THE FUNCTIONING OF PROPAGANDA IN THE MUSEUM

The cases of 'The Great German Art Exhibition' at the House of German Art,
'The Degenerate Art Exhibition' at the Institute of Archeology and
'The New American Painting' at the Museum of Modern Art

MA Thesis: Museum Studies (Heritage Studies)
University of Amsterdam

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Date of Completion: 12 March 2021
Word Count: 23608

Credit front page cover: Wallpaper Cave

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By Sophie Delfos

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MA Museum Studies (Heritage Studies)

March 2021

Abstract

Exhibiting difficult histories is a recent trend in the museum world. In their aim to come to terms with the past, museums decide to present narratives that have long been silenced and ignored because of their sensitive nature. In contrast to other exhibitions on contested aspects of the past, the 2019 exhibition 'Design of the Third Reich' received a great amount of criticism. Opponents feared the persuasive power of the displayed Nazi objects. This research seeks to clarify if these fears are valid, by answering the question: should propaganda have a place in the museum? To do so, the functioning of propaganda is analyzed in three historical museum exhibitions, namely 'The Great German Art Exhibition' at the House of German Art, 'Degenerate Art Exhibition' at the Institute of Archeology, and 'The New American Painting' at the Museum of Modern Art. Central to the analysis are the role of the museum in society and the contribution of display strategies to the promotion of the political ideals. Three elements turn out to have a great impact on the effectiveness of propaganda in the museum context: intention, control, and the manipulation of curation techniques for creating a convincing narrative. Through these aspects, the museum context comes to determine the meaning of the objects and can consequently govern the knowledge of the visitor about the political ideas. As the Design Museum Den Bosch created a dark, historical context in which the Nazi propaganda objects were displayed, their persuasive effects were repressed. Instead, the exhibition taught the visitor about the processes that caused the evil practices and with this contributed to reconciling with the difficult past.

Keywords: museums, exhibitions, propaganda, difficult histories, politics, display strategies, cultural cold war, third reich.

Acknowledgements

Throughout the process of writing my master thesis I have received a great deal of support, for which I am very grateful.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, prof. dr. Ihab Saloul, for the advice and support during the thesis process. He convincingly guided and encouraged me to find passion in my work and to believe in my own abilities. Without his honesty, the result of this research would not have been the same.

I thereby wish to show my gratitude to the other professors of the university who helped me to successfully complete the master's program, dhr. dr. Dos Elshout and mw. dr. Mirjam Hoijtink. And of course, my fellow students, who inspired me throughout the whole program.

I would also like to thank Lotte for being a star tutor, willing to proofread all my university papers since the very beginning. My English writing skills would not have been the same without you.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all other friends and family who supported me in this challenging period and helped me balancing it with relaxing time. But especially Dirk for pushing me to go forward and always believing in me.

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List of Abbreviations

DAE	-	The Degenerate Art Exhibition
DTR	-	Design of the Third Reich Exhibition
GGAE	-	The Great German Art Exhibition
ICOM	-	International Council of Museums
MoMA	-	Museum of Modern Art in New York
NAP	-	The New American Painting
Nazi	-	National Socialist, a member or supporter of the NSDAP
NSDAP	-	Nationalsozialistischen Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
The Council	-	International Council of the Museum of Modern Art
The Program	-	International Program of the MoMA
USIA	-	The United States Information Agency

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Introduction

In line with the ongoing social debate about racism in the Netherlands, Dutch museums have recently been taking steps in paying attention to the colonial past and slavery in their exhibitions.[1] Not just the one-sided, glorious past but also the uncomfortable aspects of these histories, that have long been silenced and ignored, are gradually more represented in the museum presentations (Kisić 2017, 7). In 'Afterlives of Slavery', which was presented at the Tropenmuseum in 2018, visitors encountered personal statements of enslaved individuals and their descendants.[2] In 2020, the Rembrandthuis shone a light on overlooked black figures in seventeenth-century Dutch art in 'HERE: Black in Rembrandt's Time'.[3] And currently, the Rijksmuseum is preparing a major exhibition on slavery during colonial times that will be on show in the spring of 2021 (McGivern 2020).[4] One of the incentives of these exhibitions is to encourage other museums to tackle the sensitive subject (Jaeger 2021). According to the International Council of Museums (hereafter: ICOM), by contextualizing difficult histories in museums, they can be interpreted in entirely new ways that might contribute to coming to terms with the past (Mcdonald 2016, 274). Consequently, providing for new and critical perspectives has become the priority in organizing exhibitions on contentious subjects. As Valika Smeulders, the curator of the long-awaited exhibition at the Rijksmuseum, noted in an interview with *NRC*: 'we can no longer look away, we need to acknowledge that this is our history (Jaeger 2021)'.

Another example of an exhibition that presented a difficult history is 'Design of the Third Reich' (hereafter: DTR), which was held at the Design Museum in Den Bosch in 2019. Director Timo de Rijk and guest curator Almar Seinen felt the urge to open up the debate about design from the Nazi[5] era, the period 1933-1945, that has long been silenced and ignored in literature and museum presentations on design history (De Lange 2019).[6] The exhibition aimed to demonstrate how design contributed to the development of the Nazi ideology. Consequently, objects were displayed that were once used to convince and ultimately kill huge numbers of

[1] For a summary of the debate, I refer to 'Racism in the Netherlands' by Charlotte Seijgers, published on 14 August 2020 in *The Holland Times*.
[2] For more information about 'Afterlives of Slavery', I refer to the website of the Tropenmuseum.
[3] For more information about 'HERE: Black in Rembrandt's Time', I refer to the website of the Rembrandthuis.
[4] For more information about the Rijksmuseum exhibition on slavery, I refer to the website of the Rijksmuseum.
[5] 'Nazi' is an abbreviation of National Socialist; a member or supporter of the Nationalsozialistischen Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (hereafter: NSDAP). The NSDAP controlled Germany between 1933 and 1945.
[6] Timo De Rijk is the director of the Design Museum Den Bosch since 2016 and a former professor of design history at the TU Delft. Almar Seinen is the Director of the Design Museum Dedel in Den Haag since 2018 (Knols 2018). For more information about the curators, I refer to the website of the Design Museum Den Bosch and the Design Museum Dedel.

people (Design Museum Den Bosch 2019).[7] The curators emphasized the necessity of the controversial exhibition by stating that: 'failure to show and to analyze these aspects of the past amounts to nothing less than a desire to forget history (De Rijk 2019)'. And the justification for the subject of the exhibition on the museum's website was: 'if you wholeheartedly want to be able to say *this never again*, you must take time to critically analyze how the influencing processes worked at the time (Design Museum Den Bosch 2019)'. In its aim to come to terms with the past, the narrative of the DTR is to be placed in line with the recent trend of exhibiting contested histories in the museum. In contrast to the controversial exhibitions on the silenced aspects of the colonial past and slavery, however, the exhibition on Nazi design received a great amount of criticism.

Most critics agreed on the fact that the subject of the DTR triggered negative emotions and caused a lot of pain, as it exhibited aspects of history that the visitors of the museum might have preferred to forget (Lindhout 2019). In presenting a history that has long been hidden beneath a blanket of silence, provoking emotions is however inevitable. Exhibitions on contested histories raise ethical issues and thus have the potential of upsetting or shocking the visitor (Macdonald 2016, 268). Accordingly, similar comments were heard in response to the controversial exhibitions about the silenced aspects of colonial history.[8] What distinguishes the reception of the contested exhibitions is the fear for the persuasive power of the displayed objects in the DTR. Critics argue that it is inconsiderate to organize an exhibition on the practices of Nazism at a time when far-right ideologies are on the rise in Europe (Siegal 2019).[9] As the artifacts on show were designed to function as propaganda, the opponents fear, they might still be able to sway the audience into the ideas of the Nazi ideology (Siegal 2019). This supposition and the lack of a clear counter-reaction raises the question: should propaganda have a place in the museum? In order to answer this question, research on the functioning of propaganda in the museum context is needed.

Propaganda is defined by Garth S. Jowett and Victoria J. O'Donnell in their book *Propaganda and Persuasion* (2006) as 'a form of communication that attempts to achieve a

[7] For a more extensive explanation of the practices of the Nazis, see chapters 2 and 3.
[8] See the following sources: Mitchell Esajas 'Afterlives of Slavery. A small exhibition with a big impact' *Public History Amsterdam*, 18 September 2020, Harmen van Dijk 'Herkenning in het museum, dat had ik nooit ervaren' *Trouw*, 7 March 2020, Marcel Wiegman 'Hoofd geschiedenis Rijksmuseum: Ik wil mensen hun naam teruggeven' *Het Parool*, 6 February 2021 and Ida Hoes 'Nieuw Licht - Het Rijksmuseum en de slavernij' *NPO 2*, 15 February 2021.
[9] For more information about the rise of far-right ideologies and anti-Semitic tendencies, I refer to 'The Old Scourge of Anti-Semitism Rises Anew in Europe' by the editorial board of *The New York Time*s, which was published in May 2019.

response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist (Jowett, O'Donnell 2006, 1)'.[10] When the definition is applied to politics, the propagandist is embodied by a political party or group.[11] In order to build support for and gain acceptance of their vision, the political entity manipulates or alters reality in its communication to the public. By means of these propagandistic messages, it is attempted to direct the public opinion and to provoke behavioral change (Jowett, O'Donnell 2006, 4). The biased information is therefore propagated through channels that can reach a large audience; such as educational material, press, social media, radio, and film, but also through museum exhibitions. Museums have been active in educating the general public since their early beginnings (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 2). As museum authorities decide upon the content presented in their exhibitions, they can govern the knowledge of the visitors. By presenting the information on show as definitive and authoritative, the exhibitions and their objects can direct ways of thinking (Mills 2003, 37). This given makes the museum a powerful institution and at the same time a potential propaganda tool (Luke 1992, 228).

The idea that the museum can direct the attitude of the visitor originates from the nineteenth century. In the modern age, governments became increasingly concerned with the unruly behavior of the lower-classes and searched for ways to control them (Bennett 1988, 81).[12] Tony Bennett is the first to argue that the opening of the public museum was a direct consequence of trying to transform this conduct.[13] In his book *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (1995), Bennett describes the functioning of museums as institutes for ideological control. He builds on the idea of discipline and its similarities to punishment, described by Michel Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977).[14] According to Foucault, discipline and punishment are both mechanisms of power that regulate the thought and behavior of social actors. Foucault summarizes the juxtaposition as

[10] Garth S. Jowett is a professor of communication at the University of Houston and Victoria J. O'Donnell is a professor and director at Montana State University (Sage Publishing).
[11] Other examples of propaganda types are war propaganda, commercial propaganda, religious propaganda, and pacifist propaganda (Ibele 1964, 261).
[12] The process of industrialization in the nineteenth century caused for great social changes. The poor working conditions in the profitable factories further emphasized the already existing class divisions. Eventually, the division provoked protest movements. For more information about the social context of the nineteenth century, I refer to Adam Augustyn's article 'Industrial Revolution' on *Britannica*.
[13] Tony Bennett is a British sociologist and professor of cultural studies and sociology at the Open University in the United Kingdom and the Western Sydney University in Australia. Bennett is famous for his publications on cultural studies (Western Sydney University). For more information on Tony Bennett, I refer to the website of the Western Sydney University.
[14] Michel Foucault (1926-1984) was a French historian, philosopher, and political activist who became famous for his publications on the relationship between power and knowledge. For more information on Foucault, I refer to Sara Mills, *Michel Foucault* (London 2003).

'panopticism', and uses the prison as an example to explain the functioning of the concept (Foucault 1977, 10). The architectural structure of a prison makes an inmate feel like he is constantly being observed. The possibility of being monitored creates a system for self-regulation for a prisoner and thus controls their behavior (Bennett 1988, 81). Similarly disciplining and training visitors through architectural and technical solutions within the museum is what Bennett calls 'the exhibitionary complex' (Bennett 1988, 74). Bennet argues that governments of the nineteenth century aimed to civilize the people through the effects of the exhibitionary complex in the public museum.

In her book *Civilizing Rituals. Inside the Public Art Museum* (1995), Carol Duncan further builds on the idea of museums as institutes that impose power upon their visitors. Instead of comparing the museum to a prison, she compares it to ritual spaces like temples or churches in which a certain form of behavior is required (West 2017, 14). According to Duncan, the public art museum is a similarly scripted space, in which visitors symbolically enact their participation within a certain social, moral, or political system (Duncan 1995, 12). When entering the museum, the visitor enters a so-called liminal space, in which different codes of conduct are enforced through the imposing character of the museum's architecture and the serenity of the gallery design (West 2017, 14). The design of the building and the exhibitions structure the museum visit, not only physically because of the layout of the floor plan, but also mentally because of the information given or left out (Noordegraaf 2012, 14). In this way, the public museum controls the behavior and directs the knowledge of the visitor. Foucault, Bennett, Duncan, and their successors laid the base for research into the functioning of power, politics, and ideology in the early public art museum.[15] New developments in architecture, display strategies, educational programs, and communication may however contribute to or alter the functioning of the museum in shaping the knowledge and attitudes of their visitors. It is therefore important to further investigate the concept of the museum as an institute of power.

Eilean Hooper-Greenhill underscores this need by arguing that a lack of examination and interrogation of the more recent ideological practices of the museum has caused for a failure to construct a critical history of the museum field (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 3).[16] In her book *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (1992), she proposes for an insight into the creation of knowledge in the museum by focusing on how the museum context determines the

[15] Other scholars who wrote about the disciplinary power of the museum are Timothy W. Luke, Robert Rydell, and Duncan F. Cameron (Coffee 2006, 435).

[16] The British professor Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1945) taught in museum studies at the University of Leicester and is well-known for her publications on education in the museum context (University of Leicester). For more information about Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, I refer to the website of the University of Leicester.

interpretation of objects (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 1). Stephanie Moser, responds to this need in her article 'The Devil is in the Detail: Museum Displays and the Creation of Knowledge'.[17] In the text, she describes the way in which an exhibition display creates knowledge through design characteristics, and proposes a model for analyzing exhibitions (Moser 2010, 22) (see appendix 1). The model is intended for extensive research on the museum's architecture and location, gallery spaces, design characteristics as light and color, use of text, and exhibition style. By critically analyzing these aspects of an exhibition, the way in which the museum shapes the knowledge of the visitor will be clarified. In order to examine how propaganda functions in the museum context, it is thus important to pursue researching specific historical and contemporary art exhibitions to better understand the recent plays of power, politics, and ideology in the museum's policies and practices.

But what exactly is that knowledge, that is presented to the visitor in museum exhibitions? The main purpose of the museum has always been the collection and preservation of objects (Gilman 1918, 307). Museums seek to acquire objects of a certain interest and preserve these to show to their visitors. From the emergence of the public museum, telling became an additional core aim of the institution.[18] As to make the collections comprehensible for the average visitor, the objects were to be ordered in an understandable manner. In togetherness, the collected objects of artistic, historical, or scientific value came to represent a particular narrative (Findlen 1994, 27). For example, the narrative of an ancient culture told by utensils and bones, or visitors would learn about the evolution theory explained by different stuffed bird species. Consequently, fewer artworks were exhibited in the galleries (Gilman 1918, 407). The objects that did not correspond to the narrative, were placed in storehouses. Aleida Assman refers to this dynamic in the museum as 'canonization and archiving'.[19] The objects that are chosen to be presented in the art exhibitions are canonized, the works which are not publicly presented are archived (Assman 2008, 98). The canonized objects are selected based on their meaning or value within the exhibition's narrative. The artworks that are archived, however, are 'de-contextualized and disconnected from their former frames, which

[17] Stephanie Moser is a professor of archaeology at the University of Southampton, England. In her work, Moser explores how ideas and knowledge are communicated through museum displays, exhibitions, and art (University of Southampton). For more information about Stephanie Moser, I refer to the website of the University of Southampton.

[18] An extensive description of the emergence of the public art museum will be provided in chapter 1.

[19] Aleida Assman (1947) is a German archeologist and professor of English and Literary Studies at the University of Constanz (Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen). For more information about Aleida Assman, I refer to the website of the Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen.

determined their meaning. As part of the archive, they are open to new contexts and lend themselves to new interpretations (Assman 2008, 100)'.

The idea that the meaning of artworks is dependent on the context in which they are displayed is also argued by Joes Segal.[20] In his book, *Art and Politics. Between Purity and Propaganda* (2015), Segal emphasizes that the fine arts are not reducible to one unambiguous meaning (Segal 2015, 131). This is related to the fact that visual images are interpreted based on shared knowledge. Take religious iconography as an example; symbols within medieval altarpieces are probably differently interpreted by a thirteenth-century believer, than by a contemporary atheist. When we interpret a work of art or other forms of visual culture, we test the image against the conventions and traditions known to us (Segal 2015, 129). The interpretation of art is thus related to the current political, social and moral context in which it is shown. It can be argued that, due to the subjectivity of art, objects are put at the service of the narrative of an exhibition. The artworks that best correspond to the message and context of the exhibition are selected and displayed (Assman 2008, 101). In this way, the curators can construct the most convincing, interesting, fascinating, or amusing story. These dynamics of art and art exhibitions are easily brought in relation to politics and propaganda. Governments, political parties, or other benefiting authorities can reinterpret artworks and use the exhibitions to their advantage (Segal 2015, 11). Theoretically, museum exhibitions can form a means through which the political entities can propagate their ideas and values.

In order to understand how propaganda practically functions in the museum context, three historical art exhibitions will be examined in this research. The exhibitions were organized during tense political times in the twentieth century. As the ruling political entities of the time sought for ways to broadcast their ideas to the public, museum exhibitions were utilized as tools of propaganda. The research focuses on how the institutes came to be put at the service of the political entities, and on how the organizers eventually shaped the knowledge of the visitor about their views and ideas through the museum presentations. Central in the analysis are the contribution of architectural aspects, arrangement techniques, chosen objects, and text used in the exhibition to the promotion of the political ideals. As to provide for a historical context to the case studies, the first chapter shines a light on the main functions and the prevailing techniques of meaning-making in the exhibitions of public art museums since their early beginnings. By means of this overview, it is clarified what types of display were regarded to be

[20] The Dutch culture historian Joes Segal is a former professor of cultural history at the University of Utrecht. He is currently active as a curator at the Wende Museum in Culver City, California (Utrecht University 2015). For more information about Joes Segal, I refer to the website of the Utrecht University.

effective in educating the visitor at the time of the examined exhibitions. The second chapter focuses on the utilization of museums during the reign of the Nazi party, the period from 1933 to 1945. In their aim to promote the rightful art of the German people, 'The Great German Art Exhibition' (hereafter: GGAE)[21], that was held at the newly built House of German Art in 1937, became a crucial instrument.[22]

In the destructive ideology of Nazism, everything that was regarded to be non-German was to be erased from society. As the abstract works of modern artists were opposed to the perfect world depicted in realistic German art, they were rejected as 'degenerate'. The third chapter discusses the 'Degenerate Art Exhibition' (hereafter: DAE), which was also organized by the Nazi party in 1937, in which modern art was presented as an unacceptable and reprehensible art form.[23] The fourth chapter explores the role of the Museum of Modern Art in New York (hereafter: MoMA) in times of the Cultural Cold War, that occurred between the 1950s and 1980s. Abstract expressionist art exhibitions became a means for promoting the American ideals of freedom and individuality, as opposed to the communistic values in the realistic works of the Soviets. 'The New American Painting' exhibition (hereafter: NAP) was of great value in spreading the American ideology, as it traveled to eight European countries. In the conclusion, the findings of the case studies will be juxtaposed to the criticism of the DTR exhibition. An insight into the recent plays of power, politics, and ideology in the museum's policies and practices will provide for an answer to the question if propaganda should have a place in the museum.

For the examination of the historical museum exhibitions, primary and secondary sources were used. Museum archives, exhibition catalogues, texts, and photographs made it possible to reconstruct the shows. Additional secondary sources provided for a historical context to the exhibitions and clarified the relevant policies and practices of the museums and their authorities. The examined case studies in this research were selected based on the availability and accessibility of valuable sources. Due to restrictions in physically visiting museums and their archives, the research is solely based on online resources. Consequently, the examined exhibitions were all held in European and American art institutions. When practicable, further research on the functioning of propaganda in non-western museum exhibitions is needed to provide for a more accurate idea of the institute of the museum as a potential propaganda tool.

[21] In German: Die Grosse Deutsche Kunstaustellung.
[22] In German: Haus der Deutsche Kunst.
[23] In German: Die Entartete Kunst Austellung.

I. Meaning-making within the Public Art Museum

I.I Museum reform

The public art museum is an ever-changing institution (Macdonald 2011, 98). Since their early beginnings in the seventeenth century, there have been major shifts and reorganizations within the practices of the public museum.[24] These changes are to be attributed to the plays of power and the social, economic, and political imperatives that surround them (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 1). Consequently, the way in which museums have positioned themselves in society, constructed their narratives, presented knowledge through their objects and to their visitors has taken different forms throughout history (Noordegraaf 2012, 89). This chapter briefly discusses the major functions and practices of the public art museum since their early beginnings in the seventeenth century, as to provide for a historical context to the case studies that will be explored within the research. The position of the institution in society and the display strategies used in early and modern public art museums will be prominent in this overview (Noordegraaf 2012, 93). These aspects contribute greatly to the construction of a convincing narrative, through which the museum is able to shape the knowledge of the visitor (Bennett 1995, 86).

The earliest museums began as private collections of wealthy families, individuals and institutions. The collections portrayed not only the power of the collectors but simultaneously their extensive knowledge (Bennett 1995, 92). Most of the collected objects were discoveries in the fields of history, art, archeology, and natural science. As to obtain the artifacts, the collectors and their consultants had to have the means to travel, research, and eventually display the curiosities (Findlen 1994, 3). Designated rooms in the palaces of the elitist families or institutions were filled with the collected treasures. When exhibited, the diverse range of objects was crowded together in the spacious rooms on walls, ceilings, and in large display cases (see appendix 2).[25] In the display, the overwhelming and fascinating content had to be emphasized with the purpose of impressing the visitors (Noordegraaf 2012, 70). The collections were however only accessible to the respectable citizen. The bourgeoisie was regarded to be too careless and uneducated for the exhibitions. The display of knowledge and power was thus the

[24] It is debatable what institution is to be regarded as the first public museum in history. It is however often argued that the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford opened as the world's first public museum. The wealthy private collector Elias Ashmole gifted his collection to the public University in 1682 (Macdonald 2011, 272).
[25] The spacious rooms in which the early collections were displayed came to be known as 'wunderkammern' (in German), or cabinets of curiosities (Macdonald 2011, 282).

core function of early museums, the preserved contents however had a limited outreach (Gilman 1918, 307).

In the early nineteenth century, restricted access disappeared as the museums opened their doors to the general public (Bennett 1995, 73). The incentive for this major development was the French Revolution and the emergence of the nation-states and nationalism in Western Europe that followed it.[26] The art collections came to serve as symbols of political success and furthermore created a physical manifestation of the principles of 'liberté, égalité and fraternité' (Ntoulia 2017). The treasures of the nations could now be admired and worshipped by all citizens within the public museum. Increases in wealth and education thereby resulted in the extensive growth of the serious museum audience. Culture became a useful instrument for governments in their effort to transform the masses into engaged and participating citizens (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 192). The information propagated by the exhibits formed a means for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power and knowledge (Bennett 1995, 74). In the end, the authorities decided what to communicate to their visitors within the public exhibitions. The core function of the first public museums thus became to enlighten all its visitors morally, socially, and politically (Bennett 1995, 16).

During the second half of the nineteenth century, public museums became standard features of the larger cities throughout Europe and the United States. As symbols of power, greatness, wealth, and progress, the institutions housed works that were considered to constitute the greatest artistic achievements of Western civilization (Paul 2012, VII). As the museum audience kept growing, new museum spaces were built and arranged to accommodate larger groups of visitors. The display strategies were however still identical to that of the early art institutions, which were then only accessible to the intellectual elite (Gilman 1918, 307) (see appendix 3). The museum authorities designed the script of the presentations from the idea that educating the people simply meant opening the doors to the public (Noordegraaf 2012, 80). Consequently, the exhibitions provided little information about the objects on show, as they were aimed at the visitors who could easily find their way through the displays and could interpret the artifacts by themselves. The main aim of the public museum was thus to educate

[26] During the French Revolution in 1789, the bourgeoisie overthrew the monarchy and took control of the government. The event was a reaction of the citizens that resented its exclusion from political power and positions of honor as the nation was dominated by the nobility, the church, and the king in the prevailing ancient regime. (Jaurès 2015, 10, 13) The principles of 'liberté, égalité and fraternité (terms that translate to liberty, equality, and fraternity) were the foundation of the 'new France' that the revolutionaries sought. Within the new democracy, the social and political structure of France changed tremendously. Liberty and freedom for the commoners were some of the praised outcomes, which in turn resulted in increases in wealth, education, and income. Similar events occurred throughout the rest of Europe in the late eighteenth century (Doyle 2001, 79)

and cultivate its visitors, but in doing so, solely focused on architectural and technical solutions (Bennett 1995, 66).

In the early twentieth century, different museum reform movements emerged in both Europe and North America. Due to social and economic developments, the number of educated people interested in museums had greatly increased. The transition from agriculture to industrial production caused for a migration flow to the towns and cities, where most public art museums were situated (Noordegraaf 2012, 80).[27] The growing urban population of the twentieth century had a much higher level of education than that of the nineteenth century; by 1910 the level of literacy in Western Europe and North America had risen to over ninety percent of the population (Van Zanden 1992, 93). In order to reach and serve this large and socially diversified potential audience, the reformers argued, the script of the public museum exhibitions had to be reviewed again (Noordegraaf 2012, 80). The museum's building, exhibition design, object arrangement, and accompanying text all had to contribute to the aim of educating the visitor. The task of the museum became to provide for displays that allowed all observers to sharpen their aesthetic sensibilities and to clarify for them the historical context of the art.

The developments in the first half of the twentieth century can be regarded as a breakthrough in museum and display history. The fact that museum reformers shifted their focus to display strategies such as architecture, layout and the arrangement of objects in the museum as a means to guide and educate the viewer during their visit was an innovative solution, which is still valid today (Noordegraaf 2012, 92). Before the Second World War, ideas about what a museum should be, who it was for, and how it could be made useful for educating the general public were fully deployed. Most European and North American museums had been transformed from enclosed private collections for the wealthy and rich into accessible, attractive displays of art for everyone who was interested (Noordegraaf 2012, 92). The concept of combining display strategies with the aim to educate the visitor within an exhibition lays at the base of this research. Although this concept takes different forms throughout the rest of the twentieth and twenty-first century it is important to have given an insight into the context of the development of museum and display history.

[27] The process of industrialization led to urbanization, as it created economic growth and job opportunities in the newly built factories. Therefore, people left the countryside to work and live in the cities and towns (Augystyn).

I.II The Ideal Museum

In 1918, Benjamin Ives Gilman published *Museum Ideals of Purpose and Method*, an extensive research on the ideal museum of the early twentieth century. As the secretary of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Gilman had followed the emerging museum reform movements in Europe and North America closely. He researched the museum practices of his time and delved into topical readings on the function and design of public art museums. Based on his findings, Gilman formulated the most important principles for the ideal museum of the twentieth century (McClellan 2003, 17). At the top of Gilman's list of principles was the learning experience of the visitor. Consequently, a significant emphasis lays on the visitor and his or her understanding of the content during the museum's visit in his book. The presentation of objects was no longer to be solely focused on their historical significance, but instead was to pay attention to the observers and how they empathize with the works on display. The display strategies were to be changed as to make the encounter with the artworks educative for the visitors. The twofold task of the ideal museum in displaying and explaining was defined by Gilman as:

> '[…] to fulfil its complete purpose as a show, a museum must do the needful in both ways. It must arrange its contents so that they can be looked at; but also help its average of visitors to know what they mean. It must at once install its contents and see to their interpretation (Gilman 1918, 280)'.

Museum Ideals of Purpose and Method has gone into history as a revolutionary publication that clearly demonstrates how the focus of the museum reformers shifted to display strategies at the beginning of the twentieth century. The proposed methods to influence the learning experience of the visitor by means of the layout, architecture, and arrangement of objects in the museum are often referred to in publications about display strategies in the museum, and are thereby still relevant for the practices of the museum today (Noordegraaf 2012, 143).

Gilman's book describes the ideal strategies and functioning of the museum in providing for an informative visit in great detail. The impression of the visitor before entering the exhibition is even taken into account. The museum space is ideally located in a quiet and secluded area as to provide for an environment of contemplation, away from the bustle of life (Gilman 1918, 46). The building is therefore not to be shadowed by others or to exceed the minimum of twenty-four meters of free space. Moreover, as the public welfare should be served by the museum, the visitor is to be attracted by the charm of the building and its surroundings.

The Museo Nazionale in Naples is proposed as the perfect example (see appendix 4). With this, Gilman makes an implicit reference to important historical sites such as classical temples or monumental buildings. These spaces are mostly carefully marked off as they are reserved for a special quality of attention, such as prayer or other forms of ritual. By comparing museums to such ritual spaces, Gilman emphasized the value of learning and understanding within museum exhibitions (Duncan 1995, 10).

All layers of society were to feel welcomed in Gilman's ideal museum. As to arrange a convenient visit for all citizens, liberal conditions of admission and practical opening hours were to be provided (Gilman 1918, 407). Once inside, visitors were to find themselves in a world of beauty and contemplation. Gilman proposed several display strategies that would create an environment in which the audience could easily empathize with the artworks. First of all, in order to avoid the overcrowded walls and rooms of the nineteenth-century galleries, an interesting selection of the objects was to be made. Secondly, the works were to be isolated from one another by means of an arrangement that left ample room between them. The objects were to be hung on eye level in well-lit, dull-colored rooms as to make the connection to the artwork more intimate (Birkett 2012, 12). The close encounter namely provided for a better understanding of the objects. Lastly, the museum space was to be divided into sections, to keep the visit interesting and varied (Noordegraaf 2012, 92). The described display strategies provided for an ordered and inviting space in which the art could be admired by all visitors.

Besides offering an interesting and varied presentation of the content, an ideal museum experience also had to entail comfort.[28] Contemporary literature concluded that the average visitor of the museum had the tendency to become tired and thus started to wander through the large exhibition spaces. As the aim of the museums was to induce the visitors to stay and absorb all the content, seats were introduced into the exhibition spaces (Gilman 1918, 275). The chairs and benches were naturally placed as not to hinder the free passage of other visitors; central in the room or along the wall. In line with the educational aims of the ideal museum, exhibition catalogues were printed in large numbers to provide the visitor with information on the artworks and their context. In comparison to the limited object labels used in late nineteenth-century galleries, the visitors could take the catalogue home and read it in their own time. Thereby, Gilman argues, labels are misleading. As the text labels are small, missing information would

[28] Gilman described the discomfort of the visitor in the museum exhibition as 'museum fatigue', i.e., a museum display that demands too much muscular effort from the visitor. In his article 'Museum Fatigue' in *The Scientific Monthly* Gilman described and demonstrated the discomfort of the visitor through staged photographs (Gilman 1916, 62)

be unpreventable (Gilman 1918, 321). Visitors could thus take their time to benefit from the learning experience, in and outside the museum.

As the ideal museum was thought to be a civilizing and cultivating institution, reformers like Benjamin Ives Gilman propagated ideas to make the museums accessible and attractive to the general public (Bennett 1995, 73). In this way, the political, social, or moral messages disguised within the exhibition's narratives would be able to reach a wider audience (Coffee 2006, 444). Consequently, every element in Gilman's design principles of the ideal museum stood in service of the visitors, their understanding, and their satisfactory experience. The surroundings, architecture, and appearance of the ideal museum were to be inviting and inspiring. All visitors were to feel welcome by means of offering a liberal entrance fee and providing for convenient opening hours. The exhibition spaces were to display interesting and varied content in a comfortable and ordered manner. Besides, as to give the visitors the time to understand and appreciate the didactic aspects of the exhibited objects, the museum provided for seating accommodations and additional information in the form of exhibition catalogues (Gilman 1918, 46, 275, 321). The public art museum had to feel like a home.

I.III The Modern Museum

In the years following the publication of Benjamin Ives Gilman, more scholars started to consider the matter of strategies of display within museum exhibitions.[29] Museums became a testing ground for new curation techniques, in which the aim remained the same: making the museums accessible and attractive as to be able to educate and cultivate the visitor (Cain 2017). The new principles suggested by Gilman and his successors proved to be effective. Throughout Europe and North America, the number of museum visitors kept growing. People felt welcomed in the museums and consequently encountered the content present (Birkett 2012, 14). This development did not go unnoticed. Governments realized that the new museum strategies formed a better means for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power and knowledge than they did in the nineteenth century (Bennett 1995, 74). The authorities of the former age focused on architectural and technical aspects in their museum strategies, rather than on

[29] Scholars that also examined the strategies of display within museum exhibitions around 1930 were, amongst others, Alfred Lichtwark, Kenneth Clark, Dirk Hannema, and Adriaan van der Steur. For more information about developments of the strategies of display at the beginning of the twentieth century, I refer to chapter 2 of *Strategies of Display* (2012) by Julia Noordegraaf.

understandable content. Within the ideal museum, however, the growing museum audience was exposed to a great amount of comprehensible and accessible information.

Around 1920 political groups and parties emerged that considered museums to be the perfect means for bringing their ideas to the general public (Segal 2015, 62). As the arts occupied a central position in the ideology and propaganda of the National Socialists and communist regimes, art exhibitions were the ideal place to discretely broadcast their ideas. New museums arose and monumental buildings were utilized to host exhibitions (Steinweis 1993, 2). The brand-new spaces were put in service of the political aims as the authorities decided what to communicate to their visitors. The fact that art exhibitions were reduced to propaganda tools led to reorganizations in the museum world on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. This shift can be mainly attributed to professor Paul Sachs, who founded the famous museum course 'museum work and museum problems' at Harvard University that ran from 1920 to the 1950s (McClellan 2003, 22). Sachs propagated the idea of presenting content within the museum in such a way that it will be free of interpretations of political, social, or moral nature. This led to the search for neutral art and neutral art exhibitions (McClellan 2003, 28).

It was Paul Sachs's former pupil Alfred J. Barr who first developed a gallery space in which minimalism was the core display strategy. Barr wanted every artwork to speak for itself and a simplistic display helped to isolate the objects (Cain 2017). In the preparations of an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1936, the modern art curator Barr brought his idea into practice by removing the rugs, simplifying the decorative elements and light fixtures, and painting the walls and ceilings white (see appendix 5).[30] The display strategy came to be known as 'The White Cube', and is still used in museums today (McClellan 2003, 25). In the following years, Barr's white cube concept was optimized. For the visitor to have a 'pure' encounter with the artworks presented, everything that could form a distraction – monumental architecture, decoration, extensive information, the outside world – had to go, leaving the museum exhibitions practically transparent (Noordegraaf 2012, 161). Equally, the modern artworks presented in the exhibition's galleries were becoming increasingly simplified or even unrecognizable representations of the outside world.

The concept of the white cube was soon implemented by other museums in North America and Europe (Birkett 2012, 31). But the MoMA continued to take the lead with a new museum building in 1939. The architects turned the museum into a white marble box with a glass-walled façade (see appendix 6). All historical or homey associations were erased from the

[30] It was in the exhibition 'Cubism and Abstract Art', that ran from March 2 to 19 April 1936 in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, that Alfred J. Barr first experimented with the idea of the white cube (Cain 2017).

façade, which gave the museum an inward orientation (Noordegraaf 2012, 157). Inside, the galleries felt almost sacralized as they were totally secluded from the outside world. The exhibition spaces had no windows and were, apart from the neutral-colored carpeting, completely painted white (Duncan 1995, 103). The doorways between the galleries were simply left out (Noordegraaf 2012, 161). Artworks were lit individually with spotlights, and all hung in the same manner; on the same height, spaced out over the wall, rendering them individual but making no distinction in hierarchy. All indications of how to interpret the art were removed. By taking down the object labels, the paintings seemed to float in the empty, sacralized space suggested by the white walls. The transparent presentation gave the artworks a unique and timeless appearance (Noordegraaf 2012, 161).

As the world noticed that the public art museum came to serve the politics of the 1930s in Western Europe, North American scholars decided to take a different road. As an innovator, curator Alfred J. Barr first presented his own version of the history of art within the 'neutral' white cube in the MoMA in New York. Alfred Barr further optimized the ideas of the modern museum and together with the MoMA came to characterize the movement of modernism (McClellan 2003, 27). The public art museums were transformed into places where individual visitors could best experience the pure intentions and emotions expressed in the art. As a consequence, everything that stood between the observer and the object had to be removed (Noordegraaf 2012, 162). Whereas the ideal museum was decorated to feel like a home, the modern museum erased everything familiar as to emphasize its uniqueness. In conclusion, the concept of meaning-making in the public art museum is continuously developing, according to the applicable social and political context. The next chapter will examine the practices and strategies of the ideal museum in shaping the knowledge of the visitor in more detail, by focusing on the choices made in creating 'The Great German Art Exhibition' that was organized in 1937 in Nazi Germany.

II. The Ideal Museum and National Socialism

II.I The Role of Museums in the Third Reich

The First World War ended in 1918 with a defeat of the Central Powers.[31] Germany, the former great power, particularly suffered from the enormous reparations that were demanded by the victors in the peace-settlement (Steinweis 1993, 4). The newly appointed government of the country, the Weimar Republic, experienced hyperinflation, economic depression, and mass unemployment in the aftermath of the war. Moreover, the Germans suffered from a deep sense of national humiliation (Welch 2004, 217). The National Socialist German Workers' Party, led by Adolf Hitler, promised the German people reestablishment of order and national identity.[32] According to Hitler, the only salvation from the 'degeneracy' was the creation of a pure German state (Welch 2004, 214). The words of the NSDAP were promising to many in times of economic hardship and political instability. Consequently, the NSDAP came to power in 1933 as the largest political party in the legislature, resulting in the birth of the Third Reich.[33] This chapter examines how museums were utilized by the NSDAP and exhibitions were constructed to propagate the values of the Third Reich.

In creating a pure German state, the NSDAP took up the task of re-educating the people of the Third Reich (Welch 2004, 214). As to construct the new reality, the growing power of the NSDAP was utilized to implement the Nazi ideology in all facets of society.[34] Propaganda was considered to be of great importance in their policy (Staal 2018, 79). Four months after the seizure of power, the Ministry of National Enlightenment and Propaganda was set up and led by Joseph Goebbels.[35] Culture occupied a central position in the propaganda policy, as a means to broadcast the messages of the Nazis to the public. Consequently, Goebbels designed the Reich Chamber as 'to promote German culture on behalf of the German Volk and Reich (Steinweis 1993, 1)'.[36] In practice, it became the central governing and controlling body of the arts and immediately started with a reorganization of the cultural field. Artists, critics, museum

[31] The First World War occurred between 1914 and 1918. In the international conflict, the Central Powers, including Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria were defeated by the Allied Powers, led by the countries of France, Britain, Russia, Italy, and Japan (Royde-Smith).
[32] In German: Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei.
[33] The Third Reich refers to the German state between 1933 and 1945, the period in which Adolf Hitler and the NSDAP led the country (Petropolous 1996, 3).
[34] 'Nazi' is an abbreviation of National Socialism.
[35] In German: Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda.
[36] In German: Kulturkammer.

directors, and curators had to become a member of the Reich Chamber. Cultural workers who were not members could not practice their profession any longer (Segal 2015, 56). In this way, the Nazis gained total control of the arts of the Third Reich (Zuschlag 1997, 217).

Including and excluding were necessary tools for the process of Nazification, by which a society was formed that was based on pure Aryan values.[37] As mixing with other races or political opinions would inevitably lead to loss of core values and degeneration, they were to be excluded from society (Segal 2015, 53). In the art world, employees with differing backgrounds or ideas were banned from their profession (Zuschlag 1997, 217). Moreover, all modern artistic expressions were criticized or removed. According to Hitler, Aryan art was to be accessible and intuitively understandable. Realistic paintings or sculptures were to depict typical Aryan scenes as German landscapes, peasantry, the German family, or the heroic Nazi party leaders (Peter 1992, 130). For modern artists of the 1930s, their works were a medium through which they could express their inner emotion and psychotic state (Cashin 2016, 66). This resulted in interpretative scenes characterized by abstraction of color, lines, and shape. To Hitler, these expressions were rebellions against the traditional. As the messages of Aryan art were to be understandable for both the educated and uneducated, the art was to be naturalistic and universal (Cashin 2016, 66). Consequently, all modern art expressions were demonized under the heading of 'degenerate art' (Peters et al. 2014, 12).

The Nazification of the art world did not stop at the dismissal of museum officials, art professors, and artists. The Nazis decided to utilize cultural institutions to bring their ideals to the public (Noordegraaf 2012, 80). The choice for deploying art institutions is not surprising when viewed in light of the prevailing developments in the museum practice. In the 1920s scholars had described the museum as an important civilizing and cultivating institution. Newly adopted display strategies were to make the visitor feel invited and inspired. As a result, the visitor appreciated and understood the artworks exhibited more easily (Gilman 1918, 280). As the newly appointed museum officials were able to define the canon and construct the narrative presented to the museumgoer, the focus was shifted to the organization of museum exhibitions (Assman 2008, 98). In 1928, the Combat League for German Culture was created.[38] The Combat created 'positive' art exhibitions in which the theme of Germanness was central (Cashin 2016, 37). The curators experimented with display strategies to create types of

[37] In the Nazi ideology, it was believed that the pure German people were descent from the Aryan race, which was deemed highest in the racial hierarchy (Steinweis 1992, 52).
[38] In German: Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur.

arrangements that would impress the visitors and convince them of the greatness of the German Volk. The museum exhibitions were thus used to propagate the ideas of the Third Reich.

Not just exhibitions that promoted the pure German culture arose. At the same time, 'negative' art exhibitions, with titles such as 'Chamber of Terror', 'Art in the Service of Subversion' were organized throughout the country. Works by Jewish artists, political opponents, or modernists were framed as an attack on the German people or said to be created by sick minds or crazy people in these exhibitions (Schuhmacher).[39] Additionally, curators experimented with unfortunate forms of arrangement that contributed to the disappointment of the visitor. The experimenting within these early exhibitions eventually led to the birth of two principal shows in Nazi exhibition history: 'The Great German Art Exhibition' and the 'Degenerate Art Exhibition', both held in 1937. These exhibitions eventually laid the fundamentals for desirable and undesirable art traditions in Nazi Germany (Cashin 2016, 38). The purpose of the museum exhibitions in the Third Reich thus became to educate the public about approved Aryan and reprehensible degenerate art (Cashin 2016, 1). In the remainder of this chapter, the organization and strategies of display in the GGAE will be central.

II.II The Great German Art Exhibition: Design and Arrangement

On 15 October 1933, the 'day of German art' was celebrated in Munich. Munich played a prominent role in the reign of the NSDAP. Hitler had lived in the city for a long period of his life. Thus, when the party rose to power in early 1933, it was decided to house the Nazi headquarters here (Hall 2020, 175). The new Nazi stronghold was to propagate the power of the NSDAP. As the arts were considered to be of great importance in the Nazi ideology, a foundation for German culture was to be laid in Munich. Accordingly, during the ceremony of the day of German art, Hitler endowed Munich with the title 'capital city of German art' (Grosshans 1983, 59). In the same speech, Hitler festively announced the plans for a national museum, which was to present the 'true German art' to the German public (see appendix 7). Architect Paul Troost was appointed as the head designer of the House of German Art, which was to replace the Glass Palace that burned down in 1931 (Cashin 2016, 38). After four years

[39] In the Nazi ideology, it was believed that Jews were of a subhuman race and intended to destroy the German people. As Jews were thought to be descent of a subhuman race, elimination was essential to the purification and even the salvation of the German Volk (Steinweis 1992, 52).

of building, the House of German Art was opened to the German public (see appendix 8). It was the first official building erected by the NSDAP.

The GGAE was the first exhibition to be hosted at the new site. The exhibition was designed simultaneously with the construction of the museum. In 1933, Adolf Ziegler, the president of the Reich Chamber was put in charge of filling the museum (Grosshans 1983, 59). The presentation was meant to end the cultural degeneration of the Germans, while allowing the German race to agree with the purification of art. Differently put, the exhibition aimed to sway the audience into the ideas of the Nazi ideology (Coffee 2006, 443). To attain the artworks that would fill the halls of the new museum, Goebbels and Ziegler created a contest in which German artists could assign their input for the exhibition. The quality and quantity of the desired traditional German art during the early twentieth century turned out to be small. Up until the rise of the NSDAP, modern art had namely been the most popular artistic style in Germany (Werckmeister 1997, 289). Between the ceremony and the opening of the exhibition, nine-hundred pieces were found qualified. After a final selection by Hitler, only six-hundred works were selected for the exhibition (Cashin 2016, 38).

To place the messages of the artworks on the side of the public, they were to be exhibited in the most idealized manner (Coffee 2006, 443). The design of the building, the arrangement, objects, and text of the exhibition show that extensive research has been done as to construct a convincing presentation. First of all, the House of German Art was rebuilt on the site of the Glass Palace, a former exhibition hall that was considered to be an important cultural venue. The palace symbolized the power of Germany in the nineteenth century, as the first German industrial exhibition was held at the site. Restoring heritage on this historically relevant location added cultural value and authority to the new building (Moser 2010, 24). Additionally, the museum was located on the brink of a large public park (see appendix 8). As Munich was one of the largest cities in Germany at that time, the museum's location provided for an escape from the haste of the city (McClellan 2003, 17). As the surroundings provided for astonishment and contemplation, the location of the museum met the requirements described by Gilman for the ideal museum (Duncan 1995, 10).

Hitler often referred to the museum as the 'temple of German art'. The museum was namely built in a neoclassical style. The façade reminded of a Greek temple, with characteristics such as a long row of pillars and steps alongside the width of the grey, concrete building (Cashin 2016, 48) (see appendix 8). Next to the building fluttered large, black flags bearing the famous

swastika sign.[40] Upon entering the building, the audience was greeted by a massive portrait of Hitler, posing as the righteous leader of the NSDAP (Cashin 2016, 50) (see appendix 9). The entrance into the museum thus emphasized the power of Nazi culture and simultaneously juxtaposed it to classical Greek culture. By bringing the museum and its aims in relation to ancient culture, it manipulated the way the content inside was perceived (Cashin 2016, 48). Ancient Greek temples namely functioned as the home of gods. They were reserved for a special quality of attention, such as prayer or ritual (Gilman 1918, 46). In comparing the museum visit to such a ritual experience, the exhibition was equally perceived as exalted. The architecture of the museum thus left the visitor with a sense of importance and grandeur, even before entering the exhibition.

In organizing the GGAE, attracting a large number of visitors was prioritized. Therefore, just a small admission of 50 cents was to be paid at the entrance, and the exhibition was opened daily (Brantl 2010, 5). Inside, the exhibition was designed as to make the visitor feel comfortable. The architects created a 'comprehensible circuit'. From the entrance hall, several doors led to the exhibition's galleries. The visitors could choose where they wanted to go, without feeling compelled to make the whole obligatory tour through the building (Noordegraaf 2012, 97). An impressive amount of forty rooms were to be visited, spread out over two floors of the building. The galleries were mostly equally spaced, with measures from around seven-hundred meters squared (see appendix 10). Apart from the artworks, only benches with catalogues on them filled the rooms. These spacious galleries allowed the public to move freely without overcrowding, and to take their time to view the artworks (Cashin 2016, 51). The clearly ordered rooms provided for a pleasant visit and prevented the visitor from getting lost and tired (Esslinger 2004, 335). But most importantly, it assured that the visitor would not miss out on any of the displayed artworks (Gilman 1918, 275).

The main goal of the exhibition was to get the messages of the artworks across. The objects were therefore placed as to create an intimate connection between the visitor and the artwork (Birkett 2012, 12). All the elements that could possibly distract from the objects exhibited were limited. The paintings and sculptures were spaced out along the wall, and were hung or placed at eye-height. Thereby, the works were evenly lit by undifferentiated natural lighting coming from the glass ceiling (Moser 2010, 26). This caused for neutral shades in the galleries against which the impressive colors, sizes, and forms of the paintings and sculptures

[40] The swastika sign (卐), rotated 45 degrees mostly shown on a white circle and on a red flag, was used as the Nazis' principal symbol (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum 2017).

stood out (Noordegraaf 2012, 100) (see appendix 11, 12). Moreover, the wall paint and marble tiles on the floor were executed in a neutral color. The design characteristics of the exhibition contributed to creating an environment in which the visitor was attracted to the artworks, that could easily be viewed in isolation. In the end, the experience of visiting the GGAE was to leave the visitor impressed and inspired by the greatness of the Aryan artworks and the messages they propagated (Gilman 1918, 280).

II.III The Great German Art Exhibition: Objects and Text

The design of the House of German Art and the arrangement of the GGAE both emphasized the importance of the Nazi culture. The architectural and technical aspects of the show contributed to the primary goal of the exhibition: making the visitor emphasize with the objects presented (Gilman 1918, 275). The content of the exhibition is important to take into consideration as to understand how the Nazis tried to bring their ideas to the public. The artworks selected for the show were all to contribute to the narrative of the great German art. As Hitler noted, 'to be German art means to be clear (Hitler 1937, 1)'. In the preparations of the exhibition, the definition of Aryan art was however not always as clear-cut. A few weeks before the exhibition opened, Hitler replaced the appointed jurors with his personal photographer Heinrich Hoffmann. The selection prepared was supposedly not worthy of a place in the magnificent building; it was to be impressive and above all to be logical (Petropoulos 1996, 58). As the show aimed to lay the fundamentals of 'the German art', the most convincing selection of artworks was to be presented. To reach the large, general public, comprehensibility became the priority.

To make the final selection of six-hundred objects comprehensible, the exhibition was divided into nine themes. Paintings, statues, and graphics that varied in size and form depicted the themes of the German worker, nature and landscapes, peasant life, family, motherhood, idealized nude males, war, and Christianity (see appendix 9, 11, 12) (Peter 1992, 130). Every gallery presented artworks from one or two of the categories. By means of this division, there was no doubt that the visitor would miss out on the messages propagated by the themes. Besides, varying content from gallery to gallery would keep the visit interesting and prevent the visitor from becoming tired (Gilman 1918, 275). Weariness was to be avoided, as the goal of the exhibition's design was for the visitor to absorb all the content. As the doors between the different galleries were opened, the audience was able to look at the works in the next rooms

(see appendix 11). Hereby, the interconnectedness of the themes was emphasized. All categories were part of a greater whole; the Nazi ideology (Moser 2010, 25). By dividing the selection of artworks into themes, the extensive content remained comprehensible and interesting.

Through their encounter with the objects, visitors were to be attracted to the ostensibly perfect world in the Third Reich. The works that best depicted the ideals that the Nazis valued were the naturalistic paintings by German artists. Visitors could easily identify with the life-like, yet idealized depictions of life in the Third Reich. One of the visitors accounted: 'many of the paintings in the exhibition looked like photographs (Barron 1991, 36)'. Due to their comprehensible nature, realistic paintings were considered to be of high value and extensively represented in the exhibition (Assman 2008, 98). The sizes of the paintings varied. The lesser represented statues, however, were all of impressive sizes. They stood on an elevation, and still towered far above the public (see appendix 11). It symbolized the greatness of the Nazis, and left the audience with a sense of amazement. Brief information on the artworks was to be found in a printed catalogue. Some of the works in the booklet were marked as available for sale. With this, the curators hoped to cause for the public to look at the art differently, as if contemplating to buy one's ideal (Esslinger 2004, 333). The exhibition was thus constructed as a world of beauty and contemplation, that was to convince the visitor of the supremacy of German culture (Gilman 1918, 407).

As the aim of the GGAE was to isolate the visitor with the artworks, the display seems to be principally aesthetic in style. The text accompanying the exhibition, however, expresses the pedantic aspects of the show (Moser 2010, 29). On the opening day of the exhibition, Hitler held a speech at the House of German Art. This speech set the tone for the GGAE, and at the same time drew destructive attention to the DAE. Hitler declared an 'unrelenting cleansing war' on the intensely hated modernism, and stated that the standard of all artistic achievement lay in the Aryan race (Brantl 2010, 4). The GGAE was thus framed as the prime example of righteous German art. These statements added great value to the content of the exhibition. The narrative of Aryan art was further underscored in a printed catalogue, that was made available at the entrance of the exhibition. The cover featured the national emblem of the Nazi party, and the head of an ancient Greek soldier (see appendix 13). The reader was herewith reminded of the resemblance between the German culture and that of ancient Greece. It left the reader with a sense of importance, before reading the text.

The catalogue consisted of a short foreword written and signed by Hitler, a note on the organization of the exhibition, photographs, and a list of exhibited objects. In the text sections,

the supremacy of the German culture was repeatedly emphasized and juxtaposed to the undesirable influences of political opponents and modern artists (Moser 2010, 27). In the foreword, Hitler stated that the grand exhibition was finally presented to the world public. Throughout the rest of the text, it becomes clear that this did not entail the entire world, but rather all of the German race, in Germany or in foreign countries (Esslinger 2004, 332). Suggestive language such as 'Aryan', 'our people', 'German identity', was thereby constantly opposed to 'them', 'other', 'degenerate' in the text, to underscore the exclusivity of the German culture (Esslinger 2004, 336). The text was accompanied by illustrations and photographs that reminded the reader of the desired cultural expressions. Besides, the list of the six-hundred exhibits stressed the countless examples of Aryan art. By presenting the art as being exalted in the text, the curators purposefully influenced the way the art in the exhibition was perceived by the visitors. The text accompanying the exhibition was thus crucial in shaping the narrative of the righteous German art.

The analysis of the GGAE demonstrates how museum exhibitions were utilized as tools for changing the public opinion in the Third Reich. The exhibition at the House of German Art was designed to serve as the example of how German culture and museums were to be oriented in the future (Cashin 2016, 49). To accomplish this, the ideas of leading scholars in the field of museology were researched as to understand how display techniques changed the visitor's experience within the museum. The curators constructed an environment that allowed for the thought and movement of the visitors. Consequently, the audience felt comfortable and welcomed in the exhibition space, which subconsciously made them more appreciative of the exhibited art (Cashin 2016, 52). The orderly displayed objects and the text accompanying the exhibition repeatedly stressed the impressiveness and exclusivity of the German art. No interpretation was left to change. Even the title of the exhibition manipulated the perception of the visitors. 'The Great German Art' suggested that all objects on show were fundamentally important (Moser 2012, 27). To get the message of the exclusive Aryan art across, it was often juxtaposed to undesirable art forms in the Third Reich. The next chapter will examine how the narrative of this degenerate art was presented to the German people in the DAE.

III. The Unideal Museum and Degeneration

III.I The Degenerate Art Exhibition: Design and Arrangement

A small card in the catalogue of the GGAE announced the DAE, an exhibition that was held one block away from the House of German Art (Barron 1991, 35). This exhibition was the polar opposite of the GGAE, as it showed the art to which Hitler had declared an 'unrelenting cleansing war' during his opening speech at the House of German Art. Two weeks before the opening, it was decided that the message of the GGAE would be more convincing if there was to be a counter-exhibition on the theme of undesirable art in the Third Reich (Levi 1998, 42). Consequently, on June 30 Joseph Goebbels instructed Ziegler to select and confiscate objects from public collections throughout Germany for a major exhibition on 'degenerate art'. Ziegler managed to seize 16.000 works from 32 museums, of which 650 by 112 artists were used in the exhibition. The remainder was stored, auctioned to foreign buyers, or destroyed (Segal 2015, 45). The selected works were presented to the public in the former Institute for Archeology of Munich. The hastily curated exhibition clearly showed and symbolized the lack of respect for the degenerate artists. Hence, Ziegler opened the exhibition with the words 'German Volk, come and judge for yourselves (Levi 1998, 41)'.

The former Institute for Archeology was located within walking distance from the House of German Art. Visitors could easily combine the two exhibitions, which was exactly what the organizers anticipated. After visiting the impressive neoclassical building, the audience would arrive at a far less inviting, outdated gallery (Barron 1991, 20). The walls looked unkempt, were covered with posters, and bikes were parked against them. Apart from the large banner stating 'Exhibition ''Degenerate Art'' free Entrance', the site did not convey that an event was taking place behind the enclosed facade.[41] The building was located on a busy street and there was just one narrow door to enter the exhibition. Consequently, people were crowding together on the sidewalk in front of the entrance (see appendix 14). Ziegler clearly sought for a location that met none of the requirements proposed by Gilman. Where the House of German Art was located in a quiet and secluded area, the DAE was held at a discrete, unattractive site (Gilman 1918, 46). This deception affected how the artworks within the exhibition were perceived. By emphasizing the differences between the venues, Ziegler the visitor was left with a sense of disappointment when visiting the DAE.

[41] In German: 'Austellung ''Entartete Kunst'' Entritt frei'.

The differences between the shows were also stressed within the exhibition. While the content of the GGAE was spread out over forty spacious rooms, the exhibition space of the DAE was limited to two floors of four by thirteen meters wide (Cashin 2016, 61). The narrowness of the venue was further emphasized by the exhibition design. Nine galleries were created by means of temporary partitions, with small openings to pass through. These partitions partly covered the windows, which resulted in the space to be dimly lit. The small, dark rooms thereby had relatively low ceilings that contributed to the sense of claustrophobia (Moser 2010, 25). Visitors entered the exhibition on the upper floor, which was reached by a narrow staircase (Barron 1991, 49). Hereafter, the audience was obliged to follow a route through all the rooms. As the exhibition was free of charge, it attracted large groups of visitors. Consequently, the exhibition spaces were constantly overcrowded. Moving around freely and taking the time to view the individual artworks, which was highly valued in the GGAE, was made impossible. The organizers hoped to cause for discomfort, by means of the disturbing ambiance created by the exhibition design, which would subconsciously influence the visitors to dislike the displayed artworks (Cashin 2016, 3).

The quickly assembled selection of artworks was crowded together in a chaotic arrangement (Barron 1991, 20). The brightly colored, abstract paintings were seemingly hung as closely together as possible. Some works hung above others, or above the openings between the galleries. A few paintings even hung askew, upside down, or were exhibited unframed. The statues were positioned lined up along the walls, and left little space in between them (Moser 2010, 27). Some of the objects were thereby placed in front of others (see appendix 15). In between the objects, quotations, racial slurs, and illustrations such as ‘Madness becomes method’ and ‘Nature as seen by sick minds’ were graffitied on the wall (McClellan 2003, 339). The phrases included statements by art critics that were scribbled over the wall in large fonts. Moreover, labels that hung next to the objects indicated the amount for which the museum had acquired this ‘art’. Herewith, not only the art but also the institutions and officials of the art world were criticized and demonized (Freedman 2017, 9). The content of the exhibition was purposefully arranged in a disjointed and chaotic manner, as to show and symbolize the lack of respect for the degenerate artists and the modern art world.

The fact that the objects were exhibited in a small exhibition space and arranged in a haphazard manner made it impossible for the visitors to view the artworks individually. Providing for an intimate encounter between the visitor and the objects was highly prioritized in the GGAE, as it would make the audience more appreciative of the art (Birkett 2012, 12). In the DAE this was to be avoided, as the aim of the exhibition was to demonize the artworks. In

line with this goal, Ziegler let the public enter the exhibition for free, so that the narrow spaces of the former institute would frequently be packed by visitors. When the small rooms were overcrowded by large groups of visitors, viewing the artworks in isolation was made impossible and interaction between them would be unavoidable (Moser 2010, 30). The public consequently reflected upon the exhibited works of art together. As to make sense of the presented artworks, people talked loudly and made comments to one another (Barron 1991, 36). It is even believed that Ziegler hired actors to yell, spat, and laugh at the displayed objects. The staged bustle and the noise contributed to the already existing atmosphere of chaos, in which it was impossible to focus on the individual artworks (Barron 1991, 88).

As a counterpart to the GGAE, the purpose of the DAE became to clarify for the German public what type of art was unacceptable in the Third Reich, and thus 'un-German'. Scholars of the 1930s argued that a clear exhibition design and inspiring atmosphere contributed to the appreciation and comprehensibility of the exhibited objects. The proposed curation techniques were therefore purposefully misused to achieve the opposite in the DAE (McClellan 2003, 17). Ziegler provided for an environment in which the public could judge for themselves. The artworks were arranged chaotically and displayed in a claustrophobic exhibition space. Overcrowding in the rooms made it impossible to focus on the messages of the objects. The manipulated design and arrangement techniques thus overshadowed the value of the modern artworks and framed them as unworthy of a place in the German aesthetic (Grosshans 1983, 79). In this way, the DAE directed the knowledge of the visitor, in thinking of modern art as the undesirable art form that once mingled with the 'good' art, as shown in the House of German Art (Mills 2003, 37).

III.II The Degenerate Art Exhibition: Objects and Text

The choice for the location and exhibition design of the DAE clearly demonstrates how Ziegler tried to convince the public of the reprehensible character of the art exhibited. The claustrophobic atmosphere constructed in the show left the visitor with a sense of dislike and more importantly distracted from the actual meanings of the displayed artworks. These aspects were highly prioritized in the short two weeks in which the exhibition was composed. There had namely simply been no time to pay attention to the individual characteristics of the objects. In fourteen days, 16.000 random works of art were taken off the walls of public museums (Cashin 2016, 59). Time to make a thorough selection was lacking. Therefore, the curatorial

techniques were manipulated as to make the visitors dislike the artworks. This method was already present at the entrance of the exhibition. The first object the public encountered was *Kruzifix* by the German artist Ludwig Gies (see appendix 16). The large, abstract figure unconventionally portrayed Jesus nailed to the cross (Barron 1991, 49). The dimly lit object emerged from the wall and looked down at the visitors. Ziegler hoped that the way in which the figure of Christ was displayed would shock the public and leave them with a sense of fright.

The categorization of the artworks equally manipulated the perceivement of the visitors. The six-hundred objects were namely divided into themes of degeneration. The first rooms were attributed to the subjects of mockery of religion, Jewish artists, the vilification of women, and antimilitarism (Barron 1991, 20). These categories were the exact opposite of the themes in the GGAE in which representations of Christian symbols, noble motherhood, and idealized war scenes were shown. The obvious differences in display and subject matter emphasized the insurmountable gap between Aryan art and modern art. The rest of the exhibition's grouping was a composite of broader destructive themes such as lack of artistic skill, similarities to the work of the mentally ill, and seemingly ridiculous prices for which the art was bought (Barron 1991, 20). These suggestive themes in combination with the haphazard arrangement ensured that the works of art no longer had to be interpreted by the visitor. The organizers created an associative framework in which the artworks were reduced to one single meaning, namely that of degeneracy (Zuschlag 1997, 222). By imposing the interpretations upon the audience, the exhibition was far from inspiring. Providing for a place of beauty and contemplation, that was said to create an educative exhibition, was hereby purposely repressed.

The way in which the works were categorized demonstrates that the selection criteria for the exhibition had been rather vague (Assman 2008, 98). Apart from works by Jewish artists and political opponents, Ziegler and the jurors had sought for art that did not depict the perfect, life-like world that represented Aryan art. As a result, most of the selection consisted of works by impressionist, cubist, expressionist, Dadaist, and surrealist artists, which were not easily attributed to distinctive categories because of their abstract character (Barron 1991, 87) (see appendix 15, 17). In the exhibition, the abstract art was lumped together in the latter, vaguer categories. Consequently, the distribution of artworks was very inconsistent. While the first exhibition spaces displayed a comprehensible number of artworks, the last rooms were packed with objects (Moser 2010, 25) (appendix 15, 17). Another outcome of the hasty selection of artworks was that information of some of the artworks was missing, or placed next to the wrong object. These works were thus simply displayed as representations of degenerate art, without any regard to their individual identity. The inconsistency and miscommunication within the

exhibition however only contributed to the misconception of the audience (Cashin 2016, 64). As to be able to create a convincing narrative of degeneracy in two weeks time, manipulation prevailed.

To reinforce the exhibition's narrative, text came to play a pivotal role. Just like its counterpart, the DAE was inaugurated with an opening speech in which the tone for the exhibition was set. The exhibition was presented as the pendant of the GGAE. The exhibited artworks were introduced as insane examples of horror and disgust, that were bought with the hard-earned savings of the German people (Barron 1991, 45). This responded to the economic crisis, of which many Germans suffered. By framing the art as rash purchases in times of hardship, many people felt addressed. This manipulation technique resulted in a negative perspective on the exhibition. The printed catalogue similarly contributed to this stance. The booklet was brought about as the 'leader through the exhibition' and presented as a souvenir of the show.[42] 'Entartete Kunst' was stated on the cover in a large, red, childish font between quotation marks (see appendix 18). The text covered parts of Otto Freundlich's statue *Der Neue Mensch*. As the statue was lightened from above, which accented the abstracted face, it functioned as an iconic example of degenerate art (Cashin 2016, 60). The front cover propagated the idea that the art exhibited was not to be taken seriously.

The catalogue consisted of thirty-two pages, filled with text, quotations, and images. The first pages described the aims of the exhibition in great detail; the severe threat and consequences of degeneration were clarified. The visitors could then use the booklet as a guide through the different themes of the exhibition. The text elaborated on the presented categories with words such as 'absolute stupidity', 'nigger art', and 'foolish works'. Throughout the whole catalogue 'artists', 'modernists' and 'modern art' were written between quotation marks (Ziegler 1937, 7, 16, 24). The text in the catalogue did exactly the same as the quotes on the walls; it swayed the audience into a negative interpretation of the works (Freedman 2017, 8). The passages were accompanied by reproductions of the artworks, that were reduced to the size of a stamp and arranged in complete disorder. Just like in the exhibition design, the artworks had no individual presence. Four illustrated pages in the back of the catalogue elaborated on the similarities between modern art and works by patients of the Psychiatric Clinic of the University of Heidelberg (see appendix 19) (Zuschlag 224, 1997). Modern artists were hereby reduced to sick minds. As a substitute to the physical exhibition, the catalogue further manipulated the interpretation of the visitors.

[42] In German: 'Führer durch die Austellung'

Two weeks before the opening of the GGAE, Goebbels realized that the best way to eliminate modernism and to incite the public opinion against it was not to hide it, but to display it in a negative counter-exhibition (Ricci 2019). In the short amount of time, Ziegler and his colleagues managed to confiscate, transport, and curate a selection of six-hundred artworks that came to propagate the message of degeneration. In order to bring the message across, the knowledge of how display techniques can direct ways of thinking was purposefully misused (Mills 2003, 37). As to be able to curve the public's opinion into what the Nazi ideology preached, the manipulation of curatorial techniques became the priority (Cashin 2016, 60). By means of the design of the building and the arrangement of objects, a disturbing atmosphere was created that subconsciously influenced the audience to dislike the artworks. The categorization of objects in themes of degeneration thereby framed modern artists as foolish, dangerous, and barbaric creatures (Ziegler 1937, 16). In the accompanying exhibition catalogue and the opening speech, interpretations were imposed upon the readers. Modernist art was presented as a severe threat to the pure German culture of the Third Reich (Barron 1991, 9). The negative context in which the artworks were shown, thus came to determine their interpretation (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 1).

III.III Two Propaganda Exhibitions, Two Executions

Goebbels stated in a speech written in March 1933 that 'the best propaganda is that which, as it were, works invisibly, penetrates the whole of life without the public having any knowledge of the propagandistic initiative (Cashin 2016, 64)'. In order to achieve this invisible persuasion, museums were tactfully chosen as tools of propaganda. In the 1930s, museums were namely considered to be trustworthy institutions that enriched the visitor with historical and scientific knowledge. As the varying subjects were presented as objective truths in the museum, the visitor was easily convinced of the presentations (Bennett 1995, 66). Newly discovered display strategies in museum exhibitions thereby made the content comprehensible for the general public. The public museum thus functioned as a credible institute of education with a wide outreach. In being able to direct the knowledge of the visitors, the museum was a very powerful institution (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 1). As the Nazis noticed this power, they decided to use and abuse it for their own plans. Through museum exhibitions, the party could invisibly communicate the new reality of the Third Reich to the general public (Staal 2018, 79). As a

result, state-sponsored art exhibitions were organized to place the narrative of desirable and undesirable art on the side of people (Coffee 2006, 444).

The GGAE and the DAE are prime examples of exhibitions created by the Nazi's. After years of experimenting, these shows demonstrated the perfected propaganda techniques in museum exhibitions. Whereas the earlier shows had been solely focused on Aryan or degenerate art, the GGAE and the DAE were interrelated (Cashin 2015, 38). The exhibitions were most effective when viewed on the same day. Therefore, they were held one block away from each other. As the one displayed the desirable art, and the other the undesirable art of the Third Reich, the curatorial methods were equally opposing in every detail (Levi 1998, 42). The GGAE was held in an impressive neoclassical building, in which the six-hundred artworks were neatly ordered in forty spacious rooms. The visitor was free to roam around and be amazed by the imposing, life-like artworks (Barron 1991, 34). The DAE however, was hosted at an insignificant, narrow venue in which the six-hundred objects were brought together in a chaotic and careless arrangement. The overcrowding of artworks and people caused for a claustrophobic atmosphere within the exhibition (Barron 1991, 36). Since Ziegler was responsible for both of the exhibitions, it is clear that the execution of the exhibitions was purposely manipulated as to be each other's polar opposite.

The main aim of the opposing exhibition design was to provide for an intimate encounter with the artworks in the GGAE, and to rule this possibility out in the DAE. When viewing the artworks in isolation, the visitor was namely more likely to appreciate and empathize with the message of the works (Birkett 2012, 12). Consequently, decorative elements were limited in the GGAE as to attract the visitor to the displayed objects. The exhibition spaces in the DAE were just filled with distractions as wall graffiti, mislabeling, noises, and pushing people. As a result, the visitors did not focus on the artworks but on the disturbing atmosphere (Barron 1991, 36). In the text accompanying the exhibitions, the differences between the elevated Aryan and degenerate modern art were endlessly repeated. Herewith, the interpretation of the artworks was imposed upon the audience. All aspects of the exhibitions thus compared the 'best' and 'worst' the art world had to offer, as to assure no interpretation was left to change (Schumacher). After their first edition in Munich, both exhibitions traveled for four years through principal cities in Germany and Austria to further spread the ideas of cultural purification.

The strict distinction between the themes of the two exhibitions was however not always as clear-cut. Behind the scenes, there had been a great deal of confusion about the selection criteria for the shows. There was an ongoing debate about showing the works of Franz Marc and August Macke, who had given their lives for the fatherland during the First World War, in

the DAE (Segal 2015, 61). Marc's art ended up being removed from the selection after the show in Munich, while works by Ernst Barlach and Emil Nolde, two celebrated members of the Nazi party, were used in all editions of the DAE (Bleul-Gohlke 2013, 7). Even more curiously, some of the works in the DAE had previously been presented as exemplary German art, and conversely, works selected for the GGAE had been seized by Ziegler as degenerate art from the public collections. Works by Rudolph Belling were even presented in both of the exhibitions (Segal 2015, 62). This ambiguity proves the subjective character of art; their meaning depends on the context it is shown in. The GGAE and the DAE are clear examples of how powerful the details in curating exhibitions can be as to direct the meaning of the artworks (Cashin 2016, 3).

For the propaganda shows to be effective in placing their messages on the side of people, they are ultimately dependent on the willingness of the audience to accept their worldview. The audience must literally take the first step by walking through the museum's doors (Coffee 2006, 444). In the case of the GGAE and DAE, the final attendance records were not in line with what the organizers had anticipated. The DAE namely broke all existing attendance records for an art exhibition in Germany, as around 2 million people saw the show in Munich. The GGAE however, attracted 400.000 visitors in its four-month run (Petropoulos 1996, 57). It can be argued that the reason for these divergent numbers is the fact that the DAE offered admirers of modern art a last opportunity to see the works that had been banished. When the ban was lifted after the war, there equally was a great interest in modern art. Modern art was seen as a victim of the Nazi regime. Besides, the autonomous character of the works coincided with the political neutrality that the cultural world sought for (Segal 2015, 65). Modern art became the symbol of freedom and independence. The next chapter will examine how the knowledge of the visitor about the symbolic meaning of modern art was shaped in the museum context.

IV. The Modern Museum and the Cold War

IV.I MoMA and the Cultural Cold War

The Cold War is a period of conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States that occurred between the 1950s and the 1980s. The aftermath of the Second World War is regarded to be the starting point of the political tension. As Europe lay at the ruins of the war after 1945, both world powers claimed to be the new centre of the world (Louis 2011, 73). The ideologies of the Soviet Union and the United States were far from similar.[43] Consequently, the states engaged in a battle to win people's hearts and minds. In recruiting new converts, culture became a major battleground (Louis 2011, 2). Soviet realism was the major artistic movement of the Soviet Union at the time. The representative artists realistically depicted anything that glorified communism in their artworks (Segal 2015, 78). In the 1950s, reports about the persecution of anti-communist artists reached the West. Realistic art, which also flourished in the United States, was soon associated with propagandistic socialist realism as practiced in the Eastern bloc (Segal 2009).[44] Thereby, the United States was viewed as an artistic backwater by the European countries (Louis 2011, 26). The US State Department realized that a new perspective on the arts was to be included in their foreign policy if the world was to turn to the United States for inspiration (Wulf 2015, 2).[45]

The controversial art movement of abstract expressionism was chosen by cultural diplomats to portray the cultural achievements of the United States. In the first half of the twentieth century, abstract expressionism had no fixed cultural meaning. The movement was considered to be too radical, as rebellion against all existing standards and institutions characterized the art form (Barnhisel 2015, 2). Besides, Europeans dismissed the modern art as provincial and inferior (Louis 2011, 73). In the 1950s however, the State Department realized that this relatively new art movement could be used to spread the American ideas around the country and abroad. It was only in a democracy as in the United States that the artist had the

[43] In the 1950s, the Soviet Union was a nation that based its national policies on the principles of communism and collectivism, while the United States was a liberal nation that strived for individualism and freedom. Accordingly, the Soviet Union was to be placed on the left side of the political spectrum, while the United States was placed on the far-right side. In their aspiration to become the center of the world, the nations were diametrically opposed (Kramer 1999, 539).

[44] In the Cold War period, the Eastern bloc referred to the Soviet Union and other communist states and the Western bloc referred to countries that allied with the United States (Kramer 1999, 539)

[45] The US State Department is an executive department of the federal government of the United States, responsible for the nation's foreign policy and international relations (US Department of State 2020).

liberty to express him or herself without state intervention, whereas the Soviet artist had become a tool of the state. Apart from the public freedom of the artist, the work of abstract expressionists was incredibly varied and used unusual techniques that had never been shown before. Thus, the State Department reasoned, the variation and innovation perfectly captured the American idea of freedom and individualism as opposed to the strict rules within Soviet communism (Segal 2015, 78).

Now that the state understood the importance of culture in waging the Cold War, the executive branch of the government had to develop covert methods to promote the American modern art. The newly admitted president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, responded to this need by founding The United States Information Agency (hereafter: USIA) in 1953 (Segal 2009). The mission of the USIA was 'to understand, inform, and influence foreign publics in promotion of the national interest (Chodkowski 2012)'. With regards to the cultural program, they began to coordinate temporary, traveling exhibitions in collaboration with cultural institutions abroad to portray the American ideals (Segal 2009). In 1956, the USIA abruptly cancelled one of the most important, publicly funded shows ever sent abroad: '100 American Artists'. The agency wanted to drop ten of the artists, because of obscure political reasons.[46] The American Federation of Arts, the cooperating party, refused to agree to this need and called off the show (Cockroft 1974, 85). The incident was described within the newspapers as a censorship scandal, as the critics noted in the *New York Times* of June 1956: 'unless the agency changes its policy it should not try to send any more exhibitions overseas (Franscina 1985, 152)'.

The officials of the State Department concluded that modern art could better be promoted by private institutions, than by public funding. As the United States lacked a ministry of culture at the time, cultural institutions functioned as private entities without accountability to anyone but themselves (Louis 2011, 29). The institutions led by their trustees and directors determined which artists to exhibit, and were thus free in constructing their narratives (Luke 1992, 228). Consequently, public museums were called into play. The MoMA became the principal target, as it was the main museum of modern art and therefore played a significant role within American culture. By utilizing the MoMA to broadcast the American ideals, a large and serious museum audience could be reached. Nelson Rockefeller came to play an important role in connecting the state and the museum (Cockroft 1974, 4).[47] In his former function at the

[46] According to the USIA, the artists were considered to be 'social hazards' and 'unacceptable' for political reasons (Cockroft 1974, 85).
[47] Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller (1908-1979) was an American politician, philanthropist, and businessman (Kandell 2017).

foreign affairs department, Rockefeller helped shaping American foreign policy and understood that cultural policy was a powerful weapon in the war of ideas (Louis 2011, 29). Besides, as the son of the founder of the MoMA and trustee of the board, he was closely connected to the modern art museum.[48] As to influence the policy of the MoMA in organizing state-sponsored exhibitions on abstract expressionism, Rockefeller became the perfect link between the state and the museum.

In November 1956, the MoMA created the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art (hereafter: The Council) with the counselling of Nelson Rockefeller. The International Council was to function as an auspice of the already existing International Program of the MoMA (hereafter: The Program). The Program was devoted to connecting the MoMA to an international network of artists, scholars, and institutions (MoMA 2021). The approach of the Council was more practical, as it connected the artistic leaders from the United States and abroad as to realize the cultural exchange between countries (Del Real 2012, 11). Additionally, it would assume full funding of MoMA's international exhibitions program. This resulted in around sixty international exhibits sponsored and organized by MoMA and the state. By means of the newly implemented council of the museum, the state was able to broadcast the American ideals invisibly, while hiding behind the reputation of the MoMA. As the museum had the structure to complete the mission in the fight against Soviet influence, it stepped in to fulfil the role of the government (Louis 2011, 29).

The tactical move of the state to involve museums in the Cultural Cold War is interesting when viewed in light of the theory of the museum as an institute of power. As there had never been a ministry of culture in the United States, the museum was a private entity free to exhibit whatever they pleased (Cockroft 1974, 39). Authorities could freely define the canon and thus construct convincing narratives (Assman 2008, 98). This made the museum a fruitful place for spreading American ideals. Max Kozloff argues that for an engine of propaganda to be successful it demands 'the cooperation of artists not as paid propagandists or a state censored time-servers but as free individuals (Kozloff 1973, 50)'.[49] The structure of the museum as an open and public place thus provided for a power that was not imposed upon people from above, like in the publicly funded exhibitions, but constructed through telling and showing the story of Americanism (Bennett 1995, 99). Besides, the museum was conveyed as a trustworthy entity

[48] The Museum of Modern Art in New York was founded in 1929 by Mrs. John Aldrich Rockefeller, Miss Lillie P. Bliss, and Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan (The Museum of Modern Art 2020).
[49] Max Kozloff is an American art historian. He has been active as an executive editor at the art magazine *Artforum* (Dictionary of Art Historians).

and could thus influence the public discreetly. Using the museum space to present the American ideals, through disciplining rather than imposing ideas upon the public, was thus a logical medium for the government to broadcast its ideas.

III.II The New American Painting: Design and Arrangement

One of the shows organized by the International Council was 'The New American Painting' (hereafter: NAP). The exhibition was assembled at the request of several European institutions that wanted a major exhibition about abstract expressionism from the United States (Spicer 2018). As Europe was the main target of the American cultural policy, a great amount of effort was put into the organization of the exhibition (Louis 2011, 36).[50] The show was curated by an experienced curator of the museum, Dorothy C. Miller. She had been working at the museum since 1934, and was a prominent person in the American modern art scene. For the exhibition, Miller brought together seventeen abstract artists, with an emphasis on expressionism in their work. The 81 selected works were by the modern artists that formed 'the central core and major marginal talent of the movement of abstract expressionism (Louis 2011, 48)'.[51] The exhibition aimed to present a well-composed show of the strongest examples of contemporary American art (Spicer 2018). It was to express to the Europeans that the 'new painting coming from America could no longer be ignored (Benjamin 2013)'. Between April 1958 and March 1959, the exhibition was on show in Basel, Milan, Madrid, Berlin, Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris, London, and New York.

The American edition of the NAP was hosted at the MoMA. As the goal of the exhibition was to attract the public to the American ideals propagated by the abstract expressionist artworks, the execution of the presentation was to be convincing. The fact that the show was held at the MoMA already contributed to the authority of the exhibition's content (Moser 2010, 24). Since its foundation in 1929, the main emphasis of the museum had laid on modern art. In the years following the founding, the museum had gained international acclaim through innovative exhibitions (Barnhisel 2015, 31). Exhibiting the new modern art movement at an internationally leading modern art museum thus stressed the value of the displayed objects

[50] In the ruins of the Second World War, European intellectuals still declared their cultural superiority. Europe thus became the main target of the cultural policy of the US as to compete with their modern art (Louis 2011, 73).
[51] These artists were, amongst others, Arshile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, William Baziotes, Sam Francis, Robert Motherwell, and Adolph Gottlieb (The Museum of Modern Art 1959, 20-96)

(Moser 2010, 24). The location of the prestigious modern art institution thereby coincided with the exhibition's idea of the American expressionist art being impressive and leading in the cultural world. The MoMA was namely situated on 53rd street in New York, the liberal and cultural capital of the United States. By displaying the NAP on this economically and culturally advanced site, the show and its content were easily brought in relation to success. By means of the reputation and location of the museum, visitors were influenced about the authority of the content presented in the show, even before visiting.

The architecture of the museum equally rhymed with the capitalistic values of prosperity, freedom, and individuality, that were reflected in the exhibition's narrative (Moser 2010, 24). The museum was namely located in between commercial shops. The MoMA fit right in, as the architects had designed the museum's building as a department store. The façade was made out of a glass wall, that lured the visitor in like a shop window (Birkett 2012, 25) (see fig. 5). Passers-by were free to look into the museum's building, and thus got a sense of what was shown in the prestigious art institute. It resulted in people gathering in front of the entrance to speak about the museum's interior (see appendix 20). This lowered the burden to actually enter the museum for people who considered the museum visit to be an elitist activity. Besides, the NAP that was held at the MoMA was free of admission charge (Spicer 2018). In this way, every individual was welcomed to admire the new leading art movement of the United States. The architecture of the MoMA and the liberal entrance fee thus contributed to constructing a narrative on the valued American ideals of individuality and freedom (Moser 2010, 24).

The architecture inside the museum was also aligned with the narrative of the new American modern art movement. The exhibition was held on one floor of the museum's building. The museum gallery used for the show was permanently designed as a quiet area (McClellan 2003, 26). Characteristic of the MoMA, this was accomplished by means of the white cube concept. The walls and ceilings were painted white and, on the floor lay a smooth grey cloth. Apart from the limited number of artworks and small labels, the space was empty (see appendix 21). The visitor was free to walk around and view the artworks without being interrupted by long descriptions, objects, or noises. The quietness and emptiness of the space created a place for individual and pure contemplation (Duncan 1995, 103). Furthermore, the almost transparent presentation gave the artworks a unique appearance. Against the empty, white walls, the large canvases with expressive forms and colors stood out (Moser 2010, 24). As all familiarity was absent, the space felt almost sacralized and the art as elevated (Duncan 1995, 103). The design of the museum's galleries provided for the freedom of the visitor and made the artworks stand out as unique and impressive pieces. In this way, the American art

exhibited was brought in relation to freedom, individuality, and uniqueness; important values of the American ideology.

For the NAP, the exhibition space was divided up into about fifteen smaller galleries. Every room was dedicated to one or two of the participating artists. By isolating the artists, their individual practices were emphasized. Each artist presented four or five works, that hung spaced out over the walls. Framed by centimetres of wall, the paintings could easily be viewed individually (see appendix 22). The visitor followed a route along all of the artworks. Between the galleries was an opening in the wall, that reached from the ceiling to the floor. In this way, visitors engaged privately with the 'subplots' in the larger narrative, but were also made aware of the other artworks by means of the see-throughs (Moser 2010, 25). Furthermore, the paintings were presented as if of equal importance; they were all lit individually by spots hanging from the ceiling, placed on the same height, and similarly framed. It rendered the works as individual, rather than as placed in a hierarchal order (Noordegraaf 2012, 161). The arrangement of the objects thus emphasized the individuality of the artists and their practice, and at the same time approached them as equal representatives of the major art movement of abstract expressionism. The architectural and technical aspects of the exhibition at the MoMA thus helped to instruct the visitor about the narrative of the abstract expressionist artworks and the values of the American ideology they propagated.

III.III The New American Painting: Objects and Text

The design and arrangement in the NAP thus contributed to the narrative of the exhibition. It is equally important to examine how the content of the exhibition shaped the knowledge of the visitor about the American ideals (Cockroft 1974, 85). The first object that the visitor encountered was a mural-size geographical map, that was presented on the wall before entering the exhibition (see appendix 23). The illustration functioned as an introduction to the practices of the International Council. It depicted the organization as an authoritative and powerful entity. On the map, the United States was shown in the middle with lines streaming outward into the rest of the world (Leigh 2008, 285). The exhibition views of European shows at the end of the lines emphasized the worldwide influence of the council. The accompanying descriptions stated that the council hosted: '198 showings of 60 exhibitions […] shown in 290 cities, in 51 countries of the world'. Besides, the cultural significance of the organization was stressed by juxtaposing the map next to the list of leading European art institutions to which the NAP

travelled.[52] The names of the museums were not to be missed as they were printed in a large, striking font (see appendix 24). By instructing the visitor about the authority of the organizing party before entering the exhibition, the objects in the galleries were equally perceived as authoritative.

In the entrance hall, the doors were opened to the exhibition spaces (see appendix 24). Consequently, the visitor could already see some of the works exhibited and easily related the abstract expressionist artworks to the displayed power of the organizing party. The exhibition displayed 81 large canvases in total, that were all arranged in the same manner and of equal size; most of the canvases were about two meters large in height and width (appendix 21). The selection of objects was clearly based on their intimidating shape, expressive character, and the limited quantity per artist, as to portray them as representatives of a unified narrative (Assman 2008, 98). The objects were however strictly ordered per artist, which demonstrated the individual qualities of each of the painters. Every artist edited its canvases with different forms, types of paint, and techniques. The various results demonstrated the freedom of expression only open societies, with independent individuals, allowed to flourished (Belmonte 2008, 27). By means of the selection criteria and the arrangement, the new art movement of abstract expressionism was portrayed as a unified whole, in which individuality and freedom of expression predominated. It precisely reflected the values that prevailed in the American ideology (Louis 2011, 4). The artists may not have intended such meanings for their works, yet the paintings came to serve the exhibition's narrative and its ideological purpose (Belmonte 2008, 22).

As to get the message of the artworks across, the visitor was isolated with the large paintings in the exhibition. The artworks were placed in empty galleries and surrounded by white walls (see appendix 22). Nothing was to distract from the meaning of the art. Consequently, the only text present in the exhibition was the name of the corresponding artists above the artworks, in a small and discrete font (Moser 2010, 27). Additionally, small object labels stating the name of the artist, title, medium, and date were placed next to the paintings (Noordegraaf 2012, 158) (see appendix 21). The text within the exhibition was thus rather a necessary evil; a pure encounter with the artworks was the priority. Outside the galleries, however, text was considered to be of great value in emphasizing the importance of the

[52] The 'New American Painting' was hosted by Kunsthalle in Basel, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna in Milan, Museo Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo in Madrid, Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Berlin, Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Palais de Beaux-Arts in Brussels, Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris and Tate Gallery in London (The Museum of Modern Art 1959, 4)

exhibition. This was also reflected in the choice for the exhibition's title. The title of the show was suggested by one of the exhibiting artists, Robert Motherwell. He argued that the proposed headers 'Abstract Expressionists' and 'Action Painting' were too general, and in light of the aims of the exhibition, introduced 'The New American Painting' (The Museum of Modern Art 1959, 16). Using 'the' stressed that the show dealt with the only fundamental American painting at that time. And the use of 'American' in the title, coincided with the promotion of America as a cultural leader.

Next to the physical exhibition, the narrative of the NAP was described extensively in a printed catalogue, which consisted of nearly one hundred pages. The catalogue started with an overview of the persons and institutions involved in the creation of the exhibition. This three-page long list stressed the authority and value of the exhibition. In the foreword that followed, director Rene d'Harnoncourt described the exhibition as a victory for American art by stating: '[the exhibition] won for American art widespread recognition and acclaim abroad (The Museum of Modern Art 1959, 5)'. Proof for this accomplishment was given in the section 'As the Critics Saw It'. This section summed up parts of reviews by European newspapers. Of the fourteen quotes listed, three were strongly negative. The negative quotes were short and provided only outrage without argumentation, such as 'this is not art – it's a joke in bad taste (The Museum of Modern Art 1959, 14)'. The positive paragraphs were lengthier and supported with valuable arguments: '[…] for the first time in the history of art, personalities are emerging that are not influenced by Europe, but, on the contrary, influence Europe, including Paris (The Museum of Modern Art 1959, 10)'. By making the positive reviews of international journalists stand out in the catalogue, the victory of the exhibition was framed as a fact.

The introduction of the catalogue was written by Alfred J. Barr, the advisory director of the MoMA and an influential person in the art world at the time. Barr highlighted the diversity of the modern art movement and emphasized the individualistic qualities of the representative artists (Louis 2011, 48). He then noted that the principles of freedom and individualism, that prevailed in the American ideology, were fundamental for the emergence of abstract expressionism. The symbolic meaning of the abstract expressionist works was thus clearly pointed out here. As the well-known curator brought the American ideology in relation to the artworks, the visitor was easily convinced of this connection. Another persuasion technique was to be found on the last pages of the booklet. The conclusion of the catalogue contained a list of exhibitions in which the abstract expressionist artists that participated in the NAP were featured. The lengthy and detailed list, left the reader with a sense of importance of the artists involved in the NAP (Leigh 2008, 277). By means of the text in the exhibition catalogue, the

visitor was influenced about the value, importance, and uniqueness of the artists and works within the exhibition. As a result, the visitor appreciated the content presented in the exhibition and the messages they propagated more easily.

Even though the cultural world had sought for political neutrality after the Second World War, abstract expressionism came to serve the government in the Cultural Cold War (Segal 2015, 65). As the relatively new art movement propagated the American ideals of freedom and independence, it was the perfect weapon against the traditional, realistic art of the Soviet Union. Consequently, structures and organizations within museums were put into place to advance abstract expressionism as the emblematic representation of the American freedom (Louis 2011, 34). The modern art was presented to the public in traveling museum exhibitions. As to convince the audience of the supremacy of the American art, the narratives of these exhibitions were not free of ideological connotations (Kozloff 1973, 32). In 'The New American Painting', which travelled through the United States and Europe, the museum context was constructed as to determine the meaning of the objects. The design, arrangement of objects, and text used all contributed to the narrative of individualism and freedom. In this way, the show indirectly disciplined the visitor about the American ideals (Bennett 1995, 99). By means of the abstract expressionist museum exhibitions, the government hoped that the world would turn to the United States for cultural inspiration. The exhibitions thus functioned as a propaganda tool in the Cultural Cold War. The following conclusion will critically reflect upon the findings of the case studies and ultimately answer the question if propaganda should have a place in the museum.

Conclusion

Education has always been the core purpose of the public art museum. Since their early beginnings, museum presentations are used to enlighten and inform visitors by means of the objects on display. Museum authorities thus bear a great responsibility, as they decide what is presented in the galleries. However, just exhibiting the artifacts is not enough (Hooper-Greenhill 2007, 13). As to make a museum exhibition educative and convincing, display tools such as design, arrangement, and text are crucial (Moser 2010, 22). By means of these aspects, a narrative can be shaped that instructs the visitor. The art displayed in turn generates its meaning from the constructed context in the exhibition (Assman 2008, 98). These dynamics make the public museum a valuable institute for education, as it governs the knowledge of the visitor, be it from different social classes and levels of education. But it also makes the museum a powerful institution, as it can direct the public opinion and provoke behavioral change (Bennett 1988, 81). As museum authorities determine the content of the exhibition, they are free to exhibit whatever they please. Consequently, when the organization of the museum falls into the wrong hands, the institute can be utilized as a propaganda tool.

The three examined case studies show how museums came to be put in service of political authorities. In tense political times, both the Nazis and the government of the United States sought for ways to bring their visions to the public. As museums were considered to be trustworthy institutions of public education, it was decided to utilize them as communication channels (Chen 2013, 407). In order to propagate their ideas, control over the museum's policies and practices was first to be assured. The way in which this was accomplished depended on the current political and cultural landscape. In the case of the Third Reich, the Nazis found their way into the organization of museums through newly implemented governmental structures. The Reich Chamber, as part of the Ministry of National Enlightenment and Propaganda, was called into life to control all practices of the cultural world (Steinweis 1993, 1). By means of this political system, the Nazis got free rein over the content presented in the museums. Consequently, exhibitions could be organized that propagated the values of National Socialism. In the case of the Cultural Cold War, the fact that the United States never had a political structure that controlled the functioning of public museums became useful. Museums in the United States were private entities free to exhibit whatever they pleased. Consequently, the way to bringing the American ideals to the museum audience was short (Cockroft 1974, 39). With the counselling of a board member of the MoMA, the government found its way into the organization of the institute and arranged exhibitions that celebrated liberalism.

Now that the propagandists were free to determine the content of the museum exhibitions, constructing narratives that convinced the public of their political aspirations was prioritized. Therefore, the current curation techniques were researched. The architecture and design of the building, the arrangement of objects, and the text used in the exhibition contributed greatly to shaping the knowledge of the visitor about certain values and ideas (Moser 2010, 22). In the ideal museum of the 1930s, the satisfactory experience of the visitor was paramount. The visitor was to be amazed by the museum's building and the artworks, and was thereby to be provided with understandable content (Gilman 1918, 46). The Nazis composed the GGAE exhibition in line with these ideals, as to generate a positive atmosphere that contributed to the appreciation of the presented artworks. The exhibition was hosted at an impressive neoclassical building, that was designed as a place of beauty and contemplation. In the museum, the visitors could take their time to wander through the marble halls and individually encounter the impressive objects. Both the displayed artworks as well as the text in the accompanying catalogue clearly idealized life in the Third Reich. The exhibition left the visitor amazed and enlightened about the values of National Socialism. The context of the exhibition thus came to determine the interpretation of the presented objects (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 1). In this way, the Nazis influenced how their political ideas were perceived.

The exhibition on desirable art of the Third Reich was composed in the most idealized manner of the time, as to convince the visitor of its superiority. Two weeks before the opening, the Nazis realized that the opposite effect could be achieved by presenting the undesirable artistic expressions in a negative context (Levi 1998, 42). Therefore, the DAE was composed as a counterpart to the GGAE. Curation techniques were purposefully manipulated in the exhibition as to create an unpleasant atmosphere. The DAE was held at an insignificant and unattractive venue. Inside the building, the selection of modern art pieces was brought together in narrow and dark galleries, that were constantly overcrowded by visitors (Barron 1991, 88). Destructive quotes were placed in between the haphazardly hung objects, which distracted from the actual representation of the works. The exhibition guide thereby repeatedly described the displayed modern art as degenerate and evil. In contrast to the GGAE, the DAE left the visitor with a sense of dislike. By means of the architecture, design, arrangement of objects, and text, an environment was constructed in which the exhibited artworks were interpreted by the visitor as reprehensible (Moser 2010, 22). Herewith, the Nazis curved the public opinion about their ideology and practices.

As the prevailing display strategies of the 1930s were focused on the satisfactory experience of the visitor and the presentation of comprehensible content, the propagandistic

messages in the two opposing Nazi exhibitions were clearly present. In the modern museum of the 1950s however, the prevalent curation technique was that of minimalism. Within the white cube, instead of imposing the interpretation upon the visitor, the artwork was to speak for itself. All decorative and suggestive elements had to go, resulting in empty and almost transparent galleries (Noordegraaf 2012, 161). Although the concept was called into life to function as a display type free of political connotations, it was used in the Cultural Cold War to promote the American ideals of individualism and freedom (Segal 2015, 65). These values were depicted by the innovative and varied art movement of abstract expressionism; the polar opposite of the realistic art of the Soviet Union. The abstract artworks were presented in the galleries of the MoMA and other prestigious European institutions as individual examples of the new major art movement of the United States. The narrative of the NAP connoted with the idea of America as a country of independence and success. By isolating the visitor with the large, expressive paintings in the white cube, they were perceived as unique and exalted (Birkett 2012, 12). The accompanying text thereby described the art movement as an example of American victory. In this way, the exhibition indirectly disciplined the visitor about the supremacy of the United States.

The three case studies demonstrate that propaganda effectively functions in the museum context under certain circumstances. First of all, there needs to be a clear intention for influencing the public opinion about particular political views. Secondly, the propagandist needs to gain control over the policies and practices of the museum, as to be able to bring the persuasive messages to the public. And lastly, the political authorities need to construct a definitive and convincing museum presentation by means of manipulated curation techniques. Herewith, the propagandist creates a context that comes to determine the interpretation of the objects and thus governs the knowledge of the visitor about the political ideas (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 1). The artworks thus come to serve the propagandistic narrative of the exhibition, yet are not propaganda objects in itself. When they are placed in a different context, they are decontextualized from the associative framework and open to be viewed from new perspectives (Assman 2008, 100). This is exactly what Timo de Rijk and Almar Seinen did in the ‘Design of the Third Reich’ exhibition, which was held at the Design Museum Den Bosch. The curators decontextualized design objects that served as propaganda in the Nazi era from their former suggestive frameworks and placed them in a new political, moral, and social context (Segal 2015, 129).

As the Design Museum Den Bosch was the first museum to bring the controversial design objects from the Nazi era together, the curators expected a great amount of criticism

about the subject choice for the show. Therefore, the exhibition was announced two years in advance, and it was decided to publish an article in which the justification and intentions for the show were explained. The curators emphasized that 'silencing the dark periods of the twentieth century makes it impossible to achieve a balanced analysis of our time (De Rijk 2019)'. In order to fully understand the functioning of design in our society, the evil practices need to be known too. The intention of the exhibition was thus to clarify for the visitor the functioning of design in the hands of dark forces, and to prevent the same from happening again in the future (Paver 2018, 44). The fact that there were no political aspirations to the exhibition is thereby evident through the given that the curators involved and consulted several institutions that are specialized in the history of the Third Reich and the Holocaust in the preparations of the exhibition, as to assure that the information presented was brought about cautiously (Knols 2018). We can thus not speak of propagandists intending to spread persuasive messages through their exclusive right over the museum's practices and policies.

In the exhibition, the objects were placed in a historical and evil context. The visitors entered the exhibition on the second floor, which introduced the Third Reich period. The development of the Nazi ideology and the reign of Hitler were explained by means of an introductory text, timeline, and twenty-minute video (see appendix 25, 26). Before the visitors encountered the design objects that were displayed on the first floor, they were made aware of the racist, destructive and dangerous practices of the Nazis. The informative exhibition-style returned in the gallery space on the first floor (Moser 2010, 27). The books, statues, posters, flags, and other design objects were divided into themes of the Nazi ideology, that were introduced by text panels and an audio tour. They neutrally described how the design pieces were once used to idealize the visions of the Nazis. By using the past tense, the artifacts were approached as historical sources. The visitor was thereby physically distanced from the objects by means of low display cases in which the works were laid flat. As to suggest that the artworks were products of an evil past, dark colors and dimmed lighting were used in the exhibition spaces (see appendix 27). When the visitors left the gallery space, they were confronted with contemporaneity in the white, modern museum building of the Design Museum Den Bosch (see appendix 28). By placing the objects in a dark, historical context, the oversimplification or glamorization of the design was repressed.

Instead of creating a definitive and authoritative museum presentation on Nazi propaganda that may sway the audience into the evil ideology, the curators of the Design Museum Den Bosch constructed an informative narrative about the historical use of design objects in the hands of dark forces. The DTR exhibition thus demonstrates that former

propaganda objects can have a place in the museum if they are contextualized in a careful manner. As the interpretation of art is dependent on the context in which it is shown, difficult histories, such as the period of Nazi Germany, can be viewed from new and more critical perspectives. Through the new lens provided by the Design Museum Den Bosch, we can begin to understand the great influence of design on our society and detect patterns that can help prevent similar events from happening again in the future. As the DTR was a pioneer in exhibiting on the design of the Nazi era, and since there was no clarity about the functioning of propaganda in the museum context, it is understandable that the show caused commotion. Now that we have seen that the former propaganda objects have no persuasive effects when curated carefully, and that they instead teach the visitor about processes that influenced the past and shape the present, we can hopefully normalize it in the future. By opening up the debate about the silenced aspects of history in the museum context, we can namely contribute to reconciling with the difficult past. Therefore, we can no longer look away.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Analysis model for exhibitions, derived from Stephanie Moser 'The Devil is in the Detail: Museum Displays and the Creation of Knowledge', in *Museum Anthropology* 33 (2010).

Keeping in mind: how do exhibitions create knowledge?

Architecture/Location: The architectural style of the building in which exhibitions are presented, and the location and setting of museums are key factors in evaluating the epistemological significance of museum displays.

- How does the architecture relate historically and culturally to the display?
- Does the style of the building emphasize a cultural contrast between the ''host'' or custodian of the collection and the objects on display?
- Does the architecture assign an integrity or authority to the display, or indeed undermine it?
- What does the location or surroundings of the museum say about its display?

Space: The space in which exhibitions are laid out is a fundamental part of the way displays are perceived.

- What is the size and shape of the rooms used?
- Is there a clear demarcation between primary and secondary display spaces?
- What kind of entrance space is used?
- Are different parts of the collection accorded different types of rooms?
- Are the rooms of equitable size with other galleries displaying related collections?
- Do visitors see the entirety of displays at a glance or are some displays obscured so as to enhance their impact?

Design/Color/Light: A critical factor in display analysis is the ''look'' or design quality of the galleries and rooms in which exhibitions are presented.

- What type of lighting arrangement was provided for the collection?
- What effects do both artificial and natural lighting have on how the objects appear (e.g., top-lighting, side- lighting, windows, skylights)?

- How are particular objects or groups of objects singled out through lighting strategies?
- Does the lighting lend a particular interpretation to the displays?

Subject/Message/Text: The subject and message of any exhibition and how it is presented in textual accompaniments to the displays is a critical factor that needs to be considered in museum display analysis.

- To what extent has text been used in the exhibition?
- Who has written the text and is their authorship apparent?
- What are the sources for the text?
- Style of writing: informative, creative or descriptive?
- Does the text include opinions or interpretations?
- What kind of titles and subtitles are used – descriptive, catchy, or questioning?
- What is the nature of the introductory or orientation text and how does it set the tone of the exhibition and give a sense of what lies ahead?

Layout: The ways in which an exhibition's different components are laid out in rooms and galleries is important in generating meanings about the topic or subject being represented.

- How are the displays arranged within the room/exhibition space?
- How are the surfaces of this space used (e.g., walls, ceiling, floor)?
- Are the objects aligned or associated with each other via a particular formation (e.g., are they in rows or clusters)?
- Is the space between the objects regularized or is there no pattern?
- Are the objects distanced from each other or positioned very closely?
- How are particular objects or sets of objects connected or separated?
- Are the objects arranged aesthetically (e.g., is symmetry a guiding principle for object layout)?

Exhibition Style: Analysis of museum display requires consideration of what the type or style of an exhibition is and whether it has been created with a distinctive approach to learning styles.

- Object led or idea-oriented exhibition?
- Is the style compatible with the subject?
- Aesthetic or didactic?
- Clear sense of a style or a mix?

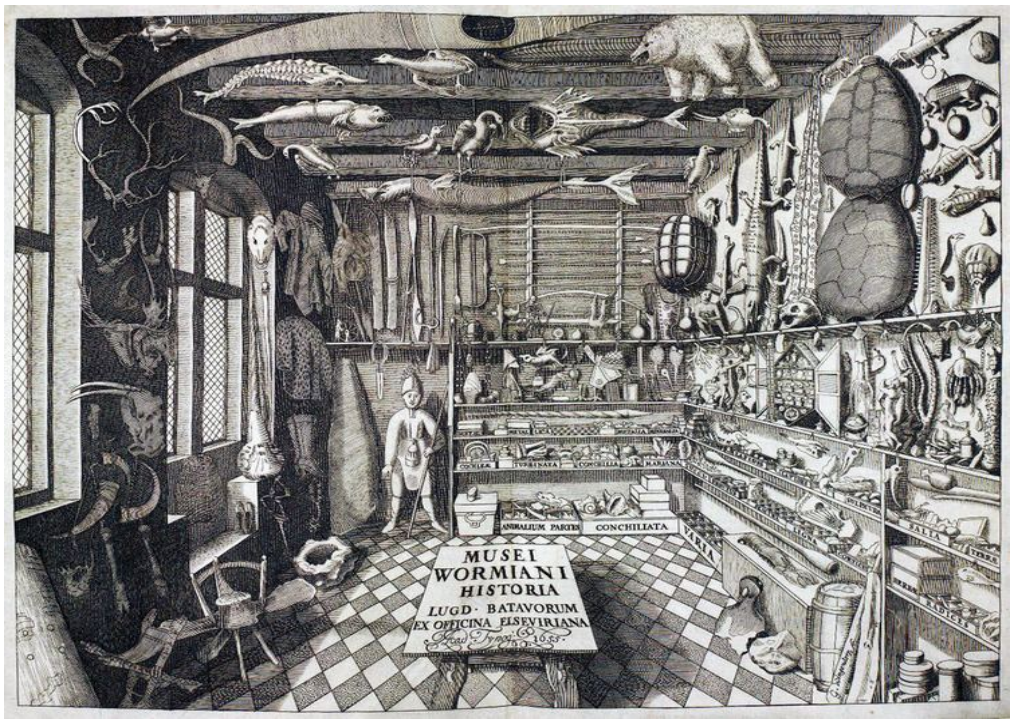
Display Type: The range and types of displays in an exhibition offer insights into the subject being represented and can contribute significantly to the way it is defined.

- What is the range of display types used?
- Has this been determined in relation to the subject and intended audience?
- How do the displays function as interpretative aids?
- Are the display types used in the exhibition distinctive to the collection and not typically used in the presentation of other types of collection?
- What is the role of images in comparison to other types of display?
- How have images been used in the exhibition?

Audience/Reception: The way audiences engage with the displays and reflect upon these experiences plays a part in how the subjects represented in displays are defined.

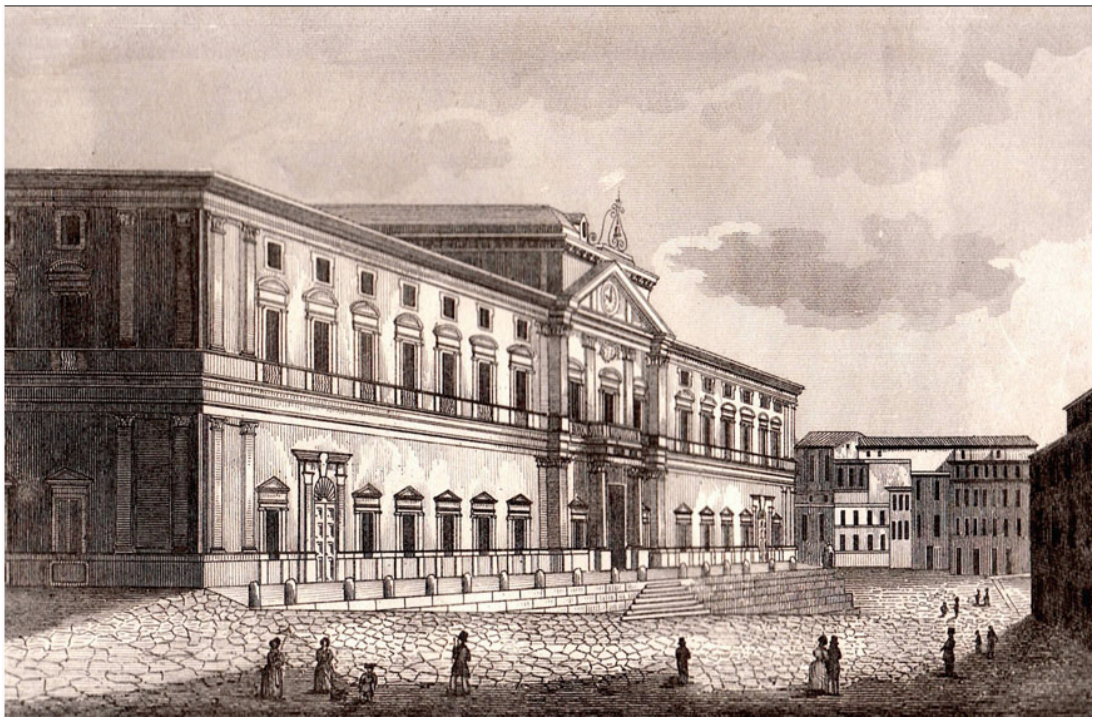
- How do visitors engage with the displays?
- Do they appear comfortable and familiar with the subject matter?
- How does the visitor behavior affect other visitors?

Appendix 2 – Musei Wormiani Historia, 1655. The contents of Ole Worm's cabinet of curiosities consisted of minerals, plants, animals, and man-made objects. Credit: F for Fact.



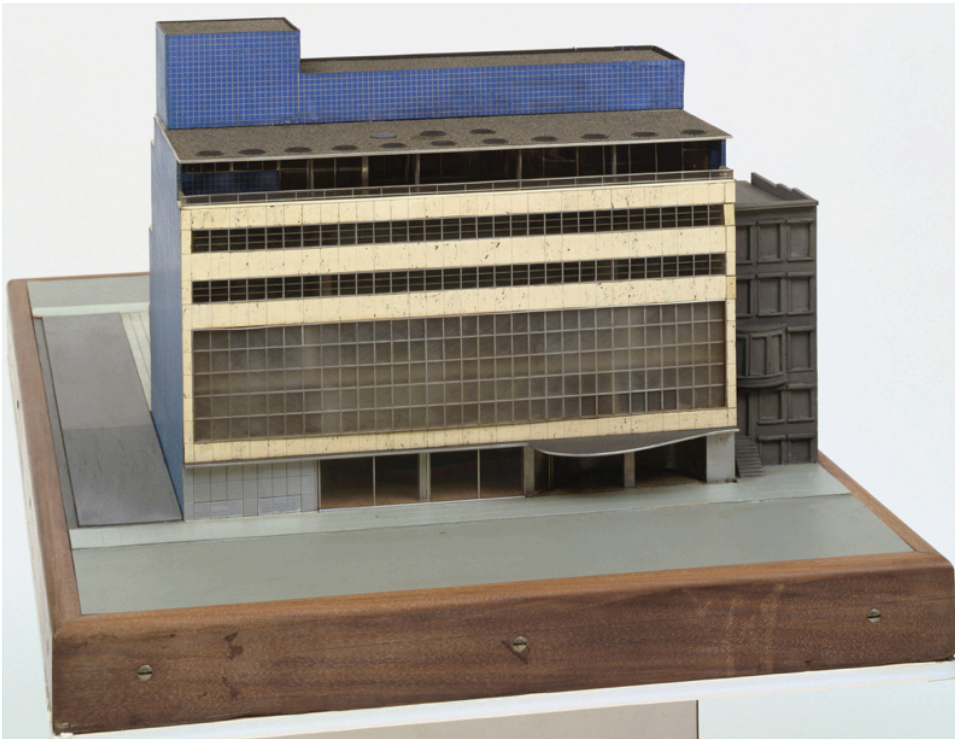
Appendix 3 –The Zoological Gallery of the British Museum in 1845, crowded with visitors. Credit: Wellcome Collection.

Appendix 4 – View on Museo Nazionale in Napels in 1841 in an etching by U. Rizzi. Credit: Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli.



Appendix 5 - Installation view of the exhibition 'Cubism and Abstract Art', 1936. Photograph by Beaumont Newhall. Credit: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Appendix 6 – Model of the new building of the MoMA, 1939. Credit: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



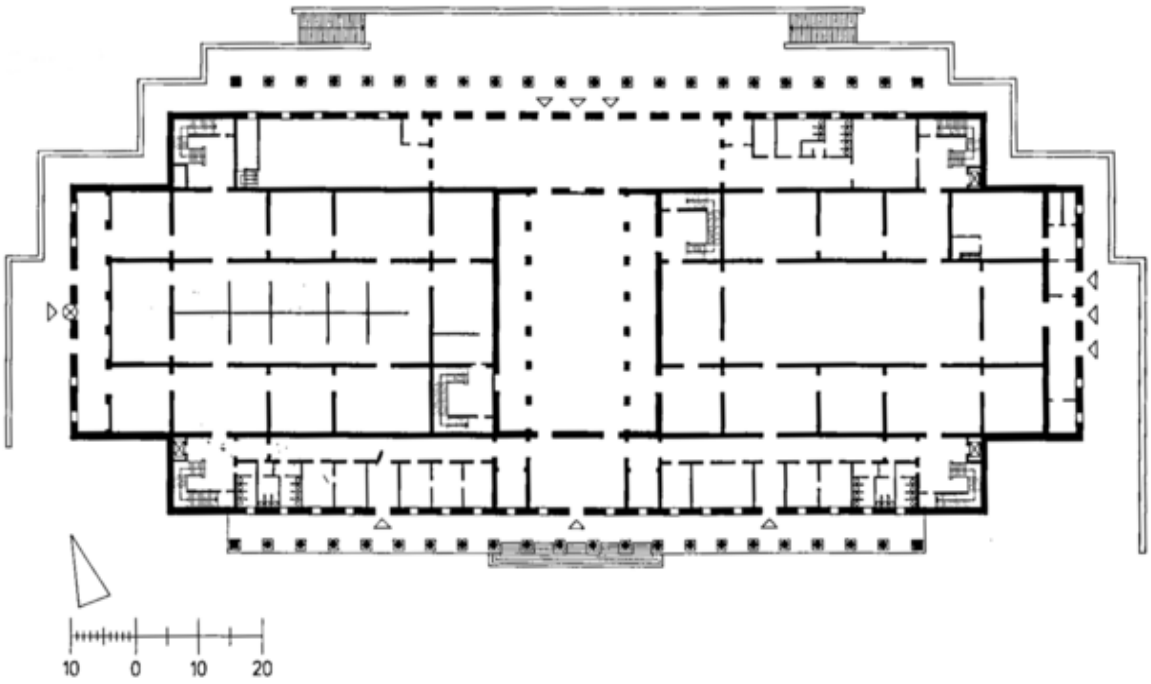
Theodore Conrad, *The Museum of Modern Art, New York City, New York*, 1939, wood, plastic, and linoleum, 40,6 × 61 × 99,1 cm.

Appendix 7 – Announcement of the House of German Art, on the day of German art in Munich, 1933. Credit: akg-images.

Appendix 8 – The House of German Art in Munich, 1937. Credit: Münchner Staatsarchiv.

Appendix 9 - Heinrich Knirr, *Führerbildnis*, 1937. A work featured in 'The Great German Art Exhibition'. Credit: Imperial War Museum London.

Appendix 10 - Floor plan of the House of German Art. Credit: Bayerischen Architekten- und Ingenieur-Verband.



Appendix 11 – Exhibition view of 'The Great German Art Exhibition'. Credit: GDK research.

Appendix 12 – Exhibition view of 'The Great German Art Exhibition'. Photograph by Heinrich Hoffman. Credit: Getty images.

Appendix 13 – The catalogue to 'The Great German Art Exhibition'. Credit: Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin.

Appendix 14 – Entrance to the 'Degenerate Art Exhibition', Munich 1937. Credit: akg-images.

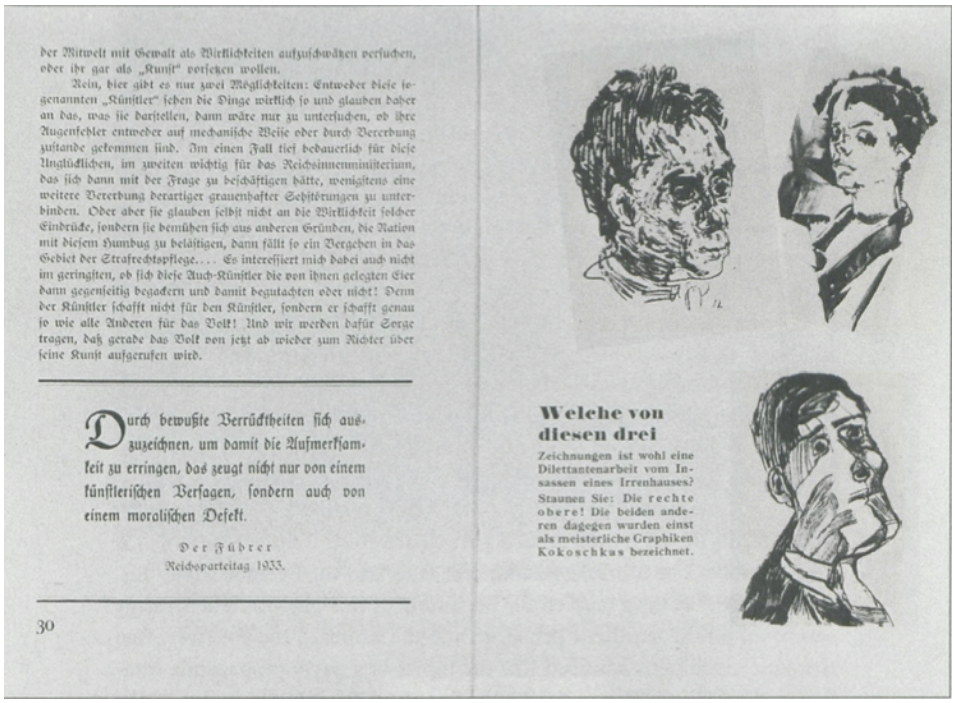
Appendix 15 – Exhibition view of the 'Degenerate Art Exhibition'. Credit: Scherl/Süddeutsche Zeitung Photo.

Appendix 16 – Ludwig Gies, *Kruzifix*, 2020. A work at the entrance of the 'Degenerate Art Exhibition', 1937. Credit: akg-images.

Appendix 17 – Exhibition view of the 'Degenerate Art Exhibition'. Photograph by Heinrich Hoffman 1937. Credit: akg-images.

Appendix 18 – Exhibition catalogue of the 'Degenerate Art Exhibition'. Credit: Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Appendix 19 – Pages 30-31 of the exhibition catalogue of the 'Degenerate Art Exhibition'. Works by two mentally ill patients of the Psychiatric Clinic of the University of Heidelberg. Credit: Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



der Mitwelt mit Gewalt als Wirklichkeiten aufzuschwätzen versuchen, oder ihr gar als „Kunst" vorsetzen wollen.

Nein, hier gibt es nur zwei Möglichkeiten: Entweder diese sogenannten „Künstler" sehen die Dinge wirklich so und glauben daher an das, was sie darstellen, dann wäre nur zu untersuchen, ob ihre Augenfehler entweder auf mechanische Weise oder durch Vererbung zustande gekommen sind. Im einen Fall tief bedauerlich für diese Unglücklichen, im zweiten wichtig für das Reichsinnenministerium, das sich dann mit der Frage zu beschäftigen hätte, wenigstens eine weitere Vererbung derartiger grauenhafter Sehstörungen zu unterbinden. Oder aber sie glauben selbst nicht an die Wirklichkeit solcher Eindrücke, sondern sie bemühen sich aus anderen Gründen, die Nation mit diesem Humbug zu belästigen, dann fällt so ein Vergehen in das Gebiet der Strafrechtspflege.... Es interessiert mich dabei auch nicht im geringsten, ob sich diese Auch-Künstler die von ihnen gelegten Eier dann gegenseitig begackern und damit begutachten oder nicht! Denn der Künstler schafft nicht für den Künstler, sondern er schafft genau so wie alle Anderen für das Volk! Und wir werden dafür Sorge tragen, daß gerade das Volk von jetzt ab wieder zum Richter über seine Kunst aufgerufen wird.

Durch bewußte Verrücktheiten sich auszuzeichnen, um damit die Aufmerksamkeit zu erringen, das zeugt nicht nur von einem künstlerischen Versagen, sondern auch von einem moralischen Defekt.

Der Führer
Reichsparteitag 1933.

30

Welche von diesen drei

Zeichnungen ist wohl eine Dilettantenarbeit vom Insassen eines Irrenhauses? Staunen Sie: Die rechte obere! Die beiden anderen dagegen wurden einst als meisterliche Graphiken Kokoschkas bezeichnet.

Appendix 20 - Exterior view of The Museum of Modern Art, 1939. Credit: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Appendix 21 – View on 'The New American Painting' exhibition, works by Robert Motherwell. Photograph by Soichi Sunami. Credit: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

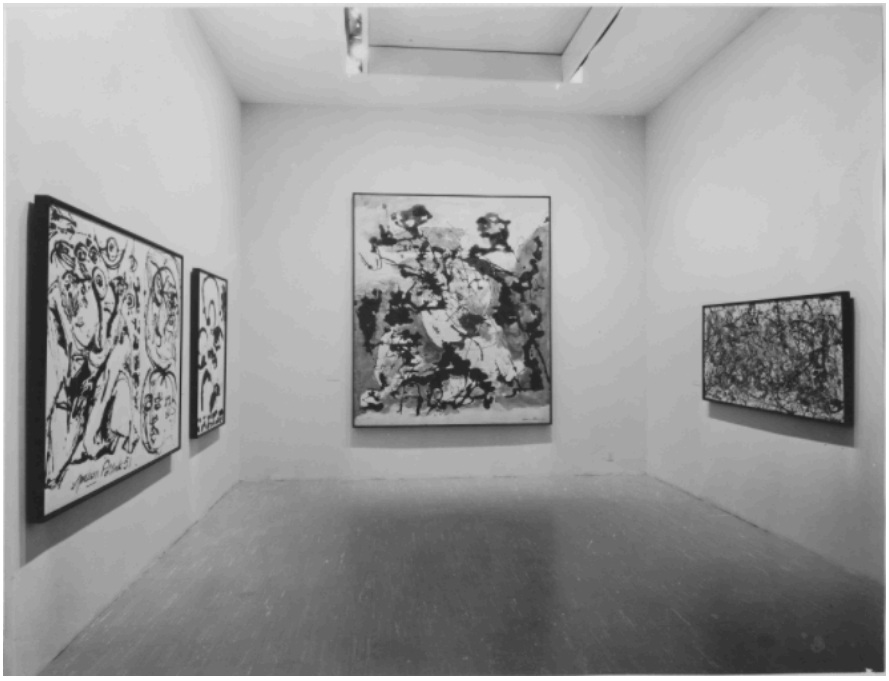
From left to right:

Robert Motherwell, *Elegy for the Spanish Republic XXXV*, 1954-8, oil on canvas, 203 x 254 cm.

Robert Motherwell, *Jour la Maison, Nuit la Rue*, 1957, oil on canvas, 177 x 229 cm.

Robert Motherwell, *Je t'aime, Number III, With Loaf of Bread*, 1955, 183 x 137 cm.

Appendix 22 - View on 'The New American Painting' exhibition, works by Jackson Pollock. Photograph by Soichi Sunami. Credit: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



From left to right:

Jackson Pollock, *Number 27*, duco on canvas, 139 x 190 cm

Jackson Pollock, *Number 26*, 1951, oil on canvas, 137 x 91 cm

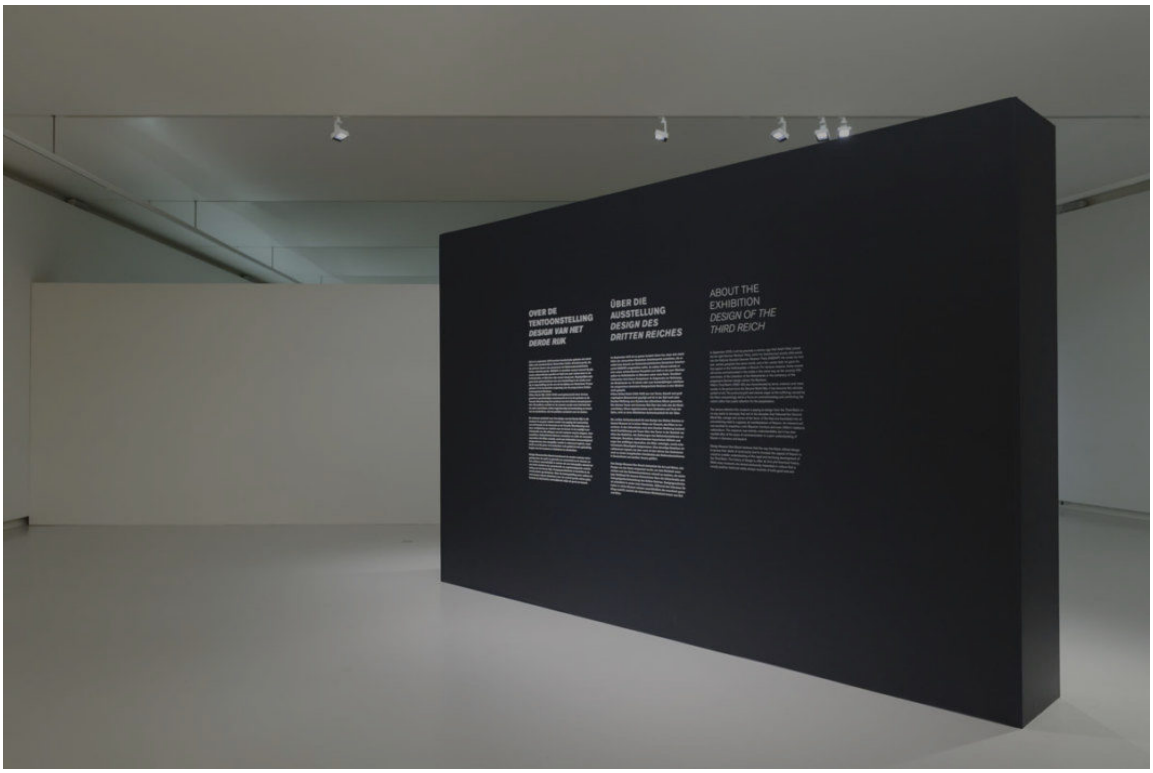
Jackson Pollock, *Number 12*, 1952, oil on canvas, 256 x 226 cm

Jackson Pollock, *Number 8*, 1949, oil and aluminium on canvas, 86 x 180 cm

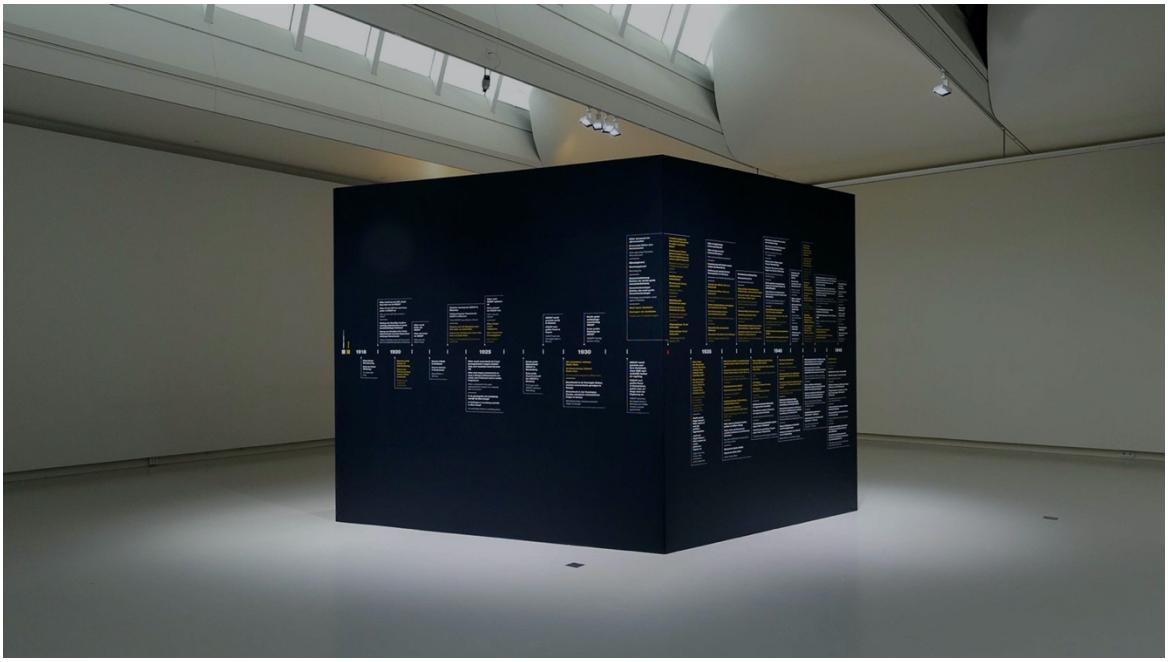
Appendix 23 – The mural-size map presented before entering 'The New American Painting' exhibition. Photograph by Soichi Sunami. Credit: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Appendix 24 – Announcement of 'The New American Painting', including the list of institutes to which the exhibition travelled. Photograph by Soichi Sunami. Credit: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Appendix 25 - View on the second floor of the 'Design of the Third Reich' exhibition. Credit: Pronk Studio.



Appendix 26 – View on the second floor of the 'Design of the Third Reich' exhibition. Credit: Pronk Studio.



Appendix 27 – View on the first floor of the ‘Design of the Third Reich’ exhibition. Credit: Design Museum Den Bosch.

Appendix 28 – View on the modern architecture of the Design Museum Den Bosch. Credit: Design Museum Den Bosch.