

... what do eggs have to do with it?
Andrea Fraser on
collectors, collecting, collections

«*I just don't like eggs!*» is the first solo exhibition ever by an Italian institution devoted to the research of artist, writer, and thinker Andrea Fraser (USA, 1965). A survey of Fraser's work investigating collectors, collecting, the art market, and the intersections between private and public collections, the exhibition spans the artist's entire research from the late 1980s to the most recent productions, including a new work created for the exhibition. Taken from the script of Fraser's performance *May I Help You?*, the title «*I just don't like eggs!*», itself a quotation from an art collector, intimates the language and mentality of collecting as an enactment of taste, desire, distinction, possession, categorization, negation, exclusivity, and the exercise of choice as an expression of power.

As one of the most radical and influential artists of her generation, Fraser's pioneering commitment to *Institutional Critique** investigates the social, financial, and affective economies of the organizations, sectors, groups, and individuals in the cultural world. Performatively embodying the data generated through her research, her practice is as physical and affective as it is critical and intellectual, employing tools of humor and pathos as well as analysis while employing strategies ranging from the discursive staging of debates, to performative actions, scripts, data, and forays into museums that shift the standards, models, and rules of the art system and critically redefine our relationships with it. The artist's sociological and psychoanalytic approach thus becomes the lens through which to interrogate the art world itself and highlight its contradictions, projections, wills, and desires.

The context of the Fondazione Antonio Dalle Nogare – a non-profit institution originated from a private collection with a focus on predominantly Western lines of enquiry into the Arte Povera, Conceptual Art, and Minimal Art – serves as the starting point for an exhibition that examines the very concept of art as commodity and the layered (and often contradictory) relationships between

artists and collectors. Revealing the structural connections between the art market and the concentration of wealth and power, as well as between art and politics, Fraser's exhibition represents an opportunity to redefine the categories of culture, class, privilege, their systemic institutionalization and psychological internalization, and to rethink our positions in the field of art, reimagining the structures and relationships entertained within it. Starting at the entrance to the Foundation where visitors are welcomed, the exhibition primarily is installed in the ground-floor Commission Room, but also spreads and infiltrates other areas of the institution – sometimes as a hyper-text, sometimes as a meta-exhibition – including the collection galleries, the library, the rooms and passageways, and the outdoor courtyard. Analogously to the works it presents, «*I just don't like eggs!*» unfolds in space as a critical analysis and a narrative unveiling of the mechanisms of the art system – which also define the institution that hosts it, its collection, its architecture, its program, and its practical functions.

Andrea Viliani with Vittoria Pavesi

* First associated with art from the late 1960s and the early 1970s, *Institutional Critique* covers a set of research and artistic practices founded on the critique of artistic institutions (museums, galleries, fairs, temporary exhibitions). Its methodology consists of revealing and questioning the mechanisms of thought, operating strategies, lack of neutrality, and indeed, the structural ambivalences and contradictions of the art system on a theoretical, political, and aesthetical level. Conventionally, its «first generation» is represented by artists such as Michael Asher, Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Christopher D'Arcangelo, Dan Graham, Hans Haacke, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, John Knight, Adrian Piper, and Martha Rosler. Contemporary with feminist movements and the genesis of gender studies, closely related to Conceptual Art, with its systematic deconstruction of language, and seminal to the reflection on the criteria of authorship and originality of *Appropriation Art*, *Institutional Critique* demystifies the ways in which the artistic subject – as well as the artwork it produces – are exhibited, communicated, and ultimately reified and instrumentalized by artistic institutions. Operating in reaction to the growing objectification and commodification of the artwork in the contemporary context of neoliberal economies and cognitive capitalism, relative to the Western modernist ideals of the autonomy and universality of art, Fraser's research differs and characterizes itself by addressing the institution not only as a physical place, where power is clearly located and easily identifiable, but as a fluid set of positions and social relations that are internalized as well as institutionalized, rendering mechanisms of domination deeply entangled in macro-economic contexts as well as affective economies of

aspiration and desire. Within *Institutional Critique*, Fraser is also one of the first artists to operate through performance, introducing her own body and biographical experiences as a tool to renegotiate and recontextualize the artistic institution and, with it, the entire art system, not only interpreting but embodying the multiplicity of roles that are the subject of her institutional analysis. From this point of view, Fraser has not only been among the first artists to use the term *Institution of Critique* to refer to both the artists of the previous generation and herself, but also to recognize that the practices it describes do not aim to escape or destroy the institutions they criticize, like historical avant-garde positions. Instead, she defines *Institutional Critique* as reflexive critique within any site of operation. It is this position, she writes in *From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique* (*Artforum International*, September 2005, vol. 44, no. 1, p. 278), that «allows institutional critique to judge the institution of art against the critical claims of its legitimizing discourses, against its self-representation as a site of resistance and contestation, and against its mythologies of radicality and symbolic revolution.»

RECEPTION MAIN FLOOR

1. *Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk*, 1989
SD video transferred to digital format, sound, 29'28"
Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles
Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk marks the culmination of Fraser's early research into museums as well as the development of her strategy of performing institutional critique through the appropriation of seemingly innocuous institutional mechanisms like wall texts and guided tours. By focusing on embodiment, she reveals how cultural institutions define aesthetic and ethical criteria for their individual visitors as well as for society as a whole. Dressed as a guide named Jane Castleton, the artist leads viewers on a tour of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. During her tour, Castleton/Fraser does not focus on the artworks but highlights the social and political structures at work in museums, such as the relationship between private philanthropy and public welfare programs, and as a visitor affiliation to the dominant criteria of culture through membership programs. Lingering in the spaces-times of service and public reception, embodying the museum's own discourse, which she quotes, with both irony and pathos, the visit/performance enacts the selective hierarchies perpetuated by cultural institutions and how these are internalized by their audiences as tastes, values, and systems of thought.
2. *Kunstvermittlung* (Art Mediation), 1995
13 wall texts. Ed. of I + I AP
Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles
Conceived as a site-specific work for the Generali Foundation, the 13 wall texts that make up *Kunstvermittlung* feature quotations from interviews Fraser conducted for *A Project in Two Phases* (number 12) capturing differing perspectives on art, corporate culture, and the company's cultural sponsorship. Intended for installation among the works in the Generali Foundation's collection, the texts serve both as commentary on other artworks on display and as didactic accounts of the institution itself. They allow us to reconstruct the intentions behind the company's investments in works of art, ranging from developing a cultured and progressive image for the insurance company – with which the elite among its clients can identify – to the biopolitical control of its employees, induced

not only to respond to certain targets of professional performativity, but also to adhere to the canons of psycho-physical well-being suggested by the corporation. The result is a portrait of the corporate world as a field of power, where employees represent the cogs in a financial and social mechanism that governs their habits and perceived needs.

COMMISSION MAIN FLOOR

3. Andrea Fraser and Jeff Preiss
ORCHARD Document: May I Help You?, 1991/2005/2006
Film, 16mm, transferred to SD video, loop
Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles
Written in 1991 and revised and translated for subsequent performances, *May I Help You?* presents six different positions in relationship to culture, each paradigmatic of a different social class: from a visual arts connoisseur to a person who feels not at all represented but rather excluded by the system of museums and galleries. By modulating her tone of voice, posture, and language in enacting each position, the performer simultaneously presents not only different but differentiating and conflicting

points of view, highlights the function of art and cultural consumption to express social hierarchies of class and status. The result is an unsettling as much as revealing portrayal of the induced dynamics of acceptance, identification, and negation within collective artistic and cultural criteria and its embodied psychological impact. Fraser and filmmaker Jeff Preiss were two of 12 partners who created and ran the cooperative for-profit art Orchard in New York from 2005 to 2008. After performing *May I Help You?* live during the opening exhibition at the gallery, Fraser and Preiss collaborated to create *ORCHARD Document: May I Help You?*. In addition to Fraser's performance, the film captures the opening exhibition and members of the Orchard community, many of whom appear in the film as gallery visitors. Fraser recorded three additional versions of *May I Help You?* (numbers 8, 18 and 19) all of which are presented together here for the first time.

4. *Aren't they lovely?*, 1992
Installation with wall texts, artworks and other objects, exhibition brochure, installation photographs California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; Bequest of Thérèse Bonney, Class of 1916; Archival materials: Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

Invited to make her own installation with works from the collection of the University Art Museum at the University of California Berkeley (UCB) (now the Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive, or BAMPPFA), Fraser takes on the role of curator, focusing her attention on Thérèse Bonney, a UCB alumna whose collection was donated to the university as the sole legatee in her will. In addition to 55 artworks and objects accessioned by the university museum (including artworks by Dufy, Rouault, Delauney, Art Deco furniture, and one painting by Renoir), Fraser found over 100 other objects from Bonney's home in storage at the museum. These coins and medals, eyeglasses, photographs, and souvenirs existed in a kind of institutional purgatory, uninventoried and without the status of artworks. Fraser exhibited all these objects along with over 300 wall texts and extended object labels drawn from the museum's archive. These texts tell the story of the transition of cultural objects from private to public spheres, revealing the complex power relations between museums and donors and the conflicts between the criteria they apply to art. By reintroducing domestic culture and objects of only personal value alongside the rarified culture legitimized by museums in the public sphere, Fraser short-circuits the value system proposed by the institution

itself. In an exhibition that raises questions about the hierarchies of art history and reveals the need for personal legitimation behind donations to public institutions, the museum is presented as the context in which the cultural aspirations of individuals and entire communities are not only presented and shared as such, but shaped and judged. A portion of this exhibition is recreated here for the first time since 1992, with loans from BAMPPFA.

5.

Eine Gesellschaft des Geschmacks

(*A society of taste*), 1993

Audio installation: 5 tracks, 91'33";

poster, photographs, catalogue

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

A Society of Taste analyses a German *Kunstverein* (or art association) as a social field of conflict and competition for different forms of status and capital, belying the self-representation of such institutions as egalitarian community spaces. Responding to Helmut Draxler's invitation to mount an exhibition at the *Kunstverein* in Munich, Fraser conducted extensive individual interviews with its nine board members, which she edited together into six scripts suggesting a series of conversations among them. The scripts were then recorded, performed by

the interviewees themselves, and edited as four different audio tracks. These audio tracks were then presented as a four-channel sound work in dialogue with an installation of 18 artworks borrowed from the board members' private collections, ranging from paintings by Gerhard Richter and the School of Watteau, to Biedermeier family portraits, to a signed photograph of Joseph Beuys. Rather than using historiographical, artistic, or formal criteria to arrange these artworks, Fraser installed them according to the interests of their owners, revealed in the interviews, which are largely arbitrary with regard to the objects themselves. Inspired by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, Fraser brings the structuring dynamics of the institution out into the open, analyzing these through five categories: contemporary and geographical centrality, social capital, educational capital, economic capital objectified in the collection, and the manifestation of the resulting struggles in the context of class relations.

6.

Dirty Data: Sammlung Schürmann, 1992

Audio installation, 40'45"; exhibition catalogue and text, laser print, 88 pages

Ed of I + I AP

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–

Paris–Los Angeles

Invited in 1992 by collector Wilhelm Schürmann to conceive a project for the presentation of his collection at the Ludwig Forum in Aachen, Fraser developed an audio tour of the exhibition edited from a 9-hour interview with the collector. Conducted both at his home and at the museum, the interview, and the ambient sounds of its context, capture the transition of artworks from private, domestic space to the public sphere. Along with the audio, the work includes the full, unedited transcript of the recorded interviews which, together, paint an intimate and non-stereotypical portrait of all the articulations of the figure of the collector.

7.

Another Kind of Pragmatism, 1992

Interview-based text work. First published in *Forum International*, Vol. III, No. 11 (January–February 1992): 64–67)

Courtesy the artist

Published in 1992 in *Forum International* magazine, *Another Kind of Pragmatism* is a narrative interview with Colin de Land, Fraser's art dealer and a central figure of underground New York in the 1980s and 90s, conducted inside his gallery American Fine Arts, Co. in New York's Soho. Inspired by the sociological interviews in-

cluded in Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction: The Social Critique of Taste* (1979), Fraser's text does not aim to paint a portrait of the interviewee but rather to capture the principles and ways in which taste is formed and oriented in the contemporary art world.

The title evokes the «taste for necessity» that the French sociologist identifies as an expression of the working classes who do not conceive of cultural objects as expressions of taste but expect them to fulfill a pragmatic function. This he opposes to the «aesthetic disposition» of dominant classes that distance and negate necessity. Under Fraser's quasi-sociological lens, de Land's experimental art gallery appears not only as challenge to the art market but to the class dynamics that structure it. *Another Kind of Pragmatism* is Fraser's first interview-based work.

8.

May I Help You?, 1991

Video, color, sound; 20'7"

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

May I Help You? was first performed in 1991 at American Fine Arts Co. in New York in an exhibition staged in cooperation with Allan McCollum, who created a set of *Plaster Surrogates* with red frames especially for the perfor-

mance. Fraser cast and directed three actors posing as full-time gallery staff who delivered a 20-minute monolog to everyone who came in gallery.

This video captures the performance of one of these actors, Ledlie Borgerhoff.

Fraser subsequently recorded three additional versions of *May I Help You?* (numbers 3, 18, and 19) all of which are presented together here for the first time.

9.

Preliminary Prospectuses, 1993

4 parts; 4 page brochure

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

In the early 1990s, Fraser attempted to theorize a model of art practice as a form of service provision, as opposed to goods production. Her *Preliminary Prospectuses* represent her effort to put this model into practice. They constitute the practical and conceptual basis for a number of subsequent projects in the 1990s, notably *Don't Postpone Joy, or, Collecting Can Be Fun* and *A Project in Two Phases*, also included in this exhibition. Drafted in four versions – *For Individuals*, *For Corporations*, *For Cultural Constituency Organizations*, and *For General Audience Institutions* – the *Prospectuses* hold a hybrid status as promotional material, contract templates, conceptual artworks,

and performance scores. They perform a contractual function but adopt an advertising logic, appropriating the vocabulary and forms typical of organizational consulting and position both organizations and individuals in the art world as «clients». For their first presentation, at American Fine Arts, Co., Fraser temporarily transformed the gallery into a consulting office. Engaging with the tertiary service economy that emerged after World War II, Fraser focuses on the social relations underlying the production of artworks and offers services that transform her position as an artist – and consequently the «cultural capital» that the artist herself embodies – into an object of negotiation.

10.

Don't Postpone Joy or Collecting Can Be Fun, 1993

Text, 54 pages, laser print on archival paper, metal binder.

Ed of 1 + 1 AP

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

The first application of her *Preliminary Prospectus For Individuals*, the text-based artwork *Don't Postpone Joy* includes two versions of an interview conducted by Fraser with artist and collector Rudi Molacek, who commissioned the project. The metal binder holds a verbatim transcript of Molacek's responses

during the interview, without any editing or punctuation. On the wall above, this 27-page transcript appears in a form reminiscent of conceptual poetry with just a few words floating on each page. Created by removing most of the text, these pages perform an interpretation by highlighting moments of memory and desire, suspending them in space to materialize the dialectic of having and lacking that defines the psychology collecting. The standardized and impersonal method suggested by the *Prospectus* turns into a psychotherapeutic session in which, above all, it is the unexpressed that draws a portrait of the collector's personality. To the collector, postponing the joy of possession risks disappearing into the emptiness of being.

11.

Collected: The Lady Wallace's Inventory, 1997

25 wall texts on paper

Ed. of 3 + 1 AP

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

Originally presented at the Wallace Collection in London as part of the diffused exhibition *Collected*, curated by Neil Cummings, *The Lady Wallace's Inventory* is based on a 19th-century inventory of Sir Richard and Lady Wallace's private mansion, which became a state museum in 1900. Fraser dis-

covered the hand-written inventory of over 45,000 objects in the museum's archive and had it transcribed for the first time. From this transcription, she created wall texts that were installed in all of the museum's public rooms, including the gift shop, listing the former function of the room and its contents – from artworks to jewelry to bedding to horses and feeding pails – with objects retained in the museum marked with an asterisk. These lists, which measure from 18 centimeters to over 4 meters long, trigger a reflection on the criteria of inclusion and exclusion adopted in the process of forming a public collection from among the objects of a domestic environment, similar to the *Aren't They Lovely* project of 1992 (number 4). The variable length of the texts also brings to light how hierarchies of taste and social status structure domestic space.

12.
A Project in Two Phases, 1994 – 1995
Archival material, poster, books
Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

In 1994, Fraser began a two-year investigation into corporate art collecting and corporate art sponsorship at the EA-Generali Foundation in Vienna (now Generali Foundation). Founded in 1988 by the Austrian branch of the Tri-

este-based international Generali insurance company, the Generali Foundation began collecting contemporary art with a dual purpose: «confronting the employees with contemporary art» and increasing the corporation's public prestige. Using her *Preliminary Prospectus: For Corporations* as a framework, the first «investigatory» phase of Fraser's project included extensive interviews with the Foundation's staff, its Board of Directors and Board of Governors, employee representatives, and its professional art advisors. Her in-depth research culminated with the publication of a report. As a critique of how the number-crunching corporation used art to give itself a human face, Fraser limited the design of her report and of all promotional material for the project to black and white, creating a poster with only the Generali logo and a few lines of text, and a report without images of art but only of the company's own advertisements. In a complex multi-column format, the report maps different positions existing within and between the corporate field of employees and management and the art field of Foundation staff and advisors, revealing a general hostility towards the contemporary art collection within the corporation and a prevalent disregard for employees among the art experts.

The second «interventionary» phase of the project was conceived

following the analysis elaborated in the report and consisted of two installations. Fraser created a «negative» or «artless installation» by removing all the collection artworks from the corporate headquarters, and a second «art installation» by presenting these artworks in the Foundation's new exhibition space – installed in the same order as they were in the headquarters, reflecting its aesthetics and hierarchies of corporate offices. With these installations, Fraser both exposed and inverted the logic of corporate collections.

13.
Um Monumento às Fantasias Descartadas (A Monument to Discarded Fantasies), 2003
Mixed media (Brazilian carnival costumes). Two versions
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin–Cologne–Munich

One of Fraser's few sculptures, *Um Monumento* is composed of costumes that the artist collected during and after carnival in Rio de Janeiro in 2003, including many that were worn by revelers and then discarded at the exit to the parade grounds. In this context, the role played by the artist is comparable to that of a collector. Yet, the artist's act of collecting diverges from the conventional connotations of the term: instead

of rare and valuable products, she collects discarded objects belonging to a varied group of people. The work is only seemingly reminiscent of Michelangelo Pistoletto's *La Venere degli Stracci* (The Venus of Rags, 1968). In the context of Brazil's «anthropophagic» culture, the symbols and references objectified in the costumes also represents accumulated cultural legacies of colonialism and slavery. The term fantasia in the title holds a double meaning in Portuguese, referring both to costume and to the imagination or, within Fraser's psychoanalytic framework, scenarios of desire and the contents of the unconscious. The heap of these disheveled and rumpled garishly colored remnants thus raises the dual and contradictory feeling of a precarious monument of abandoned dreams, of a melancholic if vivid celebration that is now over.

14.
Form, 1997
Silkscreen print on paper, with box. Ed. of 30 + 1 AP
Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

Invited to contribute to a portfolio of editions produced by the Generali Foundation, Fraser produced *Form*, a sheet measuring 60x42 cm on which eight copies of the same form are printed on a

single page. Actually constituting the purchase contract for the work itself, this *Form* is to be filled in by every collector who acquires it, becoming an empirical and procedural record of the history of its own ownership, an act of unraveling the invisible processes of the art market – a work at once conceptual and contractual.

15.

Untitled, 2003/2004

Audio installation, loop, 10'

Ed. of 5 + 2 AP

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

Untitled, 2003/2006

Project and documentation. Original press release, video stills, installation photo. Ed. of 7 + 3 AP

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin–Cologne–Munich

Among Fraser's most celebrated works and *pièce de scandale*, *Untitled* exists in the form of a video installation, an audio installation, and an image-text work, and is shown here in its last two versions. The project originated in 2002 when the artist asked gallerist Friedrich Petzel to find a collector to take part in a work that involved having sex with the artist and pre-purchasing one of an edition of five videos documenting the encounter. Having arranged the sale,

Fraser and the collector met at a hotel in early 2003. The resulting video, recorded in the style of surveillance footage, is not edited except for the deletion of the sound. For the audio installation, the video's audio track was edited to include all audible sounds – except those made by the participating collector.

The result is an emotionally saturated ambient soundscape that projects the listener into a voyeuristic position, but also one of awkward identification with the collector as the artist's object. With a feminist gesture of re-appropriation and self-determination of her own body, Fraser enacts the underlying commodification of artists along with artworks and the fantasies of exhibitionistic fulfillment and libidinal release that have shaped the relationships between artists and collectors for centuries. At the same time, she reduces this relationship to economic form as an exchange of goods and services.

16.

L'1% C'est Moi (The 1% is me), 2011

Text first published in *Texte zur Kunst*, issue no. 83 (September 2011): 114 – 126

Vynil prints

Courtesy the artist

First published in an issue of the German art journal *Texte zur Kunst* devoted to art collecting, *L'1% C'est*

Moi develops research Fraser began the previous year for an article commissioned, but then declined, by *Artforum International*. In that text, she detailed the involvement of board members of the Museum of Modern Art in New York in the banking and real estate crisis of 2007 – 2008. In *L'1% C'est Moi*, Fraser refocused this research on *ARTnews'* annual Top 200 Collectors list, while expanding on her analysis of the relationships between contemporary art collectors, art market trends, and the massive global wealth concentration that spurred the explosive global expansion of the art world in the 1990s and 2000s. The essay considers the art world as a primary beneficiary of the neoliberal policies that have exacerbated exploitation and inequality while largely reducing artworks to financial instruments and luxury goods. The title of the text references the notorious statement of absolute monarchy attributed to French sovereign Louis XIV, the so-called *Roi Soleil*, «l'État, c'est moi», as well as to Gustave Flaubert's admission «Madame Bovary, c'est moi», with which the author identifies with the character he created and her rebellion against bourgeois hypocrisy. Fraser's version insists that any critical analysis of the relationship between artists and wealth concentration must be self-reflexive, as artists benefit from this relationship, with the most successful numbering

amongst the 1% themselves.

17.

Index, 2011

Graph first published in *Artforum International*, vol. 49, no. 10 (Summer 2011): 431

Courtesy the artist

Invited by curator Jacob Fabricius to participate in *24 Advertisements* with a project that would be published as an anonymous advertisement in a magazine of her choice, Fraser chose *Artforum International*. Placed among advertisements for MFA programs, Fraser's advertisement is a graph that relates the growing concentration of economic wealth in the U.S. to price trends in the art market, suggesting how the widening gap between wealth and poverty is driving the art market. Making use of the incontrovertibility and immediacy of data and diagrams, the artist evokes the basic economics of how art collectors use art to exert their power and express their privileged status over other groups and individuals, and how this power is itself the basis of art's monetary value.

18.

May I Help You? (Kann ich helfen?), 1991/2013

High-definition video, color, sound; looped, 16'46"

Ed. of 5 + 1 AP

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

Fraser restaged *May I Help You?* at the Museum Ludwig Cologne in 2013. Presented in conjunction with Fraser's retrospective at the museum, the performance was staged in the permanent collection galleries where some of McCollum's *Plaster Surrogates* from the original 1991 exhibition were installed. In addition to performing the work herself, Fraser cast and directed two actresses to perform the work in German. This video captures the performance of one of these actresses, Suzan Erentok. Fraser recorded three other versions of *May I Help You?* (numbers 3, 8, 19) all of which are presented together here for the first time.

19.
It's a beautiful house, isn't it? (May I Help You?), 1991/2011

High definition video, color, sound, 17'45". Ed. of 5 + 1 AP

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

In 2011, Fraser created her third video based on the 1991 script of *May I Help You?* for the exhibition *91 92 93 Part Two: Simon Leung, Andrea Fraser and Lincoln Tobier*. For this performance, Fraser adapted the script to address the historic modernist domestic architecture

of the 1922 Schindler House in Los Angeles, a building run as contemporary art venue by the MAK Center for Art and Architecture. In the context of a building designed by Rudolph Schindler as his own residence, *It's a beautiful house, isn't it?* subtly shifts the script's focus from art to architecture, interior design, and the real estate market, extending Fraser's research on the private dynamics of domestic space and the culture of living. In the script that still follows the pattern of the six-voice monologue, the characters' relationships to their private environments are revealed to be indicative of their respective social statuses, and the performance becomes an opportunity to re-imagine a living space that can transcend class divisions. Fraser recorded three additional versions of *May I Help You?* (numbers 3, 8, and 18) all of which are presented together here for the first time.

20.
2016 in Museums, Money, and Politics, 2018

Vinyl installation
Book, 944 pages, The MIT Press
Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

2016 in Museums, Money, and Politics is both an artistic work of *institutional critique* and an essential tool for delving into the relationships

between politics and art institutions in the United States of America. In a 944-page volume, Fraser documents the contributions to political parties or groups made by the boards of directors of 128 art museums, including at least one from each federal state, during the 2016 election-cycle in which Donald Trump was elected president. The book begins with an extensively research introduction in which Fraser traces the intersecting histories in the US of museums, nonprofit trusteeship, and political campaign finance laws against the backdrop of a plutocratic, rather than democratic, civil society. This is followed by information about each museum represented, including a pie chart illustrating the percentage of its board making political contributions and their political orientation. Organized like a telephone book, bulk of the book lists over 36,000 individual political contributions made by board members, presented alphabetically by board member name. Following the publication of the book, Fraser created a large-scale diagram representing each museum with two pie charts: the one included in the book illustrating the political orientation of its board members, together with a second chart illustrating the percentage of the money donated that went to Democratic (blue) or Republican (red) politicians and groups. Over and over, the diagrams show a significant increase

in red from the charts showing individual donors to the charts showing the amounts donated by the board members of each museum, once again linking art and wealth concentration, this time to conservative politics.

21.
Index (Stack), 2011/2014
Stack of posters, print on paper
Ed. of 10
Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

Taking inspiration from the works of Cuban artist Felix González-Torres, Fraser reimagined her 2011 graph (number 17) as take-away posters, creating *Index (Stack)* to benefit for the organization Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.), of which she was then board president at the time. Founded in New York in 2008 with the aim of establishing minimum standards of compensation and support for artists in the nonprofit arts economy, W.A.G.E. fights for more equitable distribution of resources within the art world itself. The stack of posters installed on the ground features a print of *Index*, a 2011 project published as an anonymous advertisement in *Artforum International*, in which the artist links the distribution of economic wealth across the U.S. and price trends in the art market. As with González-Torres's

poster stacks, visitors are invited to take posters with them, further disseminating the work outside the confines of the art institution.

22.

Index II, 2014

Graph, print on vinyl

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

Created in conjunction with her audio installation *Tehachapi at Kings Road*, (see 26 below), *Index II* adds three additional data points to Fraser's earlier juxtaposition of art market trends and wealth concentration: museum construction, prison construction, and incarceration rates in the US. Between 1970 and 2010, number of both museums and prisons tripled in the US, while incarceration rates exploded by 700 percent. *Index II* illustrates the correlation between the museum building and art market boom, on the one hand, and the epidemic of prison construction and mass incarceration on the other, linking both phenomena to growing wealth concentration. Museums and prisons could not be more different. Museums celebrate free and often transgressive expression, while prisons punish transgression by revoking freedom. Museums are showcase buildings, while prisons are located out of view. Yet these two institutions are linked as two sides

of the same coin of social polarization and containment. Museums are financed by the wealthy to accommodate the ever-increasing amount of art they collect, while more and more prisons are built to incarcerate people convicted for crimes related to poverty and marginalization. Museums house surplus of wealth in the form of no longer economically productive works of art, while prisons warehouse the surplus labor force of individuals excluded from the labor market. Frequented by social classes that usually never meet, museums and prisons represent the extremes of a symmetrical inequality. Fraser's graph – actually four different graphs made to collide – aims to close the gaps of polarization while challenging the social innocence and immunity of artists as well as visitors to museums and those who run them.

23.

Study model of the Fondazione Antonio Dalle Nogare, 2008/2009 Project by Walter Angonese and Andrea Marastoni Made in Berlin

Can the museum still be an autonomous subject, capable of performing a critical (and self-critical) exercise and engaging its audience in that critique? Displayed in the exhibition with the artist's and curators' endorsement, the presence of this maquette of

the Antonio Dalle Nogare Foundation does not provide answers, but merely poses a question, as does this text, if only by mentioning that the funds for the realization of this exhibition come mainly from the real estate construction business of the institution's founder – who is also a collector of contemporary art and whose private residence is located directly above the Foundation.

BLACK BOX MAIN FLOOR

24.

Hello! Welcome to the Tate Modern, 2007

Data projection installation, 3 – 5' per sequence

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

Originally presented in the permanent collection of London's Tate Modern, *Hello! Welcome to the Tate Modern* stages the experience of visiting a major global museum from the perspective of a visitor exposed to the continuous and layered stimuli from the institution. The source materials sampled by Fraser were compiled for the museum's handheld audiovisual guides and range from reproductions of the artworks on display to audio, video, and textual media. Created by the museum to

be accessed one by one, in Fraser's work they overlap in cycles of randomness and increasingly rapid sequences of sounds and images in which 20th-century art mingles with popular culture, directional infographic maps and educational games, while artists, curators, educators, communicators, and promoters vie for attention.

The dissonant cacophony of these unique and randomly-generated sequences portray the museum as an over-stimulating attention machine aimed at producing physical and cognitive consent through the systematic conditioning of visitors: from the guidance of their bodies in space to the formation and profiling of their thinking to the transmission of suggestible and replicable criteria and tastes.

SECOND FLOOR

25.

Dinner Party, 1992

Audio installation, 31'

Ed. of 5 + 1 AP

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

This sound installation captures fragments of conversations and ambient sound surreptitiously recorded by the artist during a dinner of the board members of an American art museum. Conceived for presentation in public

galleries among other artworks, Fraser's work is installed on the Foundation's second floor, alongside an artwork, from the private collection of Antonio Dalle Nogare, founder of the homonymous institution in which it is presented. Chatter about the art world mingles with the clinking of glasses and cutlery, interspersed with conversations about food, family, acquaintances, and decor. The artwork from the Collection becomes the mute witness to the alternation between personal sphere and social role, to the mix of specialized and mundane culture, to the polyphonic space between awareness and unawareness between the public and the hidden side of the art system in which the financial circumstances, political conditions, personal interests, and corporate strategies on which contemporary cultural institutions are founded are revealed with Buñuelian levity.

COURTYARD

26.

CCI Tehachapi at Kings Road,
2014

Audio installation

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York–Paris–Los Angeles

In this environmental sound in-

stallation Fraser stages the juxtaposition of art museums and prisons that she represents graphically in the contemporaneous work *Index II* (number 22).

By displacing sound she recorded at the California Correctional Institution Tehachapi, a maximum-security prison, to a museum space, she aims to close the social and spatial distance between museums as places that celebrate the virtuous ideals and progressive aspirations of society, beginning with freedom of thought and the movement of bodies, and prisons as places that denigrate and punish the transgression of those ideas with the deprivation of freedom. Originally conceived for installation at the Schindler House in Los Angeles, a contemporary art venue run by the MAK Center for Art and Architecture, the work also reflected on the ironic architectural parallels between the historic modernist residential building – designed by Rudolph Schindler as his own home in 1922 – and post-war prisons in California, which shared poured and raised cement-slab wall construction, cement floors, and slot windows. The sound's further displacement to the eco-brutalist courtyard of the Dalle Nogare Foundation presents a new set of parallels and contradictions: between openness and fortress-like security, between privacy and public service to one's community, and between asceticism as a luxury aesthetic and as-

ceticism as deprivation and punishment. The work activates a short-circuit that highlights how the structural relations between museums and prisons, between privilege and its denial, are symptomatic of the space-time of neoliberal societies that are increasingly polarized and driven to deny the very freedom they claim as their own.

BIOGRAPHY

Andrea Fraser was born in Billings, Montana (USA, 1965) and currently lives and works in Los Angeles, California, USA. She is a Professor in the Department of Art at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) School of the Arts and Architecture. Her artworks has been exhibited in solo exhibitions, amongst many others, at: the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA, USA (2022); the Philadelphia Museum of Modern Art, PA, USA and Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, Germany (2021); the Art Institute of Chicago, IL and the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY (both in 2016); Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Wien, Austria (2012); and at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (2010). Retrospectives of her work have been presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona, Spain, and MUAC UNAM, Mexico City, Mexico (2016); the Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria (2015); Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany (2013), and at the Kunstverein, Hamburg, Germany (2003). In 1993 she represented Austria in the 45th Venice Biennale alongside Christian Philipp Müller and Gerwald Rockenschaub. She participated in the 1993 and 2012 Whitney Biennial exhibitions, the 1998 and 2021 editions of the Bienal de São Paulo, Prospect 3 New Orleans in 2014, and the 12th Shanghai Biennale in 2018. Her project *2016 in Museums, Money, and Politics* (2018) was named the best art book of the decade by *ARTnews*. Fraser was the recipient of numerous awards, including: the *Foundation for Contemporary Arts Fellowship* (2017); the *Oskar Kokoschka Prize*, Vienna, Austria (2015); the *Wolfgang Hahn Prize*, Cologne, Germany (2013); the *Anonymous was a Woman Fellowship*, New York, NY (2012); the *Art Matters Inc. Fellowship*, New York, NY (1996 – 1997, 1990 – 1991, 1987 – 1988); the *National Endowment for the Arts Visual Arts Fellowship* (1991 – 1992); and the *Franklin Furnace Fund for Performance Art Award*, New York, NY (1990 – 1991).

«I just don't like eggs!»

Andrea Fraser on collectors, collecting, collections.

13.4.2024 – 22.2.2025

Curated by Andrea Viliani

with Vittoria Pavesi

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