

## The Role of the Freelance Curator in an Art Exhibition

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### Abstract

*This article analyses the role of the freelance curator in an art exhibition. The first part of the article conceptualises the notion of the modern curator and surveys the categories of curators. The next part of the article surveys the potential models of curation. There are 7 models of curation distinguished: self-reflexive, “sampling”, traditional, decentralisation curation, virtual curation, art – curator, collaborative – curatorial platform. The third part analyses the activity of a freelance curator in the art exhibition, which is divided into five stages, namely preliminary work, preparation and completion of the organisation plan, realisation, operation, dismantling and evaluation. Each stage is described in great detail specifying what works should be carried out by the curator. The final part of the article analyses the remarks of the curators which are then used to derive the formula of successful curatorship.*

**Keywords:** freelance curator; curation models; art exhibition; planning;

### 1. Introduction

Modern curation is a rapidly growing profession (Kennedy, 2012). The number of freelance curators who not only want to ensure a fluent course of the project, but also anticipate the “moves ahead”, is increasing. They have more “freedom” than institutional curators. They become art managers as well. Therefore, the competition among the curators increases; each of them seeks recognition and maximum profit possible. They sometimes compete even with artists. According to Hiller, at the moment, the curator has become “the figure” of art which replaces the artist and art criticism. Frequently, exhibiting works are more important than the artworks themselves. There are two possibilities: the curator-artist either becomes more important than the artists and their works (or at least temporarily pushes them to the background) or creates a new high quality product together with them (Tumpyt , 2014). In any case, the curator is no longer a passive participant in the field of art. His collaboration with the artist creates a product, namely an exhibition which can create an opportunity to enter the second market of art. The aim of this article is to analyse the activities of a freelance curator during the organisation of an art exhibition.

### 2. Conceptualisation of the Notion of a Modern Curator

Since the end of the 20th century, the notion of a modern curator has been gradually evolving. Table 1 introduces the definitions of the notion of the curator. It is noteworthy that there are more possible definitions. Each curator, art critic and artist names a different possible definition.

**Table 1. The opinions of different authors on the notion of curator**

Author, year	The definition of the notion of the curator
Lubyt (2006)	A curator is a mediator who enables various contexts of art to be revealed (Fomina, 2008:102).
Kreivyt (2006)	First of all, a curator is a generator of ideas who has a certain vision and by working together with artists, develops his own ideas and tries to implement this vision (Fomina, 2008:103).
d'Harnoncourt (2006)	A curator is a man who creates a certain connection between the art and the audience (Obrist, 2011:220).
Szeeman (1995)	A curator is an administrator, amateur, author of introductions, librarian, manager and accountant, animator, conservator, financier, and diplomat (Levi Strauss, 2006). He is also an exhibition-maker (Fowle, 2007:16). "Sometimes he is the servant, sometimes the assistant, sometimes he gives artists ideas of how to present their work; in group shows he's the coordinator, in thematic shows, the inventor" (Obrist, 2011:127).
Zovien (2012)	On the one hand, a curator is also like a creator, provided he creates a conceptual project; on the other hand, he can play the role of the manager of an artist (Zovien, 2012:49)
Klimašauskas (2013)	A curator is the one who takes care of and who cares. Usually, the curator cares about the organisation of meetings between the spectator and the work of art (Šetikait, 2013).
Obrist (2014)	"A good curator is like a good chef" (Jeffries and Groves, 2014).

Source: compiled by the author.

The similarities include the fact that most of the authors describe the curator as a manager who organises the meetings between the spectator and a piece of art, takes care of the presentation of works and can be a creator himself. The main difference is visible in the quote by Obrist (2011) that the curator is like a good chef. This means that the curator is responsible for everything: for the quality of the entire exhibition, the organisation of work, etc. He must be creative. Here one can remember the quote by Kreivyt (2006) that a curator is a generator of ideas who develops his idea and vision together with artists. A curator helps artists to express themselves. He can be responsible for many actions. All of this shows that curators do not have their strong identity yet; therefore, there cannot be a unified definition for it.

The role of the curator during the last decades has been gaining more importance (Vitkien, 2012:46). According to Hopps, curation is not only the introduction of works to a certain institution; it is a far more complex phenomenon (Fowle, 2007:15). Fowle states that curation can provide a platform to realise artists' ideas and interests, it must be responsive to the situations in which it occurs, and it should address timely artistic, social, cultural or political issues creatively (Fowle, 2007:14-16). Therefore, the curator is an ideologist; he can find various topics and analyse them. He performs the work of an artist-analyst.

Usually, there are two main categories of curators:

- **Freelance curators.** They do not work in specific institutions. The position of a freelance curator is usually related to the notion of the free creator formed by the avant-garde movements (Fomina, 2008:109-110). They collaborate with galleries, funding institutions, etc. (Fomina, 2008:109-110). Therefore, they are mediators

between art institutions and artists. Freelance curators are frequently engaged in independent activities. They curate what they want and what they like. They participate in various art projects;

- **Institutional curators.** These are curators working for specific galleries, museums, etc. They are dependent on the policy carried out by the institution, and they represent it. Therefore, their creative freedom can be slightly limited (Fomina, 2008:110). The role of each curator in different museums (Alloway, 1996:221) or any other institution is different.

In conclusion, currently, the curator is not only a custodian and supervisor, but also a kind of creator, art critic and manager. He can be responsible for a lot of actions. Independently from the curation categories, curation is at the moment a part of the art industry.

### 3. Models of Curation

Szeemann is considered to be the first freelance curator and the pioneer of many models of curation. He introduced a hundred-day event instead of the usual model of the exhibition. He organised various performances, etc. He recognised new art forms which had not been recognised before (Fowle, 2007:13-15). Szeemann initiated an exhibition which turned a gallery into a studio. The artists invited to it produced installations and actions that extended into the streets of Berne. More than 70 artists participated in it.

The curator recognised such forms of art like earth art, concept art, anti-form and *arte povera* (Fowle, 2007:14). There is a particular model of curation when the curator establishes a studio in a gallery and enables the artists to create, and the works to be spread to the streets. It can be said that the curator becomes a sort of manager and the host of the festival because many artists participate and their works are “connected”. Therefore, the usual model of the exhibition where the exhibition is temporarily placed in the museum is thus changed. The curation practice starts to focus on the concept of exhibition-making as an ongoing process (Fowle, 2007:14-15). Thus, Szeemann introduced a hundred-day event *Documenta 5* which was an exhibition / live project. He organised performances, an installation where several artists were working in one space. He invited artists to introduce museums and political views, and published a catalogue (Bishop, 2007). In the next exhibition, the curation was themed. He organised a themed international group exhibition *Aperto* (Fowle, 2007:14-15). In this scenario, the curator provides the artists with the topic, and the artists create. The field of curation becomes the field to study arts.

There are various models of curation. Several of them are introduced in Table 2. The table shows that curators can choose different ways of curation. A frequent model is that of ‘Artist–curator’. The artist performs not only the function of the artist but that of the curator as well. According to Wade, the artist is the first producer, and the curator is the second producer (Birchall and Mabaso, 2013). If the ‘Artist–curator’ model is used, the artist is the first to perform his function, and the role of the curator is undertaken by him afterwards. He remains the creator and the producer all the time. Other models of curation can be used simultaneously.

**Table 2. Models of curation**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Self-reflexive	In working between theory and practice, the curator is simultaneously initiating, supporting, disseminating and evaluating projects (Fowle, 2007:16).
“Sampling”	The curator “samples” works, actions, and ideas and things (Fowle, 2007:16-17).
Traditional	Exhibition is a temporary museum. The curator only hangs the works and supervises the exhibition (Fowle, 2007:14-15).
Decentralisation curation	The community decides what to exhibit. The audience is involved into the development of the exhibition (Konecki, 2014).
Virtual curation	The curator works not only with real works of art or in the gallery but on the internet as well. He curates internet works as well (Paul, 2006).
Artist–curator	The roles of an artist and the curator are merged. The artist is the curator (Birchall and Mabaso, 2013).
Collaborative – curatorial platform	Co-curating takes place. The gallery creates certain conditions which bring together the ideas of many people (co-curating). It is like co-production, only in the field of curation (Birchall and Mabaso, 2013).

Source: compiled by the author.

The ‘Self-reflection’ model requires active curation because the work of the curator is not limited to the theory; he initiates and assesses the projects as well. It is not enough for him/her to hang the works for display in the exhibition and supervise them as it is the case with the usual mode of curation or ‘sampling’ where everything is sampled. All of this is included into the ‘Self-reflection’ model as well as the beginning or a part of curation.

It is noteworthy that curation can be virtual as well: there are virtual galleries, museums, etc. This model can supplement other models by creating additional benefit. This new model can be referred to as ‘decentralised curation’ because in this case the art community participates in the development of the exhibition and decides what to exhibit instead of leaving this decision to the curator or the institutions. Therefore, centralised curation can be distinguished, in which case the opposite occurs: curators and institutions decide what to exhibit.

The table above can be supplemented with a project management model because the curator undertakes project activities as well and prepares temporary exhibitions. The curator bases his activity on the following stages of project planning: preparation, implementation and evaluation (Kuizinien , 2007:8).

However, these models of curatorship put more emphasis on the selection of works and the exhibition thereof. According to the notion of curator, the freelance curator is currently not only the intermediary and the one who generates ideas, but also a manager. This means that it is purposeful to include certain aspects of art management which, according to Katsioloude, cover certain aspects of the traditional management, namely “planning, organizing, recruiting, selecting, leading, communicating, relating, problem solving, decision making, negotiating, conflict utilizing, training, controlling, rewarding, evaluating, and innovating” (Katsioloude, 2002:4). These elements can be further divided into four functions of management: planning, organisation, leadership and control of the production of art activity (Reussner, 2003:95-108). The aforementioned functions shall be discussed in greater detail in the following part of this article alongside the organisational stages of the art exhibition.

In conclusion, there are various existent models of curatorship, and curators constantly discover and create new ones. Each of them employs a model that suits them the best. However, while the notion of curator is changing, it is useful to supplement it with certain functions of management.

#### **4. The Activities of a Freelance Curator in the Exhibition of Contemporary Art**

An exhibition is a product born from collaboration between the artist and the curator (Fomina, 2008:114), and this collaboration may vary in terms of its nature; it can be a short-term, commercial, group or a personalised one as well as an exhibition within an exhibition, etc. Each exhibition is unique and based on the curator's concept (Moran, 2010:4).

Dewar (2010:5) distinguishes five main duties of the curator:

- to articulate the concept of art and find a way to present it to the society;
- to help artists with the implementation of their creative ideas as well as to introduce the artists and their works;
- to be the intermediary between the artists and the gallery/institution. To take into consideration the interests of the artists and the priorities and needs of the gallery;
- during the organisation of the exhibition, to enable the society and the professionals to familiarise themselves with the ideas of the project, the menu, public presentations, etc. related to the project.

A curator can be referred to as a propagandist in some sense: he explores, discovers, documents and exhibits the ideas of art. He presents the audience with the ideas of good taste and knowledge, takes a deep interest in artists, their works and, of course, analyses the forms of exhibitions (Fowle, 2007:12-14); he creates the image of the artist and his or her promotion in the art market, etc.

Curation usually starts from the preparation of the exhibition since it serves as a way to introduce a certain artist and his curator to the society. The organisation of exhibition can be divided into various categories as shown by Table 3.

According to the data presented in Table 3, it can be said that the organisational stages of art exhibition may vary and they can be developed according to the curator's notion. Moreover, organisation of an exhibition is a certain process that connects the principles/aspects of art and management.

Further in the article the activities of a freelance curator are going to be presented based on organisational stages of an exhibition introduced by Konstantios *et al.* (ANUL). They said stages take into consideration particular managerial aspects relevant to curator's activity.

**Table 3. Organizational stages of an art exhibition**

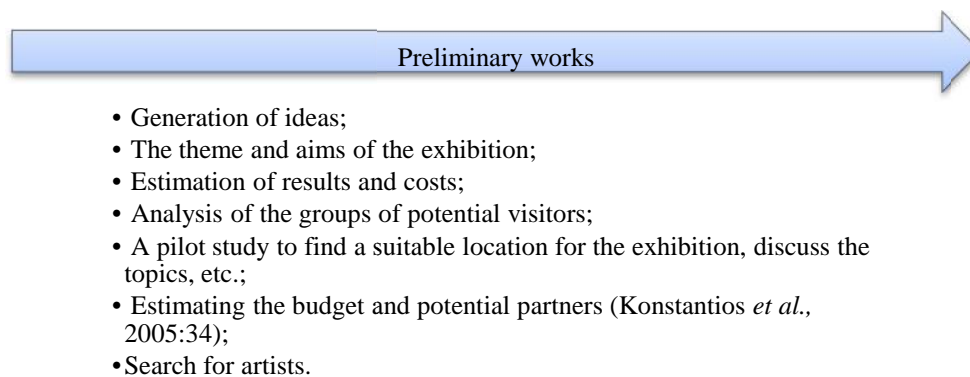
Author	Stages
Konstantios <i>et al.</i> (2005)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preliminary work</li> <li>2. Preparation</li> <li>3. Completion of the organisational plan</li> <li>4. Realisation</li> <li>5. Operation of the exhibition</li> <li>6. Dismantling of the exhibition</li> <li>7. Evaluation of the exhibition (Konstantios <i>et al.</i>, 2005: 34-35).</li> </ol>
Kuizinien (2007)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preparation</li> <li>2. Planning</li> <li>3. Implementation</li> <li>4. Evaluation (Kuizinien , 2007:9).</li> </ol> <p>These stages belong to project management and they are usually interconnected; for example, the stage of planning is usually carried out together with the stage of implementation (Kuizinien , 2007:9). It is noteworthy that the activity of a freelance curator is related to temporary exhibitions; he can base the structure of an exhibition on these stages. A temporary exhibition is treated as a project.</p>
Fayol in CMI (2012).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planning</li> <li>2. Organization</li> <li>3. Coordination</li> <li>4. Command</li> <li>5. Control (CMI, 2012).</li> </ol> <p>These stages constitute the main functions of the management process; they have been used very frequently in the management model. These functions can be adapted to the preparation of exhibitions, because the preparation of an exhibition is a certain process requiring a suitable model of management. Curator is a manager. However, alongside the traditional functions of management, one must not forget the main duties of a curator.</p>

Source: compiled by the author.

#### 4.1. The activities of a freelance curator in the stage of preliminary works

The stage of preliminary works consists of six main parts, namely generation of ideas, the theme of the exhibition, the estimate of results and costs, the analysis of potential groups of visitors, a pilot study, the estimated budget and potential partners (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. The stage of preliminary works**



Source: compiled by the author

At this stage, the generation of ideas takes place; this stage also involves activities that must be carried out before the decision to prepare the project is made (Kuiziniene, 2007: 9). Either the curator or the artist can come up with an idea for exhibition. If it is a shared idea, it is considered to be a part of an intellectual action of curatorship. The exhibition under curation becomes a work of art which analyses a particular phenomenon, tendency or event, or is used to create a utopia (Vitkien, 2012:46). Therefore, this stage already includes the discovery of the main human resources, namely the artist(s), whose works are going to be used in the project.

There are various ways to look for the artists:

- visiting art exhibitions;
- search on various websites;
- the artist finds the curator himself, sends him a proposal, etc. (Mattera, 2010)
- according to the information in the media, reports, etc. (Fox, 2013);
- announcing a public selection (Morozovas, 2014);
- visiting artist studios (PAO, 2008).

The curator may also rely on recommendations of other people working in the sphere of art, art schools, universities, their own artist database, etc.

The criteria for artist selection depend on the concept of the exhibition. The following criteria may be used to select artists:

- the conformity of the works of art with the concept of the curator's exhibition (Morozovas, 2014). If the artist himself has found a curator, this idea belongs to the artist and determines the "strength" of the concept of the upcoming exhibition;
- artist's CV (projects and exhibitions the artist has participated in, awards, achievements, etc.) (PAO, 2008);
- reviews from other art professionals;
- the quality of artist's works;
- the creative direction of the artist;
- the pursuits and requirements of the artists (e.g. the salary) (ArtBusiness, 2011).

The curator Obrist claimed that good curation happens when it involves working with a person who does things that cannot be done by the curator (Jeffries and Groves, 2014). The artist must be creative irrespective of his age. If the curator can do things the artist can do, he does not need an artist. However, the curator also takes up the role of an artist and a painter, yet instead of paint and brushes, he uses artists and their works. By connecting several artists, one can create a very fine work of art.

Jur nait notices that it is very important to understand the artists and their works. A unique collaboration can evolve into the most interesting things (Fomina, 2008:115). However, even though the curators hold extensive discussions with the artists, it is impossible to predict what the final and complete work of art is going to be like. Sometimes artists change their idea in the course of work. It is also impossible to predict how everything will look in the gallery since certain aspects like the lighting are unknown beforehand (Krzys, 2010:453). There are various factors that can change the work of art; therefore, at this stage, it is difficult to foresee the final product and how it is going to look like.

Having analysed the criteria for artist selection, it can be said that these criteria feature the elements of human resources:

- Skills;
- Knowledge;
- Abilities;
- Competence;
- Professionalism (Jan auskas, 2011:4).

According to Home (2008) curation is a subjective action characterised by nepotism, but only because curation usually resounds specific financial and ideological transactions; the selection of artists and works depends on how they “satisfy” the taste of specific sponsors. One can partially agree with Home’s notion because according to the entrepreneur Šil nas, “some entrepreneurs treat works of art as a case of investment. However, it has been acknowledged that art is a risky investment, because the value of a work of art depends on the fact whether its author is an acknowledged artist” (DMN, 2014). An important aspect is the response from the art critics who work in the location where the exhibition takes place (DMN, 2014). The issue noted by Home (2008) can be seen in other spheres of art as well and is not limited to private sponsorship. However, one can assume that a professional freelance curator will focus on the target he has set as well as the meaning of art; he also stays faithful to his position and quality standards.

Also, at this stage the curator must evaluate the need for staff to work throughout the entire project and complete all of the subsequent tasks efficiently. The curator is also a project manager. However, according to the management theory, there are currently two notions distinguished, namely the manager and the leader. The manager usually controls everything, pays attention to the systems and structures, and limits himself to the stimulation of employees, whereas the leader has the courage to accept the challenges, has followers, is people-oriented, motivates them, takes advantage of the innovations, etc. (Rimkut , 2008:57). A curator must do more than simply distribute works and perform the main functions; he must be trusted and have new ideas that would gain him followers.

It is noteworthy that this stage includes one of the elements of management processes, namely planning. Planning consists of the creation of a new activity, predictions, storing information and setting the tasks (Stoner, 2006:10). There are two types of planning:

1. **Formal planning** which is based on rationality and a system, it is performed on a regular basis and is characterised by strict documentation (Stoškus and Beržinskien , 2005:108). Everything is documented.
2. **Informal planning** is based on emotionality, spontaneous and episodic activities; it takes place at random intervals and does not involve strict documentation (Stoškus and Beržinskien , 2005:108). Everything is stored in the memory and is based on emotions.

Planning an exhibition usually relies on informal planning, yet it increases the chance of risks. Therefore, it is certainly better to combine the informal and the formal planning.

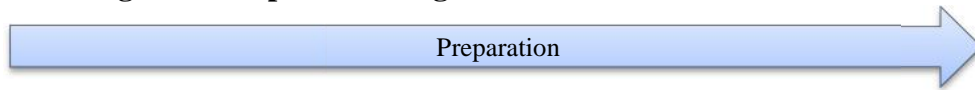
In conclusion, the most important position in this stage is occupied by the project idea / concept and human resources. It is then followed by the process of management / planning which involves setting goals, estimating the actions and the budget etc.



## 4.2. The activities of a freelance curator in the stage of preparation and completion of the plan

The elements of the preparation stage are provided in the figure “Preparation stage” (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Preparation stage**

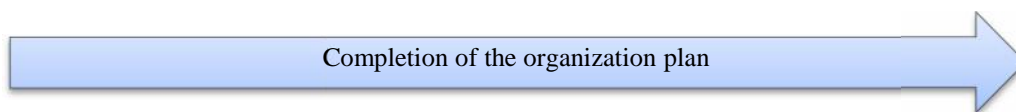


- Monitoring of the objects and their condition;
- Studying the sources, the archives and completing the literature search;
- Examining all the educational media;
- Examining the security of the public and the exhibits;
- Drafting the first installation plan;
- Reassessing timetables and budgets.

Source: based on Konstantios *et al.* (2005:34).

A freelance curator must prepare and plan all tasks that must be completed in order to implement the project. The nature of the exhibition must be determined, i.e. a personal or a group one, its field of interest, etc. (Dewar, 2010:18). This stage can be connected with the stage of completion of the organization plan (Figure 3) because the completion preparation works and organisation plan are separated by a short period of time. They are usually interconnected.

**Figure 3. Completion of the organization plan**



- Compiling the final list of exhibition objects;
- All texts and information material are selected;
- Exhibition catalogue and/or album are completed and posters, leaflets etc. are chosen;
- The final organisational plan of the exhibition is detailed into ground plans, sections elevations, perspectives etc. and the manner of mounting is decided on.

Source: based on Konstantios *et al.* (2005:34).

As it can be seen in Figures 2 and 3 the curator manages the finances including the management of the budget, raising capital, distribution of funds. First of all, the budget of the exhibition is established; it consists of estimated expenditure which might be covered (by raising the capital) from different funds: EU support, local programmes, various funds established to support culture, private companies, sponsors, patrons, philanthropists, etc. It is stated that it is useful to inform all of one's acquaintances about the upcoming exhibition or, in other words, to tell everyone about it because hearing the information by word of mouth delivered by a reliable person sometimes reaches and affects the hearer better (Stomien, 2011:41). Of course, the curator might take advantage of a loan (Fox, 2013).

The types of support include:

- Monetary;
- Provision of materials necessary for the exhibition (for example, technical equipment);
- Services (for example, advertisement in the media);

- Working throughout the exhibition and during its opening without any remuneration (Stomien , 2011:41).

When looking for sponsors, the curator must have a clear concept that would interest the sponsor (Stomien , 2011:42). It goes without saying that if the concept, the relevance and the most important aspects of the exhibition are as clear and original as possible they increase the chance of receiving funding. It is noteworthy that the benefit must be mutual.

If during the exhibition the transfer of the works of art is planned, it is necessary to assess their value, and this procedure differs from the one conducted in business. There is more than one method in the world to determine the value of a work of art. Moreover, the price of a work of art depends on a variety of facts. According to Makselien , the price of a work of art is determined by the fact whether the author is acknowledged, his professionalism, the artistic quality and the rarity of the work (Mikalaj nas, 2008). Therefore, the value of a work of art cannot be determined on the basis of its physical criteria and one formula. The benefits of an investment are evaluated taking into consideration the share that remains for the gallery (depends on the agreement with the gallery).

Further in this stage the venue for the exhibition must be found; it is a venue where the works are going to be exhibited and where the spectacle will take place. Obrist stresses the fact that the exhibitions can take place in other places rather than the galleries and, in fact, in really unexpected places (Jeffries and Groves, 2014). The curator must, of course, discuss and show the venues to the artist. However, finding a place and making necessary arrangements consume a considerable amount of time. Each gallery has its own rules. The arrangements between the gallery and the curator are finalised by signing a contract which includes all necessary aspects like the revenue, deadlines, promotion, area, etc. The curator must take care of the insurance of the works of art. It is especially important if the works of art in question are expensive.

The marketing of the exhibition takes an important place in the contemporary art. A freelance curator must think of the commercial campaign, the target audience, focus groups, etc. When the venue and the date are set, the commercial campaign of the exhibition must be started thus informing the society about the exhibition. The development of public relations starts at this stage.

Each work process must be systematic, consistent and well organised; therefore, the freelance curator must take the management and organisation into consideration. The main aspects of organisation include a detailed plan of implementation, determination of resources, deadlines, functional activities and distribution of works to the employees working on the project. The plan to be implemented must be described in great detail (Havinal, 2009:45). A freelance curator selects work methods and resources, time and venue and, if needed (depending on the scope of the exhibition), the right people to perform tasks (Havinal, 2009:122-125).

In this stage, it is useful to determine the possible risk factors that would be classified into two groups: the external and the internal ones (Figure 4). There might be various risk factors which depend on the scope of the art exhibition. They might usually be internal such as, for example, non-technical: lack of finances, failure of the artist to create the work of art, etc. It is very beneficial for the freelance curator to identify a possible risk and prepare for its control through certain means.

**Figure 4. Classification of risks**

**External**

- **Unpredictable.** Regulations on the national level, crimes, ecological and social factors, etc.
- **Unpredictable but foreseen.** Changes in the market, the currency course, inflation, changes in the tax system, etc.

**Internal**

- **Non-technical.** Deviations from the work plan resulting from the lack of materials, exceeding the funds, etc.
- **Technical.** Changes in technology, deterioration in quality, risks related to the technology used, etc.
- **Legal.** Patents, failure to comply with contracts, litigation, etc.
- **Prohibited.** Direct damage to property, indirect losses related to the rearrangement of the equipment, etc.

Source: based on Neverauskas and Stankevičius (2000:75).

In conclusion, this stage involves distribution and arrangement of all works and finding the resources that would enable the fulfilment of the goals of the exhibition as well as the estimated management of risks.

### **4.3. The activity of a freelance curator in the realisation stage**

The realisation stage consists of four main parts: estimate of expenditure, assemblage of the work of arts, the installation thereof with the help of specialists, administration of the project and the opening (Figure 5).

It is noteworthy that if the exhibition is not very elaborate and of a wide scope, then the curator does not have to hire specialists for the exhibition of works (architects and designers of exhibitions, etc.) and prepare the exhibition in the selected venue himself. However, if the curator wants the work of art to be expressive and make impact, he must manage the exhibition and the space thereof (Stomien, 2011:29) as the staging is very important. Each work must find the most suitable place in the space, fit together and in terms of the theme, etc., since the exhibition and the original staging contribute to the concept of the work of art and the interpretations thereof (Stomien, 2011:29). The curator oversees the design of the exhibition (Fox, 2013).

An original and suitable exposition contributes to the overall success of the exhibition. Stomien (2011:29) claims that exhibition of works must take the following details into consideration:

- the size and the interior of the venue;
- representation of works;
- the layout of works;
- the relationship between the space and the exhibits;
- lighting;
- preparation for the exhibition (tools, materials necessary for proper exhibition).

Exhibition of works includes curator working with the employees of the particular gallery / institution (Kendzulak, 2013). It depends on the nature of the exhibition. For example, installation involves the participation of the artists. It is possible for the works to be exhibited in a gallery without the artists and the freelance curator present as the works are

carried out by the gallery curator. Everything depends on the agreement and the concept of the exhibition. It can be said that when preparing an exhibition, curators rely on their intuition and senses; the previous arrangement of space can be changed by vicissitudes and surprises. The preparation of the exhibition is also educational. The curator learns to assess the objects in various situations. He is not a passive intermediary between the artist and the gallery (Krzys, 2010:461-462). Moreover, he is the representative of the audience; therefore, he must ensure that the space will be public and accessible to the audience as well as the ability to promote it. Curation cures the “helplessness” of the work of art (Groys, 2009:58).

### Figure 5. Realisation



- The works are mounted by specialists, adequately equipped;
- The costs are checked;
- Works are completed for the inauguration day" (Konstantios *et al.*, 2005:35);
- Project administration.

Source: compiled by the author.

When preparing an exhibition, it is useful to have the following in mind (Stomien 2011:30):

- Work of art and its certificate (name, date of creation, technique, etc.). It is necessary to examine its condition;
- List of works;
- Poster;
- Labels of works;
- Invitations to the exhibition;
- List of the previous works of the author;
- Annotation of the exhibition;
- Press information;
- Insurance;
- Contract between the artist/curator and the gallery.

Moreover, a curator is the one preparing the texts to be posted on the wall (Fox, 2013). It is necessary to think of the material which will be used for the description in order for it to match the design of the exhibition, i.e. whether the materials used will deliver the message on their own or be neutral and simply deliver the meaning of the text. It is noteworthy that an important position is taken by the annotation and the description of a work. The description of a work must justify the idea of the work, mention the technique and the message that the artist aims to deliver to the audience about himself and his works. Annotation requires a more in-depth notion; therefore, it is useful to have it written by the art critic. He must provide a well-supported and wider historical and social context for the works of art (Stomien , 2011:16).

The process of realisation always involves deviations from what has already been planned as there are unforeseen circumstances, for example, additional means required for the works to be finished, damage to the works during their transportation to the gallery, etc. The curator must conduct constant administration of the project, i.e. supervise the budget, manage the invoices, oversee the processes. He must also take care of the transportation

of works, supervise the works during the preparation of the exhibition in the gallery. Moreover, curator takes care of the creation of the work of art itself (Fox, 2013).

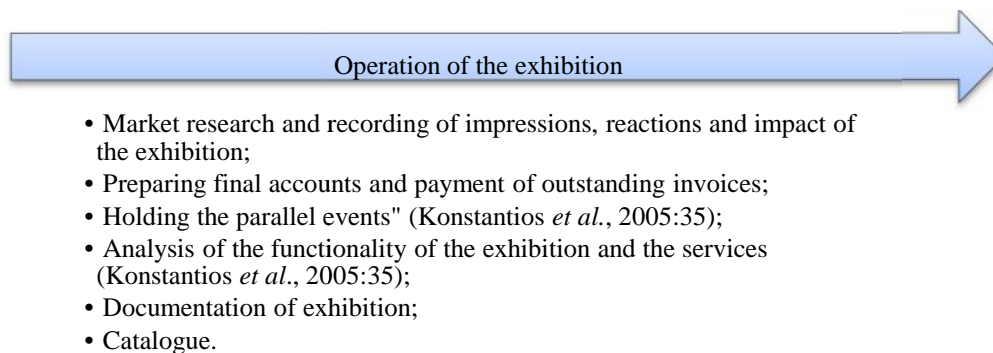
An important moment is the opening of the exhibition. It is a celebration, and both the curator and the artist participate in it. However, depending on the circumstances, the curator can represent the entire exhibition on his own. The curator is the organiser of this event; however, he must consider the requirements set by the gallery/institution and follow its traditions and the approach to the opening celebrations. During the event, curators, artists, the audience and the representatives of the art world join a direct act of communication.

In conclusion, this stage involves organization and the opening of the exhibition. The success of the exhibition depends on the works of art, their exhibition and communication between the public, the artists and the curator.

#### **4.4. The activities of a freelance curator in the stage of operation of the exhibition**

The operation of exhibition consists of six main parts introduced in Figure 6.

##### **Figure 6. Operation of the exhibition**



Source: compiled by the author.

It is a beneficial practice for a freelance curator to count how many people have visited the exhibition he curates throughout the entire period it has been opened. In order to receive the feedback from the audience, the survey on the audience is conducted by using certain methods of research; for example, observation, when the curator is observing the reactions of the visitors.

The curator, of course, conducts the analysis of media by collecting and analysing the articles on the exhibition. The articles collected (with positive feedback, of course) increase the chances for the exhibition to continue its journey through the galleries, countries, festivals, etc. Moreover, this is also needed to develop an artist's *portfolio*, especially if the artist in question is a young one. Therefore, one must conduct a market analysis which is used to profile the visitors of the exhibition and analyse the reasons resulting in low numbers of visitors.

The curator must be good at writing and document the exhibition skilfully (Kendzulak, 2013). He must be good at producing essays and prepare a catalogue and the design thereof for publication (Fox, 2013). Publishing a catalogue is very important, especially when the scope of the exhibition is wide. The catalogue presents the artist and the event. Monographs written by art critics contribute to the success of the exhibition and provide significant information about the creative course of the artist. A catalogue is like a certain

educational and informative instrument that presents the event. Therefore, it can be referred to as the guide through the art fair (Stomien , 2011:22). All publications must present artists and exhibitions, and also to educate and inform the society (Stomien , 2011:22). Moreover, the catalogue serves as a good method of documentation and a promotional tool which might contribute to the success of future projects. Publishing a catalogue is one of the tasks of the curator (Kendzulak, 2013). There are no strict rules of what the catalogue should look like. It depends on the curator, the concept of the exhibition, etc.

At this stage, the preparation of the final reports and issuing invoices takes place, with other planned events taking place as well (for example, creative workshops, educational programs in the exhibition, etc.). This stage must also include identification and removal of defects. Control taking place in this stage must be used to assess whether the exhibition is about to reach its goal.

In conclusion, this stage includes market research, taking care of the image of the exhibition, preparation of the catalogue, documentation and management.

#### **4.5. The activities of a freelance curator in the stage of dismantling and evaluation**

The stage of dismantling consists of two main parts: removal of the works of art and the final report (Figure 7).

##### **Figure 7. Dismantling of the exhibition and its evaluation**



- Removal of the works of art;
- Final report;
- Response of public;
- Inspecting whether the goals have been reached.

Source: based on Konstantios *et al.* (2005:35).

This stage is a rather technical one. It includes dismantling the exhibition and handing over the works of art to the artist or the buyers. The final report reflects the resources and the material collected during the market analysis. Analysis of the exhibition covers the main aspects of evaluation. The curator submits the report to the artist and the team, and establishes the subsequent goals related to the exhibition and collaboration with the artist. Starting from the first stage, the stages are carried out on the cyclical nature. In conclusion, this stage includes the completion of the exhibition and dismantling thereof. However, this stage ends only when the final report is submitted and the success of the exhibition is evaluated.

### **5. Factors of Success of Independent Curation**

The freelance curator must ensure smooth implementation of the project and foresee future actions. The question that occurs is namely: which aspects are the most important to take into consideration in order to become a successful curator? The answer to the question can be found in the Table 4.

**Table 4. The rules of art curators**

<b>Author/ curator</b>	<b>Rule</b>
Rose Lee Goldberg	The curator must know the history of art. Curation comes from the deeper knowledge, the expertise of art, culture, political situation and the history of art.
Jens Hoffmann	The curator must have a vision. He must know what he wants to tell the society. The vision must be greater than the exhibition.
Marc and Sara Schiller	It is necessary to collect the best artists that would raise the bar. The important role belongs to the quality of the works of an artist.
Martha Otero	It is necessary to have specific, particular goals and a strong inner impulse and drive. Galleries take pride in collections which maintain their value.
Zach Feuer	Curator must respond calmly to everything. The career comes when he does not care for it. The work and how to do it should be more important than career.
Matthew Higgs	It is noticeable that curators of contemporary art do not have original ideas. They must support artists and create the context for their ideas. The role of artists is to create the most original and exceptional works of art. The artists have the entire power in the world of art, and not the curators and critics, etc. Because there would be no galleries and curators without artists, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to listen to the artists.
Eli Klein	The exhibition must cause a strong reaction to the audience. A successful exhibition is the one that causes even negative emotions to the audience. It is said that it is better to create negative emotions to the audience rather than to cause them no emotions at all.

Source: compiled by the author; based on Pasori (2013)

According to Table 4, a freelance curator must not only be aware of the history of art, but take interest in current political affairs as well. He cannot dissociate himself from the events that happen in the world. He must have a vision which cannot be limited to one exhibition only; it must be a wider one. An important place in successful curation is, of course, taken by the artists. There would be no exhibitions without artists. Higgs (cited in Pasori, 2013) notices that curators of contemporary art do not have original ideas; therefore, they have to listen to the artists; their goal is to find an exceptional work of art. Their works must be of high quality. However, according to Klein (cited in Pasori, 2013) the exhibitions can now also cause negative emotions. The exhibition is considered to be a failed one if it has not caused any emotions to the visitor. The curator must take interest in his work only. He must think not only about his career, but also about the implementation of the vision, how he will introduce the works of the artist to the audience, etc. The successful career of the curator comes from his works and efforts to do everything as well as possible.

After the analysis of the remarks from the curators, **the following formula was derived for successful curation:**

**Broad spectrum of understanding / knowledge + vision + artists + goal + work + audience = curation.**

This formula should be supplemented with some additional aspects, namely the skills and knowledge of management and communication skills possessed by the curator. The curator implements cultural projects. It can be said that the exhibition is a type of project, and its management requires certain knowledge that have already been discussed in this article.

In conclusion, if a freelance curator wants to be successful, he must follow this formula: broad spectrum of understanding / knowledge (of management, art, etc.) + vision + artists + goal + work + audience = curation.

## 6. Conclusions

There are two categories of curators: institutional and freelance. Institutional curators work in galleries, museums, etc. They are dependent on the policy of the institution; therefore, the creative freedom is limited. Freelance curators do not work in specific institutions. They are more frequently engaged in individual activities, they mediate between the artist and the institutions. A curator is a manager, half-creator, intermediary between the artist and institutions, and between the artist and the audience, an analyst, generator of ideas, an overseer, etc.

The freelance curator of art uses the following seven models of curation: self-reflexive, “sampling”, traditional, decentralisation curation, virtual curation, art – curator, collaborative – curatorial platform. Several models can be used simultaneously. There are more models of curation because each curator creates his own model.

Curation of an exhibition of contemporary art consists of five stages of activities: preliminary works, preparation and completion of the plan, realisation, organization, dismantling and evaluation; a freelance curator follows these stages. Some stages are usually interconnected. The stage of preliminary works involves generation of the project idea and concept, prospecting, estimation of human resources. A great degree of attention is paid to finding an artist and the works of art. Management and planning take place as well, including the estimation of the budget and the action plan, etc. It also includes decisions related to the commercial campaign and the opening of the exhibition. The stage of preparation and plan completion involves distribution of tasks, the coordination of works, finding the resources and the management of risks. In the realisation stage, the curator takes care of safe transportation of works, setting the exposition and creating the exhibition. The opening of the exhibition is an event during which the curator introduces the exhibition; he also oversees all processes that are taking place. Organisation stage includes the preparation of documentation, market analysis, control and removal of possible defects. The stage of dismantling and evaluation includes the removal of works from the gallery/institutions and the settlement with the artist and his team. This stage also includes preparation of the final report and evaluation of the success of the exhibition. Determining further actions related to the exhibition and collaboration with artists is another element involved in this stage.

A freelance curator who wants to be successful must follow this formula: broad spectrum of understanding / knowledge (of management, art, etc.) + vision + artists + goal + work + audience = curation.

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