we're breathing, we could not be without these plants. Yes. So there is an interesting symbiosis because they again need CO2. There is an interesting collaboration that is going on, and I think it would be high time that we start to really see them as having rights and as having agency.

M

Maria Ptqk 19:39

Yes, because they do have agency. They decide. I mean, they decide - as much as we decide. I mean, we are not completely free, we have a lot of constrictions so today they cannot move, we cannot fly.

C

Christina Stadlbauer 20:03

Yes, yes. No, I mean, they communicate with others of the same species, they communicate with other species, they communicate with life under the soil. So I mean, there's a lot of things that is now, that are starting to be a bit more talked about also a bit more in our focus, but I think this is something struck me very much.

M

Maria Ptqk 20:26

I'm glad to, to hear it. Because, yeah, it's a provocation. But then. I mean, companies have rights. Yeah. So if companies have rights, I mean, what kind of world is that where companies have rights and living organisms don't?

C Christina Stadlbauer 20:48

Yeah. Well, this is a totally different discussion. I think it has to do a lot with money. Yeah, of course, because this is what we're fighting over if we go to court. And of course, plants don't care so much about it. But indeed, I think yeah, it maybe would be also interesting to look at the sentence - what does it mean to have rights in general - Is it always connected with money? Or maybe also, sometimes not?

M Maria Ptqk 21:14

Yes. not all rights have to be translated into money. It's also existence, the right to existence. So should we - let's say, I mean, all species are necessary or have the right to exist, let's say. But should we care more for species that have a use for humanity than for others that don't? And why is that?

C Christina Stadlbauer 21:46

I think this is a very good question. And this leads a little bit or for me there is a parallel in a way that we only introduce the so called human rights at a very late stage in human history. So for a long time, it was not about everybody being equal, and not every human has the same rights. And it still maybe in practice is not. So in my opinion, it's time to think about this outside of just our species. Yes. And I think it's maybe easier to do this with animals or with the so called higher animals, which is questionable, a questionable term in itself, because they are somehow similar to us, and we can understand them a bit better. Yeah. But I think it's exactly the same question that you just that you were just pointing at. I mean, where do you draw the line? Who is more equal than somebody else? It's a complex discussion, I think, but I think, it's coming out a little bit of this colonialist discussion, or of the feminist discussion. And I think it's now becoming more accepted also to talk about these things even. But it's a it's a whole big thing.

M Maria Ptqk 23:04

Yes, it's a change, big, big change of perspective. For us, humans.

C Christina Stadlbauer 23:10

For sure, for sure, and I wanted to ask you, because I mean, of course, there is all these protection measures that we are doing for the environment. And for the diversity of our living beings on the planet. But I have a feeling that often this is directed towards one selected species. Like, for example, you have to protect the elephant and the ivory

because there is again, a business behind it or certain types of shark because they end up in the cuisine of Asian restaurants. And so there are regulations and rules and protective mechanisms, but they're often directed towards one particular selected animal or plant. And so I wanted to ask you how you feel about this and if maybe there is a confusion and we should, instead of picking a species that is endangered, think about how we can change our entire attitude.

M

Maria Ptqk 24:16

Yeah, that's the whole discussion around biocentrism and the rights of nature. The social movements, arguing that for biocentrism what they say is precisely that, that the conservationism protectionist argument, even if it is, we still have to go for it because it's a way of - in fact, protecting endangered species- is not enough. And we need to think in terms of ecosystem of not an isolated species. That of course, also have a value in human terms, but to think of ecosystem as a whole entanglements of different species living together, also with humans. So it's a different, it's a different view on the problem. So it's not only about very exceptional species, but of ways of being alive, ways of living, where you have microorganisms in the soil, you have plants, all kinds of plants, you have many, many kinds of animals, from tiny animals to bigger animals, and then you have also humans, as human animals. All of them entangled in and these ecosystems have the right to exist, should be preserved, and not only a particular species. Because a particular species in itself, you know, it's like a, like, a pot of flowers.

C

Christina Stadlbauer 26:17

Yeah, isolating it from its environment that is also needed, because you cannot isolate. I mean, you cannot. It's the idea of putting the polar bear on the South Pole. I mean, this is not a very good idea, I think, because it's just stripping this animal out of his own ecosystem and putting it into an alien ecosystem. Yes, yes. It's gonna create two types of difficulties.

M

Maria Ptqk 26:39

Yes, yes. And this animal probably has an important role in its own ecosystem, as a predator of I don't know what, and or as a nutrient of another life form? Or because it's excrements are useful, whatever. Yes. And attracts I don't know what insects that then ensure whatever.

C

Christina Stadlbauer 27:07

Yes.

M

Maria Ptqk 27:09

So it's not enough to preserve the species outside of its environment. Yes.

C

Christina Stadlbauer 27:16

Yeah. So if we think in this way, how do you feel about the pandemic that we are experiencing at this moment? Because, of course, there is, again, this division between the humans that have to be protected and the virus that is our enemy? Yes. And it has to be fought and killed and deleted and gotten rid of? So how does this fit into this new way of thinking, at all?

M

Maria Ptqk 27:44

It's difficult because this thinking leads us to the idea of, you'll have to cohabit with the virus. But in fact, we'll have to cohabit with it anyway. But yeah, there are some science philosophers thinking about diplomacy with the virus. Maybe you've read about it, that we should stop using a war language, and instead use the language of diplomacy, which is more the language of negotiation. And which also maybe is more realistic in terms of what we can really do with with a virus. I mean, we can have it controlled, we can set some conditions under which we are not exterminated by the virus or we are not killed in big numbers. And then I was reading this, this interview by - the name of the scientist is Fernando Bagatares - for the scientific research counselling in Spain. And he was saying that the vaccine against COVID we already had it, and it was the diversity, biological diversity. And he connects the emergence of COVID directly to the destruction of ecosystems.

C

Christina Stadlbauer 29:23

Yeah, it's, it's, some people do this and I find this a very valuable way of thinking about it.

M

Maria Ptqk 29:29

So, I mean, we have created an ecosystem where we humans are the prominent species species, because we have eliminated all predators or have controlled all virus, bacteria not killing us massively anymore, although they might do it again. But since we are also changing the conditions of these environment, then this environment - we are not fit to it anymore. Yeah, it's reacting, of course. And it's not reacting for our benefit. Yeah. So, yeah,

yes.

C Christina Stadlbauer 30:16

Yeah, in a way, I sometimes have the feeling that we are obsessed with humanity we are taking up so much space. And in a way we're denying to look at this as a problem, or we don't know how to tackle it, because it's too big and too complex also, but I have been also wondering if this crisis that we are now going through is actually a pandemic? Or is it rather a manifestation of this obsession with ourselves? And that we have to actually see something else through this crisis. But we keep on looking away, we keep on looking at the virus instead of looking at what is really wrong in the whole system.

M Maria Ptqk 30:58

Yes, I guess you are, right. Yes.

C Christina Stadlbauer 31:02

So that might be also, yeah, I sometimes have the feeling of a bit of a missed opportunity, or at least until now, because - and this has to do for me very much with this, isolated looking of conservatism and conservationism. And protecting single entities, because I think it's again, a form of denying that the problem is not in protecting one entity. The problem is not the pandemic, the problem is a totally different one. But we are concentrating on this. And by concentrating on this, we don't have to look at the actual problem. Yeah. And this is a very human way of going about problems, of course.

M Maria Ptqk 31:45

Yes, you're right. It's a big shift, what's happening. And, we have this urge to find answers and to understanding and what I guess we are still like, under shock. The global society I mean, like, like, everybody.

C Christina Stadlbauer 32:14

I agree. As a community. Yeah. As a group.

M Maria Ptqk 32:22

So we cannot really think very clearly. And so maybe in 100 years, this will be viewed as, as the beginning of another time, in which we were forced, because we will be forced to

shift our thinking anyway. But now it's too short. The time is, too. I mean, it's happening right now. So we are in the middle of - my area like for instance, in Spain, now in Madrid, is my area going to be restricted or not? This is our current struggle with COVID. Yes, I don't want to get it. I will not what don't want my people that I love to get ill. I don't want to lose my job, or I want to move.

C Christina Stadlbauer 33:12

It's understandable. Of course. It's understandable. Because Yeah, of course. How do you say this? shirt is closer than the jacket? How do you say this? What is closest to you, you worry about the most? So it is understandable. But I have been wondering: It's a practice that I think we started very long time ago as humanity, as a group, as a collective. And I think maybe now we come to the point that we are forced to really look at what is burning and not in the other direction.

M Maria Ptqk 33:46

Yes, yes. I believe this is going to be a change, but in which way? Maybe it's not all bad. Maybe it's not all good.

C Christina Stadlbauer 34:02

Yeah, no, we cannot say, you cannot say - step by step.

M Maria Ptqk 34:07

No, but it's very interesting because it forces us like for instance, what is a virus? We don't know. Unless you studied biology or science. Most people, we don't know what the viruses so in four months, we have been...

C Christina Stadlbauer 34:26

We all became researchers, we all became researchers. What you explained before.

M Maria Ptqk 34:33

So all of a sudden, we have to understand what the virus is ---, I don't know a lot of words. I don't even know them in English because I have never used them in English. I only use them in Spanish, you know? And to understand that the virus and bacteria are totally

different entities.

C Christina Stadlbauer 34:55
Yes - different planets, one could say.

M Maria Ptqk 34:57
Different planets and... But we still buy these masks that are antibacterial. And it's like, okay, but this is a virus. But we go with our antibacterial masks, and that's fine.

C Christina Stadlbauer 35:13
That's what we have.

M Maria Ptqk 35:16
So um, yeah. So like a big planetary experiment of citizen science.

C Christina Stadlbauer 35:25
Yes, exactly. And everybody's knows now, much more than six months ago.

M Maria Ptqk 35:29
Yes, exactly. Yes. Even those that don't want to know. I mean, you are forced to learn.

C Christina Stadlbauer 35:36
Yes, exactly. So maybe, because we just talked about planets. You have a special interest in space and other planets and extra terrestrial thing. How does this feed into your practice and into your philosophy and also into your way of seeing the world, I mean, our world, our planet?

M Maria Ptqk 36:05
Yeah, you know, we are looking for life outside of the planet. And we don't even know the life in our own planet. Because, like, when you read, I was reading this book about mushrooms living in the abyssal spaces. We don't know anything about abyssal spaces

Like there is a huge number of organisms living there, mushrooms and others and microorganisms. And we don't know anything about them. And and when you see pictures of them, they really look like extraterrestrials. But then we go and invent extraterrestrial stories? Yes. You know,

C Christina Stadlbauer 36:51
Actually, we have them right here.

M Maria Ptqk 36:53
We have them here. But we can't reach them. And we can only see them through a lot of technical devices. Yes. In a way, my view of extraterrestrial life has also changed. getting more and more interested in reading more and more natural sciences books. And it's like, wow. But I can't think of an extraterrestrial being invented by science fiction that is half as fascinating as whatever of these creatures that you see in your.... nature documentaries from the abyssal spaces.

C Christina Stadlbauer 37:43
Yeah, it's beautiful that you say this, because I think it indeed before, we didn't have devices also to explore these terrestrial entities. So we had to invent them, and we had to imagine them. But now as we are becoming more capable of looking or finding or have also visualising, then indeed, the terrestrial life becomes so much more diverse.

M Maria Ptqk 38:07
Yes. Or insects or microorganisms? Yes. Or plants again, plants have a diversity, which is it's really fascinating. And I don't know who it was -and I found it very inspiring. That said, who - like thinking of this human suprematism - who told us that if there was an extraterrestrial intelligence, they would choose to, to contact us as humans, and not bacteria, or fungi.

C Christina Stadlbauer 38:47
Or plants - Yeah, indeed. I also heard this I don't know who said it. Yeah, so Maria, coming back to our practices, which are very much in the artistic fields. I found this Gabinete Sycorax, yes. And is described as inverted Museum of Natural Sciences. And I like this very much. This inversion. So, can you explain a little bit what this is, before I have a few more questions about the inversion?

M

Maria Ptqk 39:31

Well Sycorax is - I have this joke that it's my museum. So put a museum in your life. So I'm the director of this museum. Yeah, it's the museum I would like to visit ideally - Sycorax is not that because I don't have the resources to make it, but it comes out of the frustration of going to natural sciences Museum, and having the feeling that they were not talking precisely about what we've been talking now. And, or even farther, because there isn't even an ecological - in most of them- an ecological thinking. So this is the museum, I would like to visit. The natural sciences museum I would like to visit. So, from there the joke of it's a museum without a building, but with projects. So I put inside the projects like the umbrella for all the projects I produce, or I curate around this crossroads of Natural Sciences and art or cultural practices. And it's inverted as a, again, as a joke for I don't know if in English you say that, but I'm pretty sure it's also used inverted, like for gay people. In Spanish, you say "invertido" - not now anymore. It's like an old fashioned term. But you will say, invertido. So as something queer.

C

Christina Stadlbauer 41:21

They're upside down or something.

M

Maria Ptqk 41:22

Yeah, it's like upside down. But it also relates to queer or to bizarre or to strange. Yes. So that's the museum I direct.

C

Christina Stadlbauer 41:35

Yes. I love it. And so this type of museum that has a project, but not so much a building, but a building is also maybe not so important, because it could be decentralised it could be just a collection also, that is not in one place.

M

Maria Ptqk 41:58

Mm hmm.

C

Christina Stadlbauer 41:59

How do you have to find that these places help us in our attempt to be more inclusive with these other than humans, or with these other species that are inhabiting. Museum, I mean, these types of places, these types of projects, these types of seeing how to see the world

because this, of course, is a way of, like you said, it's your imagination of the museum that you would like to visit or that you would like to see.

M

Maria Ptqk 42:30

Yeah, well, I'm sometimes very anti-romantic with art, and sometimes very romantic with art. So my romantic side makes me think of art as a space of possibilities. And from that sense, because it has less constraints as other fields, but then it happens to have a lot of constraints. But it shouldn't, at least, there are some spaces of possibility, of experimentation. So I take it as a place without place or sometimes with place as a context where we can get together to reflect on multi species thinking or our connection to the environment, or what view of the world we are trying to get. But then the reality of the art world is often very conservative, because of its institutional and financial links. So it is attention there.

C

Christina Stadlbauer 43:59

Yeah, so there is something utopian, but also Yeah, it's there, as you said, as attention to the institutional but it is also an institution. It's an imagined institution like my Institute for relocation of biodiversity. I mean, I love to play with these invented platforms or places because they allow us to ...

M

Maria Ptqk 44:24

also the director of the Institute.

C

Christina Stadlbauer 44:27

Yes. And I would love love to have a museum like the Gabinete Sycorax which hosts many of these ideas or these projects, or these practices, because I think, and this is maybe my my, the last thing that I would like to talk about is this institutionalised idea of museum. I think there's a big crisis that the museum is undergoing at the moment because they realised it in their being so rigid and so defined and so stiff, they are in their own way somehow they are. Yeah, they make many things impossible. And so they came to this moment of trying to redefine themselves. And now they are stuck in their struggle, because they cannot find a consensus. They cannot find a redefinition. Yes. So I think these places like you are the director of and I'm very intrigued by and I would like to have it in a much bigger scale or many more of those. I think they're fantastic places because they allow exactly what is not possible in these defined museums.

M Maria Ptqk 45:41
Yes, I was following the link on your document to this this definition that was not agreed at the end?

C Christina Stadlbauer 45:49
Yes.

M Maria Ptqk 45:50
It wasn't a bad definition. But I understand it was not agreed. Because it was kind of ambitious.

C Christina Stadlbauer 45:56
Yeah, it was ambitious. But I also think there were I mean, of course, there is in this ICOM, the International Council of museums, They have a lot of members, and they have a board. And of course, they have a lot of very strong personalities. So I don't know exactly why they couldn't agree on this new definition. But it became a whole political discussion also. Yes. And now they opened the process to all the members, so everybody can now propose his own definition, or the parts that he would like to see back in the definition. And now it became already for a year to have been collecting, and now they're trying to make out of all these proposals, they try to make something but it's, it became a huge, very tedious and very, how can I say it's yeah, they are they are struggling, or they are wrangling with words, while at the same time, our world is on fire. So there is this, this tension in this whole process for me that is that makes it very interesting. And where I would really like to propose to hack this definition, I would like to become part of this process. And to make Gabinete Sycorax and the museum that I would like to open part of this, I would like to open this in a totally different way. And of course, this is utopian in itself. But I like the idea of thinking about it.

M Maria Ptqk 47:23
Yes. It's quite symptomatic, that the museum, that the definition of museum is in crisis. That they don't even agree on a definition. Yes, because it's the museum is, it's pretty much a paradigm of a way to understand the world, something that you can collect, classify, categorise, and there are those that know and those that don't know.

C Christina Stadlbauer 47:58
Yes.

M Maria Ptqk 47:58
So and all of that is falling apart. Yes, as the university I mean, the University hasn't still undergone its crisis, while it is in a permanent crisis. But it hasn't like exploded.

C Christina Stadlbauer 48:13
But while the museum also has not yet explored it, but I think I can say it's symptomatic of what is happening to our world in general. And, yeah, I don't know how this will end, maybe they will, they will find a way. But I was listening to a conference the other day, and it was the title was "Death to museums". And it was a very, it was a conference organised in the United States and they invited a lot of museum directors or curators to talk about this crisis that is happening. And many of these invited people said, it's impossible to fix this. It's too complex and too messed up. So actually, the only way to go about it is to to kill it. And I, yeah, it was very interesting to listen to these people, because there is a frustration also from within these institutions. It's not just a frustration from us, who are working in a totally different manner. But even the people who are inside they see that this is just not - yeah, it's old fashioned it's not representing anymore. How? Because in a way, I see museums as ... -how can I say - they should tell us how to look at the world, they should open a certain gaze, that a person who's not schooled in natural sciences can then perceive natural sciences in this way. But I think the way that they're doing it is so old fashioned, and so it doesn't function. It doesn't work anymore. I think this whole crisis is indeed reflected inside the museum outside the museum. It's in this definition, so it's all over the place.

M Maria Ptqk 49:58
Yeah, but then, there's the question of memory, right? Because museum is also a place for archives and memory. And it's kind of risky. When we this temptation of putting down places of where we keep the memory. Even if it's a memory, we don't, that we don't see ourselves represented anymore. But you understand what I mean?

C Christina Stadlbauer 50:34
I totally understand. And you know, there was an episode in Brussels, because in Brussels, there is the - so called Africa museum that is actually called the Museum of Central Africa. And it was a museum that was opened during colonial times, with terrible episodes, they, I

mean, they were dragging people from Africa, to Brussels so that people could see them. And they were kind of in a cage. It was, it was terrible. It was really extremely colonial. And until 2015, this museum was that way. And then they closed it for a full renovation. And now it was reopened I think, in 2019, and it was a catastrophe again, because they tried to somehow change it and tell the story differently. But it didn't work at all. And they- it's catastrophic. When you go there actually, not nothing much changed. Because they tried to keep also the objects that they had, and they try to exhibit them now differently. but they stay these objects that were stolen pieces, and I mean, it's it the history is just extremely complex. Yeah. And a lot of people say that what they should have done, and I agree, they should have made a museum about the museum. So leave everything the way it is, and say :this is how we used to see things.



Maria Ptqk 51:58

Yes, that's interesting.



Christina Stadlbauer 52:01

Because then you can actually reflect much better than if you try to change a little bit, but actually the soul remains the same. Yes.



Maria Ptqk 52:12

Yes.



Christina Stadlbauer 52:14

In a way, this has a bit to do with this redefinition, because I think it's a very complex process, because the museums are I mean, they cannot look from the outside. So there is a blind spot also in this whole process, of course, yes.



Maria Ptqk 52:30

Yes. And there are so much entangled also with political institutions, and, and also companies, private companies. Yes. Even public museums, yes. for funding and so on. Now, most museum have partners from the media entertainment, from energy, from finances, like what the main fields, like running the world, and running capitalism. So it's, it's, it's really difficult to, in that institutional context, to make another statement.

- C** Christina Stadlbauer 53:22
Yeah. And to make a real shift. And I think in that sense, this conference was, although it sounds a bit funny, but I think in that sense, the conference was very serious, because maybe that's the only way to kill the museum and to just make it new, make a new concept entirely. So maybe, Maria, our our invented and imagined institutions are going to be the Museum of the future.
- M** Maria Ptqk 53:51
yes, yes. Why not? Why not? Or the Museum of the present? But no one knows. It's already the music of the present. But they don't see it? I don't know. But it's, it's an interesting way like, like to meet people that are in the same mental vibe. Like, you have your institute, I have my museum.
- C** Christina Stadlbauer 54:29
Yeah, so maybe we have to invent an ICOM, parallel to the ICOM with all the people who have similar projects going on. And make a definition that we can then present to the ICOM.
- M** Maria Ptqk 54:42
That's really interesting.
- C** Christina Stadlbauer 54:46
So let's start with a conference of all the museum directors and Institute directors.
- M** Maria Ptqk 54:54
There's a bunch of them.
- C** Christina Stadlbauer 54:56
I'm sure there's a bunch of them.
- M** Maria Ptqk 54:58
Okay. Let's organised a conference with all the serious stuff they have in conferences like

papers and panel discussions and posters and whatever.

C Christina Stadlbauer 55:13

Yes. Excellent. All decentralised and all inventive. Very nice. So thank you very much. This was a very inspiring and very nice.

M Maria Ptqk 55:30

Thank you, Christina, because for me, it's very interesting to have conversations where we make these points explicit. You know what I mean? And so yeah, it's a pleasure. Really, really. And I look forward to see what you do with it? And if it's the beginning of series, or, it's interesting, isn't it? I mean, coming back to the conference, maybe the beginning of the conference?

C Christina Stadlbauer 56:10

So give me a little bit of time. I will now do the three, then we can listen to the three. And but yes, I would like to really continue this because I think I mean, the incentive for this whole, my entire APASS project was a little bit to hack, this definition of this official definition of museums. And when I started to go into this in more detail, I understood that of course, this is probably impossible, but it's also not really I mean, I don't care what they are, what they define, what I actually care about is how can these practices that we do like you and me and many other people - how can they make a shift in how we see things or help also other people and maybe even help the museums? Because they are also struggling. Yeah. I think we need just a new a new way of going about these things. And then I thought, to have conversations is one way of starting but of course, I would love to create some sort of platform where these practices somehow come together and can help each other also.

M Maria Ptqk 57:16

I think this is a great way.

C Christina Stadlbauer 57:20

Yeah. But I'm very interested in having a conference at some point. Maybe next year, I don't know when, when it's a bit also clearer - who, yeah, when we have collected a few of these, these projects, but I think it would be quite a statement also.

M Maria Ptqk 57:44
Totally,

C Christina Stadlbauer 57:45
Not only towards the museums, but also towards - how we're trying to really do the practice so that it can be inclusive. Not by changing and shifting and pulling a little bit, but by really inventing something that is a bit different and very precarious. But this is how I think our planet in any ways is very precarious. I think life is precarious. Yes. Yes.

M Maria Ptqk 58:15
Yes, that's what the viewers tell us. And, and we deny that as well. That we are very fragile, very vulnerable. But not because of the virus.

C Christina Stadlbauer 58:27
No. No, because of the position we have manoeuvred ourselves in, we are actually in a dead end. And we are not willing to look at the wall. No, no. Turning around or I don't know finding another exit. We're not willing to look at this wall. And this makes it very difficult. Yes.

M Maria Ptqk 58:45
How there is an author that I'm sure you would be interested in - I don't know if he there is something in English - it's Baptiste Morizot. So he's French, but he's quite young. I mean, quite young, he must be in his 40s. And so very young for a known philosopher, and he's French but he comes from this style of Anglo Saxon philosopher that is very much from the wild, you know that he goes out with his mountain boots to look for wolves and to listen to wolves and then he goes ski and looking for wolves and I read this book called the ways of being alive and there is something in English and I'm going to send it to you. Everything is in French. I read it in French. Yeah.

C Christina Stadlbauer 59:48
Yes, I can also read in French, it is a bit difficult but I can manage.

M Maria Ptqk 59:52

But I'm gonna send you something. Okay, I look for it.

 Christina Stadlbauer 1:00:01
Okay, very good.

 Maria Ptqk 1:00:03
And yeah, I'm so glad, Christina that we had this conversation.

 Christina Stadlbauer 1:00:08
I'm very happy. Thank you very much. It was really inspiring and nice. I mean, it was just nice, as you say to, to talk about these things and to find, yeah, shared opinions, but also just to make it explicit, as you say to just, yeah, put it on the table.

 Maria Ptqk 1:00:23
Thank you very much, Christina.