



The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating

Jean-Paul Martinon

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Stop curating! And think what curating is all about. This book starts from this simple premise: thinking the activity of curating. To do that, it distinguishes between curating and the curatorial. If curating is a gamut of professional practices for setting up exhibitions, then the curatorial explores what takes place on the stage set up, both intentionally and unintentionally, by the curator. It therefore refers not to the staging of an event, but to the event of knowledge itself.

In order to start thinking about curating, this book takes a new approach to the topic. Instead of relying on conventional art historical narratives (for example, identifying the moments when artistic and curatorial practices merged or when the global curator-author was first identified), this book puts forward a multiplicity of perspectives that go from the anecdotal to the theoretical and from the personal to the philosophical. These perspectives allow for a fresh reflection on curating, one in which, suddenly, curating becomes an activity that implicates us all (artists, curators, and viewers), not just as passive recipients, but as active members. As such, the Curatorial is a book without compromise: it asks us to think again, fight against sweeping art historical generalizations, the sedimentation of ideas and the draw of the sound bite. Curating will not stop, but at least with this book it can begin to allow itself to be challenged by some of the most complex and ethics-driven thought of our times.

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