

Week 2 – The Early Formation of a Non-Linear Viewing Structure

Category: Uncategorized

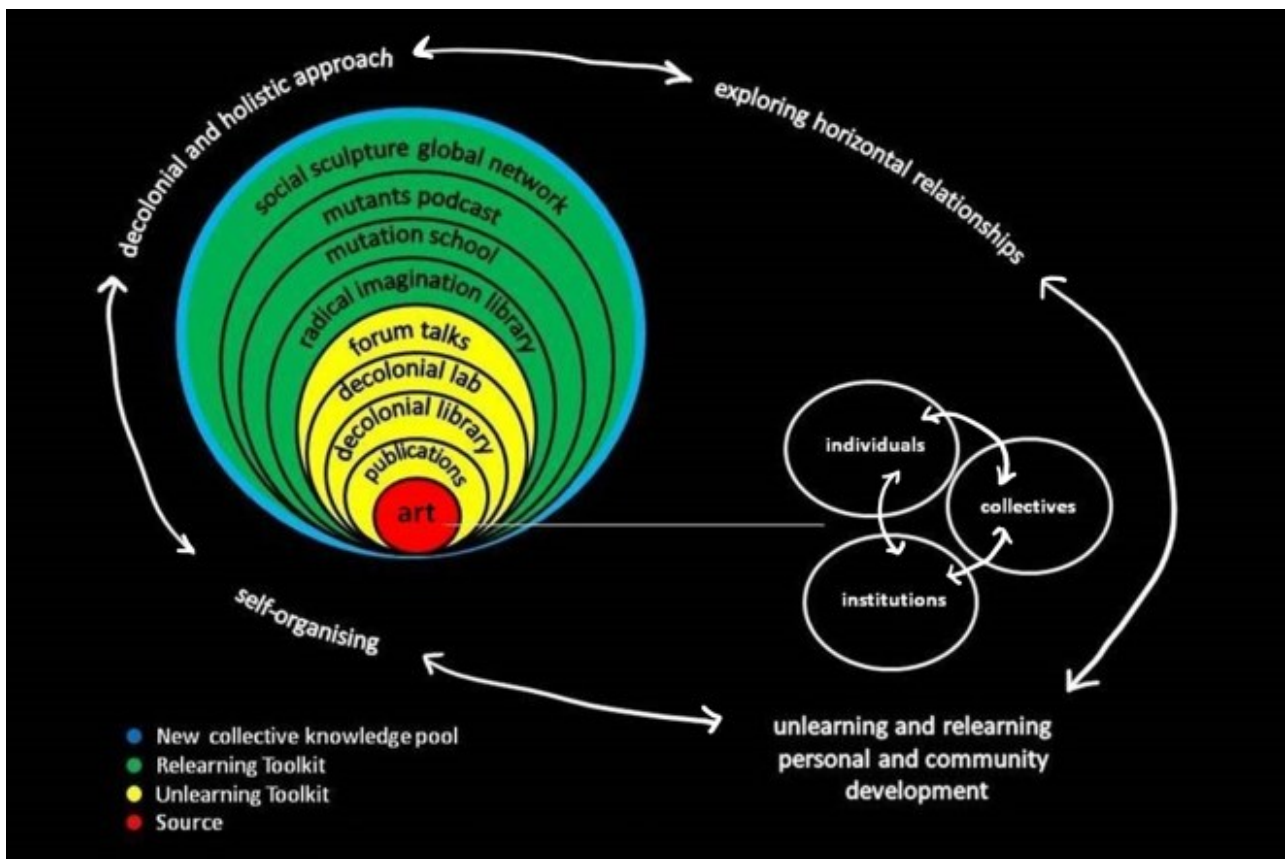
written by s2814160 | 26 January 2026



This week, I began to rethink the meaning of curating. For me, curating is no longer simply the act of placing artworks into a space. Instead, it is a practice of reshaping narrative and actively organizing how audiences understand what they encounter. Concepts discussed in class, such as dematerialization, contemporaneity, decoloniality, and intersectionality, encouraged me to think about curating from a different angle. They made me realize that curating always takes place in a reality shaped by inequality, so it cannot pretend to be neutral or fully objective.

Counterspace was the case that pushed my thinking forward most strongly this week. What attracted me was its attempt to create a structure of ongoing interaction, resource exchange, and shared production between individuals, collectives, and institutions. This provided an important example for me to understand curating as a continuous process of relationship-building. At the same time, it also made me notice a structural problem: once a critical curatorial method enters a large institutional framework, how can it avoid being weakened by the institution, or even repackaged as a consumable form of “difference”? In this respect, documenta fifteen revealed this contradiction very clearly. It led me to ask whether critical

curating, once it enters an institution, can still maintain its ability to challenge systems of power and control.



Counterspace diagram, Cultural Strategy, London, 2021. Commissioned by Cristina Morales. Source: Counterspace website.

This contradiction also influenced my own curatorial project. I began to ask whether modes of viewing can themselves be arranged in advance by institutional logic. Institutional power affects space and organization, but it also shapes the order in which audiences encounter works and the way they interpret them. Because of this, I became more certain that route design should be treated as part of how narrative authority is distributed. In collective discussions, I also talked about this confusion with my tutor and group members. For me, an increasingly important question became: how do audiences move through an exhibition, and can this movement itself become part of the exhibition structure?

My early idea was to use a map to connect several outdoor sites, so that audiences could either follow suggested routes or choose their own paths. For me, what really matters is whether this kind of route design can change the way viewers enter a work. If a fixed route often implies a relatively fixed logic of interpretation, then multiple routes and audience choice may offer a greater degree of participation, agency, and space for judgment. I therefore became interested in a non-linear viewing structure, one that does not require viewers to follow a single order of interpretation, but instead allows the process of viewing itself to become part of the exhibition narrative.

Ai Weiwei's *Sunflower Seeds* further strengthened my understanding of this issue. The way the curator placed the individual and the collective, labour and power, repetitive material, and institutional space into one shared environment made me realize that exhibition form is not simply a passive container for content. How audiences enter a space, how they keep distance from the work, and how they physically encounter it are not secondary details. They are part of the political effect of the work itself. For my own project, this was especially important because it made me realize that curating is not only about what audiences see, but also about how they are brought into a problem.



Installation view of Ai Weiwei, *Sunflower Seeds*, The Unilever Series, Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London, 2010. Source: Tate website.

References

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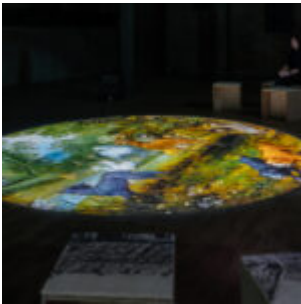
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Week 1 – From Description to Structure

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This week, three concepts helped me rethink the issue of ecological crisis: the Anthropocene, the Capitalocene, and *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*. When I looked at them separately, I did not find anything especially striking. However, when I connected them together, I began to see a line of critique that becomes deeper step by step. The Anthropocene suggests that human activity has shaped the global crisis. The Capitalocene questions this broad idea of “humanity as a whole” and instead sees capitalism as a historical system that plays a major role in ecological destruction. Yusoff goes further by showing that extraction, geology, and racial violence are also closely connected. Moving from the description of a phenomenon to structural analysis, and then to the question of justice, this layered way of thinking made me realise that curating also cannot remain at a single point of view.

This way of thinking changed how I looked at Sarah Wood’s

Project Paradise. What attracted me was not only the work itself, but also the way it was presented. Unlike the screen-based viewing mode in a traditional exhibition, this work was projected onto the floor. It allowed viewers to look down from above at an opening in the ground and enter a space shaped by archival images, drone views, history, and memory. For me, this was an important curatorial lesson. It showed that exhibition form does not only support content. It also has the power to shape how content is experienced and understood.



Installation view of Sarah Wood, *Project Paradise*, Fruitmarket, Edinburgh, 2023–24. Source: Fruitmarket website.

At the same time, with the help of these three concepts, I tried to read the exhibition in a more critical way. Fruitmarket introduces *Project Paradise* mainly through ideas such as ecology, landscape, memory, and extraction. This clearly offers an important entry point for understanding the relationship between crisis and nature. However, my own framework also led me to ask further questions: which histories are made visible, and are there deeper structural or

racial dimensions that are not fully unfolded? These questions opened a new direction in my thinking. The same curatorial work can be opened up into different layers of meaning through different theoretical perspectives. This became my first important understanding this week: curating is not only about presenting material, but also about organising how material is read.



Figure 2. Film still from Sarah Wood, *Project Paradise*, Fruitmarket, Edinburgh, 2023–24. Source: Fruitmarket website.

Finally, in the first week's collective discussion, we each introduced our backgrounds and skills. I was interested to hear that different members had strengths in installation, editing, communication, and modelling, and many of these are areas that I am not especially confident in. Because of this, I feel that collaboration in the coming collective activities will also become an important source of practical experience for me. My learning in curating will develop not only through theory, but also through working with others.

References

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