THE NEW NEW MUSEUM

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Table of content

1 Introduction

In 2008, the New Museum relocated to its new purpose-built signature building on Bowery Street in New York's Lower East Side. At that time it was the first newly constructed, freestanding museum for decades in Manhattan and the first museum ever built in Downtown Manhattan. Widely covered by the media, its relocation received as much positive attention as it got critical reviews. As an institution with a rich and complicated history, the New Museum is involved to its core in the long term and more recent gentrification processes within various areas of New York City. With its building being a new architectural icon, the new New Museum has become an anchor architecture landmark in the redevelopment of 'the Bowery', a historic street in a formerly poor and derelict neighborhood, characterized by deindustrialization, homelessness, artists' squatting, and, more recently, by culturally driven gentrification.

This diploma thesis' topic is based on the observation that former countercultural practices of space production have become commodified over the past 40 years. In the 60s and 70s of the 20th century, New York saw the appearance of what has been referred to as the "alternative art movement" (Ault 2002: 396). This movement[1] consisted of many individual artists, artist collectives and cooperatives that stood in close relation to a diverse criticism of the institutional status quo and its exclusionary stance at the time. Beyond criticizing the existing institutions and commercial galleries through writing, protest, and artwork etc., an engagement in the production of oppositional spaces (artist-run spaces and community centers, but also rather ephemeral projects without fixed locations) was documented; these activities were called "alternative art spaces"[2] early on. Many of these spaces closed down after a few years or were already initially conceived only as temporal spatial interventions.

[1] Julie Ault, in 1996, first historicized an entire spectrum of alternative art practices that erupted in the 1970s and 1980s to subsume it a "movement" as part of the retrospective "Cultural Economies: Histories from the Alternative Art Movement, NYC"; further developed in "Alternative Art New York, 1965-1985" (Ault ed. 2002: 396).

[2] The earliest appearance of the term "alternative art space" can be found in a NEA funding category for noncommercial art spaces in 1973, then headed by Brian O'Doherty, who theorized the term a year later (O'Doherty 1999: 79).

Even though the heyday of alternative art spaces is long over by now, the original myth of the alternative art movement and its spaces lives on, mostly on the margins of public memory. Alternative art spaces often only survived in archives, as ephemera and in autobiographies describing everyday life in Manhattan's lofts in the 70s. There are only a few recent publications on the topic of alternative art spaces, and their authors were, in one way or another, involved in the art scene and in alternative spaces at the original time.[3]

The list of former alternative art spaces which are actually still active today is brief: *The New Museum*, *MoMA PS 1*, *White Columns* (*112 Greene Street*), *Artists Space*, *DIA* and *Clocktower Radio*. Some of them were later integrated into larger museum structures, some changed their directorship and focus; they all deal with their history as alternatives on somewhat different levels. While some such as the New Museum (founded by Marcia Tucker in 1977 as something between an alternative space and a museum) address it actively, some such as PS1 Contemporary (founded by Alanna Heiss in 1976 as an "anti-museum" – today it is associated with MoMA) reference their history only on a spatial level as its former classroom atmosphere and peeling walls were kept intact. Others such as White Columns (founded by Jeffrey Lew and Gordon Matta Clark as 112 Greene Street in 1970) abandoned their early concept of an art production space and left the cast iron district (now housing high end luxury shops) to join the commercial gallery scene in the Meat Packing district. Artists Space (founded by Trudie Grace and Irving Sandler in 1970) might be the one space today most in line with its original mission. Still residing in its original location in SoHo, it continues to create a space for underrepresented and under-acknowledged artists, although without directly addressing its history as an alternative art space. Stefan Kalmar, its current director is hesitant with discussing the institution's history and tries to reposition Artists Space as a critical institution in the contemporary art discourse.[4]

[3] See *The Rise and Fall of an Artists Colony* (Kostelanetz 2003); *Playing by the rules* (Rand 2010); *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces 1960 to 2010* (Rosati, Staniszewski 2012)

[4] After Stefan Kalmar took over the directorship of Artists Space in 2010, the institution underwent a process of spatial and institutional re-conceptualization, stripping varnished

Among this group, the New Museum is in a singular position, being the only institution that commissioned its own, completely new building. This building is also the first newly built museum structure in Manhattan since the construction of Marcel Breuer's Whitney Museum of Contemporary Art in 1966, and, as already mentioned in this thesis, the first new museum ever built in Downtown Manhattan.[5] The lot on the Bowery is located in an area which was, at the time it was purchased by the New Museum in 2000, unlikely for an art museum and the commissioned architect's office, SANAA, was not yet popular in the US. In its re-conceptualization, the institution had to find a way to balance being alien to the site and accepting its own history as an alternative art organization, establishing its identity in the process. The Bowery neighborhood was, despite its closeness to SoHo, still neglected and rough in the early 2000s. Not only was this street Manhattan's oldest major thoroughfare, it also has a sad reputation of being among the roads with the highest pedestrians death tolls in the city (Grieve 2011: web). In the past century the Bowery underwent a radical transformation from a popular "skid row" in the early 1900s, home to "Bowery Bums", to an artists' neighborhood in the 1960s where people appreciated the boulevards' width with its good light and unobstructed views. While nearby SoHo and the Lower East Side had gentrified already in the 1970s and 1980s, the transformation of the Bowery took a little longer.

In recent years, however, things changed and today the Bowery is lined not only with boutique hotels, independent retailers, cafes, bars, restaurants and beer gardens, but also with luxury condominiums, galleries and newly built high-rises. The New Museum worked as some sort of gateway maker when it moved to this neighborhood in 2007, as culture is frequently a way to trigger redevelopment and raise the cultural resources of its surrounding

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wooden floors, introducing an open space concept. Its alternative history played a minor role in this re-positioning. For further information see Stefan Kalmar's interview with Andrew M. Goldstein on Artists Space and the changing art economy (Goldstein 2012: web).

[5] The New Museum is no longer the only art museum in Downtown Manhattan, as the Whitney Museum of American Art moved into its new purpose-built museum building on 99 Gansevoort Street in spring 2015.

area.[6] Being aware of the potential effects of the museum's relocation, Lisa Phillips, current director of the New Museum, acknowledged the museum's role in bringing change to the Bowery, as she described that the Bowery used to be "a no-man's land, stigmatized and neglected while all around it things were changing and springing to life" (quoted in Capps 2007: 85). When the museum chose the Bowery site as its new home; she even asked: "could we help transform this storied street?" (Phillips 2008: 11). The New Museum not only helped "transforming" the rough Bowery, but it had, in fact, already experienced a similar process before with the gentrification of its previous immediate surroundings in SoHo on Broadway, where, as Phillips put it, "we helped to transform that street" and "we wanted to do [again] what we had done in SoHo" (quoted in Capps 2007: 85).

The media feedback prior to and after the institution's re-opening on Bowery was charged with positive anticipation, but also with anxiety over what Phillips had coined "transformation" (blending out the rather negative connotations of gentrification). In the article "The New New Museum. The King of the Bowery" Niklas Maak observed the general media's sentimental stance on the Bowery's change and described the New Museum's agentism in the street's gentrification as "a piece of bad dialectical feedback between art and life" (Maak 2008: 125).

After the museum has now resided on the Bowery for several years it is time to reevaluate and reexamine the institution in respect to the Bowery's most recent transformation, triggered by its newest program, "NEW INC". Acting as an addition of the New Museum, "NEW INC" is a mission-led initiative that looks to further expand the notion of museum space.

[6] See the blog "NY. Curbed" on the topic of the Bowery's gentrification and specifically the New Museum's partaking in this transformation (Arak 2010: web).

1.1 Outline of present work

The New Museum, with its roots in postmodern thinking, has to be understood as an active producer of its identity, addressing and re-envisioning the notion of the alternative today. In order to understand how the appropriation of the institution's own memory as a radical avant-garde space functions, this diploma thesis employs a critical and historically informed perspective on the New Museum's current identity program which was developed in the process of the institution's re-location and expansion, while understanding it as part of a greater transforming cultural discourse where culture is appointed a role in a city's gentrification and urbanization. In addressing its present "identity" configuration in relation to the institution's history and the history of alternative art spaces, the approach taken is to analyze how the institution positions itself in its mission, exhibition projects, program, and architecture.

It is the author´s view that the New Museum's identity is still trying to expand museum practice and in doing so, with a strong focus on spatiality, makes use of specific historic notions of space attributed to the concept of alternative space. For this purpose it also reaches into its own institutional memory. Raw, scrappy, flexible, collaborative – alternative spaces exhibited early installation practices that morphed the understanding of exhibition space altogether and helped to break open conservative museum practice in order to incorporate ephemeral, installative, performative and political art practices, making them more accessible for a greater public. Ironically, however, the spaces still existing today had to institutionalize and adapt to the newly forming cultural industry (see Goldbard 2002: 183-199). Over the past forty years, notions of alternative space have been thwarted and are today used merely as reference points in the reconceptualization of institutions and their branding. In the case of the New Museum, this not only shows in its program – devoted to innovation and its mission of "New Art, New Ideas" – but also in the institution's architecture, which has been described as "beautifully rough" (Sejima and Nishizawa 2010: 28) by the architects –a phrase which has been incorporated into the New Museum's PR language.

In order to give an insight into this diploma thesis' structure, there will be a short overview over the topics addressed in each section: "2 Context" discusses the New Museum's history in relation to alternative art spaces and their institutionalization, commodification, and expansion. "3 What is lost, what is gained" describes the connection between institutional growth, museum expansions, gentrification and the New Museum's role in the Bowery's "transformation" in order to lay the groundwork for the theoretical and methodic approach. "Notions of alterity" takes a detailed look at specific terms which have been re-appropriated by the New Museum. The final section revises, analyzes and interprets the previous chapters and it questions the concept of institutional growth.

2. Context

Originally created in 1977 by Marcia Tucker as a space between established conservative museums and alternative art spaces, the New Museum was intended to re-conceptualize the understanding of art and its presentation. According to Ault, the institutional concept of the New Museum emulated that of a German Kunsthalle, an institutional exhibition format unparalleled in the United States (Ault 2002: 49). The New Museum was intended as a flexible art organization balancing the gap between alternative spaces and larger, bureaucratically organized museums which were neither interested in nor equipped for showing dematerialized, under-recognized forms of contemporary art that had no adequate outlet in the art establishment at the time (Jeffrey 1980: 116). In trying to avoid the traditional hierarchies which are typical for larger institutions with all their issues, a democratic institutional idea was embraced. A grassroots administrative structure allowed collaborative programming and decision making. Running the institution as a sort of manager-curator, it was important to Tucker that the participatory institutional approach was also manifest in a flat salary structure (Jeffrey 1980: 114).

Observing an "egalitarian mode" (Shaked 2012: web), the museum did not follow a completely anti-corporate funding program and rather than having the museum's board dictate the exhibitions' contents, Tucker tried to persuade the trustees of the New Museum's vision. While the New Museum mimicked conventional museums in its structure (board of trustees, committees etc.) as a requirement for public funding, the board and its committees consisted mainly of artists. Nizan Shaked analyzed the New Museum's early history as an alternative institution and its use of private funding. According to Shaked, Tucker's early institutional ideas

> "reveal a persistent attempt to change the ways in which the relation of corporations to museums was established, and to convince corporate entities and private donors that it is ultimately in their best interest to allow museums to function through a cultural and not a free market logic" (Shaked 2012: web).

As Jeffrey noted in 1981, using the word 'museum' in the New Museum's title served as a matter of self-definition in relation to – as well as – against the traditional art museum: "there are several alternative spaces that consciously call themselves 'museums' […] while they have taken the word 'museum' as part of their title, however, they do not appear to have plugged into the traditional museums world, nor do they seem to have any desire to do so" (Jeffrey 1980: 114). The agendas behind those museums shared terminology were manifold, yet related. While some institutions, as the Alternative Museum's director Geno Rodriguez stated, tried to widen the understanding of the traditional museum as an "intermediary between the minority institutions and the dominant Eurocentric institutions" (quoted in Ault 2002: 42), others such as the *Bronx Museum of the Arts* and *The Studio Museum Harlem* chose to spread out into the communities in order to "decentralize the major art museum and sponsor exhibition facilities in traditionally underserved neighborhoods and districts" *(*Ault 2002: 31). Yet others such as *PS.1* (*MoMa PS.1*.) conceptualized themselves as "anti or non-museums" (Jeffrey 1980: 116).

To get a better grasp of this intermediary position in which the New Museum placed itself – as an in-between of the traditional art museum and alternative art spaces it is worth contextualizing both the "white cube" associated with the modern art museum and its designated antagonist – the alternative art space. In the early 1970s, art institutions were, as the artist and writer Robert Smithson described it, perceived as "spaces of cultural confinement" (Smithson 1972: 154), which created art history exclusively from a governing angle.

The expanding art scene in New York during the 1960s and 1970s diminished the already meagre chances for artists to exhibit contemporary, non-traditional, time-based and ephemeral art projects in established museums and galleries. Traditional museums had to plan their exhibitions years in advance in order to obtain funding, making an integration of new art practices virtually impossible. While excluding avant-garde art and catering to the dated established modern "high" art, these museums employed a specific system of representation which adhered to a "white cube" esthetic, which was first descriptively analyzed by Brian O'Doherty in his article series *Inside the White Cube* in Artforum in 1976:

> "Unshadowed, white, clean, artificial – the space is devoted to the technology of esthetics. Works of art are mounted, hung, scattered for study. Their ungrubby surfaces are untouched by time and its vicissitudes. Art exists in a kind of eternity of display, and though there is lots of 'period' (late modern), there is no time. This eternity gives the gallery a limbo like status; one has to have already died to be there" (O´Doherty 1999: 15).

Brian Wallis recounts the needs of artists who felt that they were not being paid attention to in the major museums and galleries at the time:

> "the need for unions or other democratic collectives not ruled by capitalistic interests; the need for defense of artists legal and moral rights; the need for the control of exhibition space and artists housing; the need for monitoring and protection of artists from specific health hazards; and the need for changes in the distribution of power within the art world" (Wallis 2002: 170).

Institutional critical practices sprouting in the 1960s as part of a greater countercultural movement addressed these constraints of museums as mere containers for objects by reassessing the notion of the exhibition site and of art production, intervening into the white cube esthetic of eternity, synonymous for exclusive commercial processes of selection and audience production, inaccessible for an emerging generation of artists, suggesting a new understanding of space altogether. These critical practices served as a base for various progressive coalitions, co-ops and alternative spaces which addressed specific issues linked to the cultural revolution.

Historically, the first alternative art spaces were embedded in the context of these greater social roits and institutional critical practices. Attributing the white cube an eternal vibe enclosed in, and transported through its white sealed walls, O'Doherty suggested alternative art spaces as another channel for presenting these rather ephemeral and critical art practices, thus introducing the term "alternative art space" to a wider audience (O'Doherty 1976: 79).

Arguing with Foucault, alternative art spaces traversed traditional forms of representation through the production of space as "other-sites", as "enacted utopias", within which "all the other real sites that can be found within culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted" (Foucault

1986: 24).[7] Both counterculture and alternative art spaces employed a heterogeneous mix of more or less critical spatial practices which again created forms of inclusion and exclusion on the inside. Julie Ault summarized this dialectic relation in 1995: "The very word alternative produces endless arguments. It is provocative and meaningless, and suggests simultaneously an opening up and a closing down. Naming oneself alternative sets up both distance from and bondage to dominant institutions and ideas" (Ault 2010: 94). An alternative art space offers another way of doing something, and at the same time the alternative art space is the other already.[8] The very word alternative indicates the difference in approach to the act of presenting art in a space, while the site is already the other. The signifier alternative, can only endure in its opposition to mainstream and hegemonic norms. Being aware of the danger that a continuous use of the term 'alternative' might give the idea that this paper is written adhering to a binary cultural logic, it has to be stated that its aim is rather to deconstruct the discursive connotations that former alternative spaces repurpose as part of their branding strategy today.

Even though the expression 'alternative space' derives its meaning from this oppositional character, it is in itself not a term which denotes one thing only. According to Claude Levi-Strauss, the term can be understood as a "floating signifier" (Levi-Strauss 1987: 63) lacking universal meaning. What is and has been called an 'alternative art space' points to a diverse array of models of art presentation from almost institutional-like spaces to ephemeral letters posted on walls.

Likewise, the agendas and esthetics each alternative space followed were as diverse. Some intended to show underrepresented artists without prior gallery representation (*Artists Space*), female artists (*A.I.R Gallery*) and/or artists of color (*Studio Museum in Harlem*), some alternative spaces wanted a location to sell their own art (*3 Mercer Store*), other spaces operated based

[7] For an adaption of the concept of alternative art spaces as heterotopias, see Jaqueline Cooke's article on art ephemera as alternative spaces (Cooke 2006: 34-36).
[8] The noun 'alternative' points to "a thing that you can choose to do or have out of two or more possibilities" (alternative def. 1). In its use as an adjective 'alternative' suggests something that is done "different from the usual or traditional way" (alternative def. 2).

on a desire to radically morph the understanding of an art institution (*P.S.1, New Museum*), yet others merely wanted to dissolve and take apart architectural elements in order to deform people's understanding of space altogether (*112 Workshop/112 Greene Street*).

Although diverse, alternative art spaces offered a somewhat artist-centered perspective. Frequently artist-run themselves, they took position against established forms of representation in museums and galleries with their top-down management structures which excluded artists from the decision making process, as Julie Ault explains: "The desire to change systems of distribution and representation also led to the challenging of various curatorial and institutional practices. Curatorial projects by artists as well as their efforts to extend their work beyond the studio, to assume control of presentation, or to take their art to the streets, were viewed as alternatives to art as merchandise" (Ault 2002: 6). Artist-centered art spaces focus on contemporary art, and often local artists, made a more direct interaction beyond an already anti-hierarchic organizational structure possible. Artist collectives such as the AWC[9] were an integral part of the education about collaborative forms of action, as they "expressed the general mood of discussion and cooperation that led to the establishment of co-op galleries and alternative spaces" (Moore 2008: 201). Most grassroots artist-to-artist-led organizations tackled decision making processes collectively. In their flexible, anti-commercial and non-profit structure they have to be seen in the context of the larger countercultural movement and a changing society with its beginnings in the mid-1960s.

These diverse organizational types of alternative art spaces are closely related to the production of an alternate notion of the space of representation of and for art. In his essay, "Alternative: Space", Martin Beck identified certain esthetics of alternative art spaces – from "raw spaces" to collaborative projects emulating the "white cube" by duplicating the spatial conditions of the established gallery system" (Beck 2002: 267). According

[9] Founded in 1969, the Art Workers Coalition (AWC) was an oppositional cooperative, critical of the existing art establishment. It was a driving force in the education of fellow artists about alternative models of art distribution.

to Beck, these esthetics are to be seen as a manifestation of different conceptions of space. Raw spaces in SoHo's industrial lofts (*112 Greene Street*) pointed to an understanding of space as a "medium that takes on a productive role in art making" (ibid.). Others, Beck describes, understood space "primarily as a contested political arena" (ibid.). Later, however, these spatial esthetics were, alongside the institutionalization of alternative spaces, perceived as spatial styles "tied to a specific artistic movement that had gained prominence in the gallery system" (ibid.: 260) and were institutionalized themselves.

While Martin Beck covered only two distinct spatial models developed in alternative spaces ("raw spaces" and collaborative spaces), there were as many spatial styles as there were organizational models. The New Museum today re-appropriates some of the spatial notions developed in these alternative spaces.

The New Museum's early organizational structure was informed by notions of collaboration and flexibility, letting artists participate in the decision making process, as Tucker states in her memoirs: "Most important of all would be involving artists in shaping the future of the museum. I wanted to have a direct relationship with living artists. I wanted that to be primary" (Tucker 2008: 121). Furthermore, collaboration was visible in Tucker's aim to implement an egalitarian, grassroots management structure: "I looked for ways to redistribute authority and privilege in the museum context; to share power and decision making; to create alternative management structures that stressed collaboration, openness, mutual respect, exchange and dialogue" (ibid.: 125).

2.1 The Formation of the Cultural Industry

The notion of culture underwent a transformative process in the second half of the 20th century. At a time when alternative art spaces were at the height of their production as the critical antidote to the rather hermetic museum and gallery scene of the 1960s and early 1970s, competing for paying visitors or benefactors must have seemed arbitrary, as most small alternative art spaces were initially funded either solely by government support or by of the founding members, often artists, themselves. This more or less comfortable situation changed, however, as the neoliberal logic[10] developed theoretically in the 1970s – was put into action in North America as a process of politically supported commodification and deregulation of the public sector, strongly affecting the New York City and its cultural sphere. The financial decline in the late 1970s was reflected in a retrenchment of cultural funding and an establishment of policies which supported and stimulated private investment in U.S. art institutions.

The neoliberal logic has a long tradition in U.S. art museums, visible in the history of private influence even prior to 1960, but the entanglement of corporations and private businesses in the cultural sphere escalated from the 1980s onwards in a process of deregulation and corporatization (Shaked 2012: web). During the 1970s alternative art spaces were institutionalized, while adapting to the formal government funding application processes, as Phil Patton described in 1977: "most [of the alternative spaces] are at least somewhat cleaned up. And all have developed somewhat more formalized organizational structures and selection processes" (Patton 1977: 81).

The financial crisis of 1977 ignited a transformation of alternative art spaces into professionalized spaces which not only had to compete for public subsidies, but also develop profiles and missions to attract private investors, as the private influence on alternative art spaces was strengthened by government actions: one federal dollar of funding had to be matched with

[10] A utopian economic theory made public by the Chicago School of Economics, politicized as a popular reform model under Reagan and Thatcher in the late 1970s and early 1980s which had major effects on the use of public space (see Peck and Tickell 2002: 381-404).

three to four private dollars in order "to encourage local effort and supplement rather than replace private contributions to the arts" (Patton 1977: 81). Under Ronald Reagan's presidency (1981-1989), the privatization of cultural endeavors was amplified, while, at the same time, government funding was further curtailed and declined steeply. Up until today, the budget of the National Endowment for the Arts has not recovered to its pre-Reagan era high.[11]

This development largely affected the viability of alternative spaces. Troubled by the friction between the need for higher visibility in order to attract private investors and losing their own pretense as alternatives to the establishment, many spaces fought a tough battle to stay focused on their initial concept. Joan Jeffrey summarizes this fragile situation for alternative art spaces: "The balance between expansion and institutionalization, on the one hand, and retaining close contact and input from artists, on the other is decidedly uneasy, and only those organizations that can maintain that balance will remain the true alternatives" (Jeffrey 1980: 129). Exactly at this point of professionalization, the term 'alternative' was increasingly compromised as there was no real distinction between mainstream and alternatives any longer. Jeffrey explains further: "Perhaps the first thing to be said of alternative spaces is that the term used to identify and categorize them no longer applies […] [T]heir activities were too widely different to lump them together under a term" (ibid.: 106).

This was also made apparent by the exhibition "Alternatives in Retrospect – An Overview 1969-1975" organized by Jackie Apple for the New Museum in the same year as Joan Jeffrey published her book on the emerging alternative art spaces. The exhibition treated early alternative art spaces as a historical subject.[12] This historicizing perspective documents not only the decline of former alternative art spaces, but also the professionalization of art organizations, as they were faced with the urge to compete with other

[11] Inflation adjusted (See Knight 2011: web and NEA Open Government 2014: web).
[12] *Alternatives in Retrospect 1965-1975* was the first retrospective exhibition on the topic of alternative art spaces including early alternative spaces such as *Gain Ground*, *Apple*, *112 Greene Street*, and *Idea Warehouse*.

cultural organizations in a supply-and-demand kind of framework in which they had to create new channels of income such as private donation programs, merchandise products, and other ways of funding. By 1985, the alternative spaces were understood as part of the cultural industry, as Paul DiMaggio argued: “although most arts organizations are nonprofit institutions, they are not non-market institutions” (quoted in Rentschler 2007: Introduction).

2.2 Expanding museums

As the cultural industry grew incessantly over the past 30 years, the need for public visibility on the one hand, and private sponsorship on the other transformed museums as spaces of collection, education and research to places of entertainment of its audiences. Rentschler analyzed this process of how the understanding of marketing refocused the role of the museum “of [a] custodial emphasis to one of audience attraction and increased participation” (2007: 15).

Most art organizations embrace identity branding as a valuable tool in order to distinguish themselves from a vast variety of institutions, cultural events and other leisure activities. As early as 1990, Rosalind Krauss interpreted museum contents as “assets” (Krauss 1990: 3-15), relating them to Weiss’ interpretation of museums as corporate identities: “The notion of the museum as a guardian of the public patrimony has given way to the notion of a museum as a corporate identity with a highly marketable inventory and a desire for growth” (quoted in Krauss 1990: 127). Expansion as a leading factor for institutional development was not acclaimed by everyone working in this newly forming industry. The New Museum’s founding director, Marcia Tucker, was critically aware of what growth and expansion could do to the museum landscape, noting already in 1987: “We need to prevent growth, mindless expansion in American museums” (quoted in Shaked 2012: web).

Today, this situation gains even more significance as art and culture mean big business, and "culture is a social currency-promoted, traded, and liable to inflation. Private investors and sponsorships gain significance while public funds are cut" (Klanten 2013: 5). Funds that were, prior to the recession in 2008, mainly provided by private corporations, were thereafter replaced by added board member seats and individual donation programs.[13] A loose research on the terminology of museum fundraising displays a repetitive use of terms, illustrating the diversification and an increasing focus on private sponsorship and individual donations.[14]

The corporatization of museum funding affected the power structures in museums. Nizan Shaked observed, specifically for the case of the New Museum and with an outlook on other institutions, that boundaries between museum trustees, donors and collectors have become increasingly blurry and institutions still strive to expand in order to stay visible on the cultural map, which appears, at times, to be in conflict with the institutionns fundamental ethics concerning collecting, preserving and interpreting (AAM 2000: web).

The New Museum does not fit neatly into this category developed by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), as its primary mission lies on "New Art, New Ideas" and it only intermittently acts as a collecting institution.[15] It does not hold many assets, instead it forms partnerships with other object holding entities. This may have an even stronger effect on the corporate influence on the institution: in 2010 the New Museum inaugurated the exhibition series "The Imaginary Museum". Without a centralized collection itself, this series was intended to display collections otherwise inaccessible to the greater public. The first collection on display was the one

[13] According to Stacy Perman, a seat on a New York museum board can cost up to 250.000 $ per fiscal year (MET) (See Perman 2015: web).
[14] Looking at the various options of support on New York's museums websites, a repetitive use of terms emerges: "membership", "upgrade membership", "deluxe membership", "individual giving", and "corporate support". Researched institutions include *The New Museum*, *MoMA*, *MoMa PS1*, *White Columns* and *The Whitney Museum*.
[15] The New Museum holds over 2000 works of art which were acquired under Marcia Tucker from 1987 onwards as part of the program "The Semi-Permanent Collection", but today it refers to itself as a "non-collecting institution" (Phillips quoted in *Art in America* 2013: web).

of real estate tycoon Dakis Joannou who, not incidentally, also serves on the museum's board of trustees and who selected the collection's ordained artist, Jeff Koons, to curate the show.[16]

The exhibition "Skin Fruit" (March 3 to June 6, 2010) received widespread and immediate criticism across all media, for instance by Roberta Smith for the New York Times, who summed the exhibition up as an "anti-mainstream museum's mainstream show" (Smith 2010: web). On a rather urban level, the exhibition evoked a grassroots protest. Critical posters, featuring the New Museum and the slogan "~~Anti~~ Establishment" (fig. 1) were put up anonymously on the walls of New York's streets in close proximity to the New Museum on the Bowery, giving media outrage a visual expression.[17] The program "The Imaginary Museum" was quietly discontinued after its inauguration as the interwoven relations were all too explicit in "Skin Fruit".

In essence, the discussion over this exhibition illustrates the conflict of interest between the poles of expansion and content that museums are placed in, as Stacy Perman stated: "The fund-raising dilemma has a lot to do with the relentless drive – especially among the biggest museums – to bulk up and get ever bigger. As they compete for audiences, acquisitions, and money, their educational and cultural missions appear to collide with equally aggressive commercial interests" (Perman 2014: web). This made it possible for museums ethics to be at risk to be sidelined and thus, curatorial programs to be compromised, as Shaked explained: "The increasing sway of a power/money nexus over the operation of museums has been rapidly turning into control over content executed by individuals who are unprepared for the task and hence substitute opinion for knowledge" (Shaked 2012: web). Even though this influx of revenue can potentially secure the immediate operation of a museum, the long term effects are

[16] Koons did not shy away from including himself into the exhibition.
[17] The posters displayed the New Museum with a colorful collaged façade which was inspired by a pattern designed by Jeff Koons for Dakis Joannou's yacht with the slogan "~~Anti~~ Establishment" hovering above the collaged image. Hrag Vartanian discovered the makers of this poster campaign to be the three friends Adam Wissing, Kenny Komer, and Boris Rasin (Vartanian 2009: web)

unpredictable. Recognizing this shifting landscape, museum professionals have engaged in debates about the future roles of museum practice, questioning the evolving power dynamics between expansion, education and research. (See Möntmann 2006: 192)

The growth of the cultural industry and its institutions is marked by spatial expansion, narrated through identity branding strategies. The authors of "(Re)Staging the Art Museum" documented a rash of museum expansions, as art museums underwent "extensive renovation and rebuilding, adding new structures to their existing premises" (Hansen 2011: 10). The motto of recent international museum redevelopments has even been argued to be "Go big or go home" (10 Museum Re-Openings to Watch 2013: web), indicating that museums in the 21st Century have no other choice than to expand in order to stay relevant. Museum branding is a spatial matter for this reason specifically.

In New York City, six museums in Manhattan are currently (early 2015) in the process of a major expansion: The *Whitney Museum of American Art* opened its doors in May 2015 as the second newly built museum (designed by Renzo Piano) in Downtown Manhattan, the *Metropolitan Museum of Art* will partially move into the vacant Breuer building, left behind by the *Whitney Museum* to extend its square footage, and the *Frick Collection* announced plans to expand its Fifth Avenue campus by 25 % (Peers 2015: web) The museum currently most present in the media is the *MoMA*, recently even having been compared to a "property developer" with a "bulldozer's heart" as the institution seems to be constantly on the lookout for buying up real estate in New York City to extend its square footage of exhibition space (Kimmelmann 2014: web) In the process, the institution does not shy away from demolishing existing buildings, as Kimmelman observed: "It would be truly radical for MoMA to save the former folk art building, but that's not what the museum has ever really been about. MoMA wants more gallery space, and the expansion that drives the planned demolition is just more MoMA madness" (ibid.).

When the New Museum decided its relocation in the late 1990s, the institution was still located in the New Museum Building on Broadway in SoHo, a district which, over the course of the last 30 years, gentrified, transforming the scrappy, formerly culturally rich district into one of luxurious condominiums and high end shopping, forcing many nonprofit art spaces to relocate to cheaper areas such as the Lower East Side and Brooklyn. As a historic institution, the New Museum was faced not only with the changing urban environment, but also with the intricacy of remaining visible in a growing cultural sphere. Phillips described this difficult time the institution was trapped in, making clear the urgency for re-branding of the New Museum's identity:

> "Part of the institution's charm was its flexibility, scrappiness, and refusal to look anything like a museum. This also eventually became a handicap, and a challenge that was difficult to sustain. What was the New Museum? Where was the New Museum? Most people outside the art world asked, 'Which new museum?' With such a generic name, and with so many new museums being built, the museum had a difficult time establishing itself as an institution with a clear identity and location. It lacked the identity that a body can give, and it lacked good spaces to show art in" (Phillips 2008: 5).

For these reasons, the museum's leaders decided to re-think the institution's mission, re-brand its identity and grow spatially: "the decision was made to take a big step, a daunting financial challenge, and make a decision charged with the dilemma of how to grow and remain true to the mission" (ibid.).

In 2003, the architect firm SANAA (Sejima and Nishizawa) was contracted to design the new space on 235 Bowery, in cooperation with the architect's office Gensler. Then not widely known[18], SANAA designed a minimalistic yet iconic building which looks like six container boxes stacked upon each

[18] In 2010, two years after the New Museum opened on the Bowery, SANAA won the Pritzker prize.

other. Being aware of the negative implications of 'starchitecture'[19], Phillips described the desires for this new spatial concept: "We did not want trophy architecture; we wanted good spaces for art; But we did not want banal architecture either; we wanted something surprising, innovative, and outstanding that would give form to our mission" (Phillips 2008: 7).

Alongside its new architecture, the museum underwent a complete identity overhaul, including a revised set of programs, exhibitions formats and cooperations with other institutions. The branding agency Wolff Olins was hired for re-branding the institution's visual identity, "paying tribute to the New Museum's new building, new location, new principles and new international partnerships" (Marianek 2008: web). The visual identity derives directly from the idea of the museum as a container of objects, as an undisclosed design team member is quoted on underconsideration.com: "we have taken the concept of what a museum is, in a sense of platform/container and applied that idea to the identity using language" (ibid.). In the process, The New Museum of Contemporary Art changed its name to New Museum in order to emphasize the revised mission of "New Art, New Ideas". The museum's completion and opening in 2007 was advertised in an innovative way for an art institution: it consisted of an extensive urban marketing campaign conceptualized by the in-house advertising team Droga 5.

[19] 'Starchitecure' is a term used to describe iconic buildings as empty gestures, often without reference to the buildings contexts, designed by prominent architects (See Buchanan 2015: web)

3 What is lost, what is gained

Jesko Fezer argues that neoliberalism is everywhere and cities have become "key arenas in a primarily market driven globalization process" (Fezer 2010: web). Miriam Greenberg interprets New York City as such a "key arena", paradigmatic for the dialectical relationship of representation in the form of urban branding and spatial production through arts and culture. (See Greenberg 2008: 326) Fezer, himself an urban designer and theorist, goes on to describe how urban branding hints at the understanding of urban space as an enterprise which bears notice of the neoliberalization and commodification of urban space, but also holds the "potential tools with which to transcend [the neoliberal city]" (Fezer 2010: web). Looking at former alternatives might help this quest to transcend neoliberal urban communication.

Ever since SoHo's gentrification in New York City during the 1970s and 1980s, artists and art institutions were increasingly perceived not only as victims, but also as agents in the gentrification of their neighborhoods as part of the contemporary neoliberal event economy. (See Zukin 1989: 232) The New Museum has been in this position twice, if not three times. Having expanded its quarters already in 2008, the New Museum, originally conceived as an institutional and spatial model to be unaffected by and independent from funding pressures as well as from questions of growth and spatial expansion, expanded once again in 2014 with its latest program "NEW INC".

Anne-Marie Hede questions this concept of growth and spatial expansion, describing it as a difficult moment in a museum's lifespan, throwing into question the inherent institutional ideals, concept and mission, thus, establishing a need to balance its memory and its future roles and location (Hede 2007: 152-159). Several authors have criticized the New Museum's expansion and re-conceptualization, questioning if growth really is the ultimate model for this museum's future, as it does not play directly into the programming and quality of the institution.

Nizan Shaked argued that, ever since Marcia Tucker left the New Museum in 1998, the institution has been characterized by corporatization, deregulation and expansion:

> "Unfortunately, [the early New Museum as a radical and anti-corporate institutional model for contemporary art spaces] has been all but displaced since [Marcia Tucker's] departure from the museum in 1998, its feasibility as a system has not been considered in the planning, building, or expansion, of a host of recent contemporary museums (including the New Museum itself), all of which follow corporate models and seem to address first and foremost the concerns of private and corporate donors" (Shaked 2012: web).

In fact, the New Museum can be seen as a new kind of art institution that embraces its corporate potential through a wide array of partnerships and collaborations in advertisement, funding and programming, all while keeping its status as a nonprofit organization.

Similar to Shaked, Martin Braathen contrasts the New Museum's early flexible institutional model to its current identity program in "The New Museum; New Institutionalism and the Problem of Architecture" (Braathen 2008: 219-242), documenting the identity loss during its expansion and re-branding. Braathen identifies the New Museum's aim of re-mythologizing itself and the gentrified Bowery through the display of artworks documenting the artistic production on the Bowery and its former derelict state (ibid.). Both Braathen and Shaked observed and documented the New Museum's antithetical identity overhaul from a postmodern, site-less and critical "alternative space" to an institution embracing its entrepreneurial potential, using branding strategies on all levels of the institution: its mission, style of management, the curatorial program, and its architecture, which all tie into the representation of its identity.

The re-mythologization of the Bowery, undertaken by the New Museum goes even further than just displaying artworks featuring the Bowery in a historic fashion. The Bowery location with its grittiness and history serves as a key element and backdrop in localizing and contextualizing the New Museum as a contemporary institution devoted to innovation in an urban area which was influenced by constant transformation. In publications, in leaflets and online the New Museum makes reference to its own institutional history and to the specific spatial and cultural history of the Bowery. This information emphasizes spatial change and the Bowery's artistic spirit. In the museum's publication "Shift: SANAA and the New Museum", history is traced back as far as to the time of the Dutch settlers, when the "Bowery had begun its life as a cow path that was dubbed 'Bowery Lane' (after bouwerij, the 17th century Dutch word for 'farm' and the name of Peter Stuyvesant's residence on the street), connecting the walled city of New Amsterdam to the large farms to the north" (Phillips 2010: 7). "Shift: SANAA and the New Museum" not only retraces the street't history, but also features a historic text by Julian Ralph for the "Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine" in 1891/2. Ralph's text "The Bowery" describes the changing nature of the street from a cow path to a secret skid row beneath the railway tracks of the "Third Avenue Elevated" and is accompanied with a timeline of the Bowery's transformation.

Putting emphasis on the specific artistic history and transformation of the Bowery, Phillips further reconnects the museum to the street's symbolic meaning as an artists' neighborhood: "When the tracks came down, artists moved into the large theater and loft spaces, appreciating the wide boulevard and good light. Art historian Irving Sandler comments that it was a sign of success for an artist to have a loft on the Bowery" (ibid.). According to Phillips, it was the institution's vision to transform the Bowery once again and to bring the lost artistic spirit back to the thoroughfare characterized by urban decline and neglect:

> "The Bowery was so close and yet so far. It was still a no-mans' land, stigmatized and neglected while all-around it things were changing and springing to life. Could we help to

> transform this storied street? A street with such a rich history and one whose charms artists had recognized for decades as a broad boulevard with lots of light, accessible by many subway lines surrounded by heterogeneous communities" (Phillips 2008:11).

The change and transformation, however, was more effective than anticipated and maybe more than what the museum had asked for, as the Bowery begun a process of gentrification at the turn of the century, while the New Museum's new building was underway: "the Bowery had begun to change. By the time we opened in December of 2007, the Bowery was in full swing. *The Bowery Hotel, Whole Foods*, and a branch of *Chase Manhattan Bank* were all recent additions, and cranes were visible up and down the Bowery and to the east and west. Several galleries have relocated from Chelsea or are opening up additional spaces nearby" (Phillips 2010: 7). While not directly discussing the topic of the Bowery's gentrification, Phillips acknowledges that the New Museum was involved in the Bowery's transition: "We recognize that there is a responsibility involved in being part of a neighborhood in transition, and we have to work with the community to bring about positive change. One of the biggest challenges is to preserve the creative community that has flourished here for several decades and attracted us in the first place" (ibid.).

In its quest to reposition its identity as it moved away from Broadway and its luxury commercial character of the entirely gentrified SoHo, the New Museum chose the site on the Bowery specifically for its grittiness. The institution's challenge now is not only to preserve the creative community on the Bowery, but also to instigate it afresh, as there is a danger for the institution to lose its own identity once again with the gentrification of its immediate environment and luxurious condo towers being built up and down the Bowery. The new New Museum building on the Bowery is part of this new landscape as a distinct and iconic building, yet aiming to make reference to the Bowery's grittiness in its choice of materials to appear as "beautiful rough" (Sejima and Nishizawa 2010: 28). Contextual architecture can suffer when the referred disappears. In order to contain and preserve the

now valuable artistic myth of the Bowery, the institution undertakes an array of approaches both curatorial and spatial. One of these undertakings is "The Bowery Artist Tribute", a project documenting the artistic life on the Bowery online and on paper: "both a celebration and exploration of our new neighborhood, the Bowery Artist Tribute explores the presence of artists on this famed thoroughfare" (Museum as Hub: web).

On another, more contemporary and future-oriented level, the New Museum attempts to revive the artistic spirit in its programs and its use of space. Having purchased the neighboring building in 2009, only a year after the institution opened on the Bowery, the first project, "Studio 235", made the building's ground-floor space available to artists for producing their work on-site. Today, the building is mainly occupied by the New Museum's latest program, "NEW INC", a combination of an artist's residency and an incubator, aiming at recreating the Bowery as a location for art production. The New Museum's struggle to preserve and recreate the artistic nature of the Bowery illustrates how representation can be an expression of social and economic change, but also how it can inform the discourse on urban space and place. The New Museum actively uses its history to recreate its identity as a radical institution.

3.1 A theoretical approach

Analyzing the relations of space and its representation described above presents the problem of where to enter the subject, as space not just *is*, but rather represents a social construct a set of relations, dependent on the perspective of its users and makers, as Michel Foucault stated: "The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space […] [W]e live inside a set of relations" (1986: 23). Unlike Michel Foucault's approach, sociological studies on space have traditionally borrowed from geographical and economic effects and transformations, as Martina Löw analyzed, viewing space as a material substrate, territory, or location and as a material object that serves mainly as an environment for social interaction (Löw 2001: 9).

The changing roles of media and spectacle have influenced people's understanding of urban space and its representation since the late 19th century and have urged theorists to come up with and adapt their thoughts on urbanization and representation. Walter Benjamin, for instance, was convinced that the visual expresses societies' transformations in a rather direct way (Greenberg 2008: 20). More contemporary approaches tend to build on the work of the French philosopher and Marxist sociologist Henri Lefebvre, who continued the investigation into the relationship of representation and urbanization, focusing on the social aspects of space and its production (ibid.) Taking inspiration from Henri Lefebvre's seminal work "The production of Space" (1991), urban space is tinted by the images one has of a place, produced through the make-up of an array of visual and textual representation, be it texts, symbols, advertisements, logos, websites, or other media, as its representation "overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects" (Lefebvre 1991: 39). In this respect, spatial branding becomes an important outlet and agent for institutions and

businesses to market their ideas, concepts and goods, as its reception relates closely to the public image of the brand, institution, and its spaces.[20]

Anne-Marie Hede describes museums themselves as brands, as their contemporary identity and image is built on attraction, while establishing standards that create a "sense of comfort for consumers in 'brand museums' as they have become accustomed to what a museum does and should be, through branding […] [S]uccessful museums have identified themselves with the notion of the contemporary 'brand museum', rather than the museums of the past" (Hede 2007: 154). Branding in this sense is not only understood as unifying the appearance of an institution, but also as having the ability to assist institutions in articulating their identity in their mission and strategy. Alina Wheeler, author of "Designing Brand Identity" describes the necessity for branding as a need for the creation of relationships with the consumers and for making people remember them (Wheeler 2009: 18).

> According to her, "competition creates infinite choices, companies look for ways to connect emotionally with customers, become irreplaceable, and create lifelong relationships. A strong brand stands out in a densely crowded marketplace. People fall in love with brands, trust them, and believe in their superiority. How a brand is perceived affects its success, regardless of whether its [sic!] a start-up, a non-profit, or a product" (Wheeler 2009: 2).

Branding is an elastic concept tying get together a whole range of "tools to communicate a clear message to consumers in an increasingly complex marketplace" (Hede 2007: 151). In the corporate realm, identity ideals, suggest stability, authenticity, and value: "The best identity programs embody and advance the company's brand by supporting desired perceptions. Identity expresses itself in every touchpoint of the brand and

[20] A similar approach was employed by Miriam Greenberg in "Branding New York. How a City in Crisis was Sold to the World", describing the impact PR-strategies had in overhauling New York's image of crisis and debt in the 1970s (2012: 326).

becomes intrinsic to a company's culture – a constant symbol of its core values and its heritage" (Wheeler 2009: 10).

Denoting something as having an identity program which expresses itself through a brand, however, displays a rather limited conception of identity. In contrast to its practical adoption in branding literature[21], Stuart Hall asserted that there is no essential or true identity (in subjects), as identities are constituted performatively – contingent on their context – and produced discursively (Redman 2000: Introduction). Applied in the branding context, identity conception is simplified – with a stronghold on differentiation in a competitive marketplace: "Brand identity fuels recognition, amplifies differentiation, and makes big ideas and meaning accessible. Brand identity takes disparate elements and unifies them into whole systems" (Wheeler 2009: 4).

Contrary to the corporate realm, however, identity design in the cultural context is more complex as it is "antithetical to the idea of a single essence and thus defies all attempts at standardization and clear-cut visual representation" (Klanten 2013: 5). According to Klanten, identity branding is more complex, as cultural identity is ephemeral, elastic, and intricate to comprehend, because definitions of the relation of culture and identity are ambiguous and branding is usually associated with a monetary function (ibid.). Klanten argues that

> "branding, in the 'evil' sense of the term, suggests a commercially-oriented strategy of communication that is imposed from the outside against the intrinsic tendencies of

[21] It appears to be symptomatic for literature on branding that there is no one concise theoretical analysis of what is meant by the term 'identity' as there are numerous definitions of what the act of branding entails, depending on the author and addressee. Governed mainly by industry literature of how-to-guides for corporations and institutions, and often written or compiled by designers, the literature focuses merely on the development and strategy rather than on explaining underlying philosophical connotations of branding, identity and brand image. There is, however, a small amount of literature on museum marketing and branding focusing on branding for market institutions. With some exceptions (see for instance Franzen and Moriarty 2009: 558 pp.), academic literature on branding is scarce.

> cultural content. It is stylized, manipulated, and in favor of sales. Cultural institutions and organizations rarely focus on selling goods. Above all, they produce ephemeral constellations, intersubjective structures of experience and information (curatorial approaches and exhibitions, directorships, ensembles and programs, heritage, site). Institutional identity, or cultural branding, in a more generous sense of the term, evolves from these structures" (ibid.).

Identity design tries to give form to content, be it an institutions mission, or an innovative product. The New Museum's novel identity program unfolds on several levels in its "brand touchpoints" (Wheeler 2009: 10), avoiding a singular perspective on its identity. It is apparent that the New Museum's architecture, program and visual branding aims at connecting the institution equally to its history between a museum and an alternative space, to its context on the Bowery, and to its mission of "New Art, New Ideas". The process of rebranding the institution's identity, did not only lie in a new type of architecture and logo design, but also in a reconceptualization of the institution's program, which Lisa Phillips described to have been outdated at the time when she took over directorship from Marcia Tucker in 1999 (Phillips 2010: 5).

3.2 Methodic approach

In line with Foucault, things only become meaningful by the amount of relevance attributed to them, as discourses are practices which "form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault 2002: 54). Influenced by this "anti-essentialist perspective on language, identity, society, and social practices" (Park 2008: 394), the author argues that alternative spaces, once defined through their raw esthetics as oppositional to the "white cube" have become commodified spaces of art presentation with an ability to reproduce the notion of alternative space as part of their institutional memory and identity branding. The New Museum does exactly that, as it historicizes itself and the Bowery neighborhood as part of its identity strategy, aiming at re-contextualizing and re-envisioning itself and, in the process, making use of historic notions of critical spatial production.

While in more general terms, alternative art spaces appear as an art historic topic as early as 1981[22], the notion of the alternative space has undergone several transformations. Today, alternative art spaces are popularized in the form of anthological overviews and artists biographies, documenting these multifarious spatial concepts.[23] Julie Ault, editor of "Alternative Art New York 1965-1985" identified as a movement what others might call a scene and observed the various oppositional endeavors as linked through the ideals of "continuity and cultural democracy" (2002: 4) present in alternative art spaces and through their opposition "as constructive responses to the explicit and implied limitations of this commerce-oriented world" (ibid.: 3). The New Museum is not alone in its re-production of its alternative history and memory, as other former alternative art spaces or anti-museums are doing the same as part of their activities in order to sort through and publicize their archives.[24] The New Museum is the one

[22] Early alternative art spaces (*Apple*, *112 Greene Street Workshop*, *Gain Ground*, *98 Bleeker Street*, *10 Bleecker Street*, *Idea Warehouse* and *3 Mercer*) were historicized only eight years after their first appearance as part of the retrospective exhibition "Alternatives in Retrospect" at the New Museum of Contemporary Art (New Museum) in 1981.

[23] For an overview see Ault 2002, Kostelanetz 2003, Rand, 2010.

[24] In recent years former alternative art spaces such as the *MoMa PS1*, *Artists Space* and the *New Museum* have engaged in opening their archives to the public. The *New Museum* has

institution, however, that is most actively involved in a discursive re-appropriation of its institutional history in the context of alternative art spaces.

Viewing branding as part of a dialectal process of representation and urbanization, Lefebvre's theory of spatial production ("The Production of Space") can serve as a theoretical point of entry to access and analyze space via the elements and output of the institution's identity branding strategy. A varied array of materials comes into play here, and the New Museum is a generous case, re-producing itself continuously in its PR materials, mission statements, curatorial programs, books and other ephemera. The author puts this institutional re-mythologization in contrast to actual facts in order to inquire which parts of the New Museum's memory where addressed, used and which were left out.

More specifically, the author inquires which aspects of alternative space use have been re-appropriated into the identity strategy of the museum and how these notions of space have been re-conceptualized and transformed. Which are the key expressions used and sampled in their re-formulation as an alternative? In order to answer these questions, this diploma thesis offers a critical perspective on spatial production and its representation. In researching the subject of alternative spaces and their transformation, the author has paid attention to recurring elements and statements, "expressions" in Foucault's terms (Foucault 2002: 136). These elements form the basis of discourse analysis and have been analyzed contextually, in their situative, media, institutional, and historic context and in depth in their micro-structure.[25]

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information available for visitors in the institution's resource center and on the *New Museum*'s website; *Artists Space* archives can be visited by appointment at the *Fales Library* in New York City; *MoMa PS1* archives can be visited in Queens, New York.

[25] In analyzing the materials provided by the New Museum the author used Achim Landwehr's concept of historical discourse analysis (Historische Diskursanalyse) as Michel Foucault's writings on discourse are merely theoretical, not methodological. (See Landwehr 2008).

3.3 A discursive perspective on the new New Museum

Looking at the most accessible texts, objects and graphics that the New Museum provides for its visitors, it becomes apparent that the museum sees its current identity and mission inspired by "New Art, New Ideas"[26]. The author has observed that the New Museum derives its programmatic identity of "New Art, New Ideas" equally from its historic legacy as an "anti-museum" and "alternative space" devoted to collaboration, and from an entrepreneurial perspective on museum practice "to break new ground" and to question what "art and its institutions can be in the twenty-first century" (About the New Museum: leaflet). The New Museum describes itself recurrently as "the only museum in New York City devoted exclusively to contemporary art" and defines the institution's beginnings "between a grassroots alternative space and a major museum devoted to proven historical values" (ibid.).

The concepts of innovation and entrepreneurship are used to recreate the museum as an alternative and avant-garde art institution in the contemporary culture industry, visible within the institution's programs such as "Ideas City", an annual event and exhibition project to "explore the future of our cities with culture as a driving force" (Ideas City: web) and "NEW INC", the "first museum-led incubator", which offers a "lab-like environment and framework for the development of new ideas, practices and models in the pursuit of innovation" (ibid.).

[26] The New Museum's mission is repeatedly stated in introductory texts on flyers, online, printed on ball point pens, and as part of the museums logotype (fig. 2.).

3.4 Notions of alterity

In this chapter, there will be a discussion of the New Museum's discursive appropriation of specific notions of alternative space, and an analysis of how these terms were further developed in the New Museum's reconceptualization. Among the key terms that have been re-appropriated and used repetitively, the focus will be on 'flexibility' and 'collaboration'.

Even though the New Museum's mission reads "New Art, New Ideas", the institution employs a historical perspective on itself and on the Bowery neighborhood, consistent throughout its publications, PR texts, leaflets and the web. Even though the New Museum brings forward a specific understanding of its identity as an earlier anti-museum, devoted to "New Art, New Ideas", it is relevant to keep in mind that it is only an identity and image that is reproduced mostly by the institution itself, as it forms its own discourse. The notions of alterity the institution draws from, is, however, not coherent. Alternative art spaces can be interpreted as "floating signifiers" (Levi-Strauss 1950: 13), having never been united by a singular ideology or identity conception, thus conceived in a heterogeneous countercultural environment.

Brian O'Doherty, artist, critic and former head of the NEA´s Visual Arts Program introduced the term 'alternative art space' to a wider audience in an article-series published in "Artforum" in 1976 and used it to describe the growth of diverse spaces "outside the formal museum structure" which could only be summarized by a "change in audience, location, and context" (O'Doherty 1999: 79).[27] This change in audience, location and context was very often connected to spatial practices of decentralization, community building and flexibilization. From the late 1960s onwards, the notion of (alternative) space denoted a range of diverse art spaces, organizations and ephemeral projects which left little to no documentation. The already diverse notion of alternative space transformed repeatedly over the years,

[27] Even before defining the use of this term through critical writing, the NEA's Visual Arts Program, then headed by O'Doherty himself, established the sub-category *Alternative Space/Workshops* in 1973 as part of the NEA program supporting the arts in the U.S.

adapting to the needs of artists and, increasingly, the professionalized art world. While early spaces engaged in a practice of direct intervention in space and used space as a material, others understood space as a social practice. (See Beck 2002: 249-279)

The term flexibility in this context stems from a specific form of alternative space created to describe institutional structures as "floating exhibition programs" which operated at different locations without a fixed space to call their own (Jeffrey 1980: 107). Examples for this type of alternative space were documented as early as 1980 by Joan Jeffrey in "The Emerging Arts: Management, Survival and Growth". Jeffery discussed institutional models developed by Alana Heiss and Marcia Tucker who both came from a more traditional art historic background and with that knowledge established alternatives which were neither museums nor alternative spaces as anti- or non-museums without a permanent home.

The New Museum's original name 'The New Museum of Contemporary Art' was not meant to distance the institution from other alternative art spaces – rather, it challenged the notion of the museum through its self-assertion: "When I was asked why it had to be an art museum and not an alternative art space, I responded by saying that I was an art historian who had always worked in museums and that if I was going to challenge a paradigm, it needed to be the paradigm I knew best" (Tucker 2008: 121). Ironically, Lisa Phillips repeatedly refers to the New Museum as a former alternative space: "The New Museum was founded as an alternative space in the heyday of alternative art spaces" (The Art Spaces Directory: web).

The aim of the institution in its beginnings was to reinvent outdated museum practice, displaying contemporary art by living artists who had not necessarily had public exposure up until then. The institutional program was devoted to a self-reflective and critical perspective on exhibiting. Tucker's unconventional and controversial approach of curating at the *MoMa* and the *Whitney Museum* had been a conflicting experience within the limits of a bureaucratically top-heavy organizational style (Tucker 2008: 118). Having gained an insight into operations and inherent defects of major institutions,

her accumulated negative experiences contributed to the re-conception of the museum as an institution for contemporary art as: “The [...] bigger museums were ill-equipped to respond quickly to radical or sudden changes in the arts, in part because exhibitions had to be scheduled years ahead of time [...] most important of all, in order to obtain funding. Even if institutions did have a contemporary department, they weren´t [sic!] interested in anything that wasn´t [sic!] shown in galleries. We, on the other hand, were intrepid, willing to go where no curator had ever gone before” (ibid.: 123).

The New Museum’s flexible institutional approach, conceptualized by Marcia Tucker in 1977, is emphasized in several of the New Museum’s publications as a key term to describe the institution’s new mission and identity: “In 1977, Marcia Tucker founded the New Museum with the hope of creating a flexible institution that could respond to rapid developments in contemporary art” (The Art Spaces Directory: web). The historic flexibility of the institution, particularly in spatial terms, is underlined and analyzed in depth by Megan Heuer in “A Museum in the Sky. A Spatial History of the New Museum”, available on the New Museum’s website. In her web article, Heuer traces the history of the museum, without a permanent collection of objects in a specific place, envisioning “a more flexible model not contingent on a specific architectural site” (Heuer 2012: web). Portraying the spatial history of the New Museum and building on her research at the New Museum archive, Heuer stresses the museum’s current identity as being informed by this spatial flexibility: “The architectural and geographical history of the New Museum reveals the ongoing evolution of the Museum not as a stable container of objects, but as an armature with permeable boundaries” (ibid.). This conception of a flexible institution, spatially and institutionally, builds the very basis of the current identity program as an institution which aims at re-thinking the role of the museum in the 21st century and extends itself beyond its physical site. Heuer constructs this model of flexibility around Tucker’s vision of “The Museum in the Sky” – an institution without a permanent architecture: “I´d [sic!] taken to calling my project ‘The Museum in the Sky’ because it had just

gotten off the ground. The thought that I could just start somewhere and see what happened made my ears twitch" (Tucker 2008: 121).

Drawing a detailed history of the New Museum's numerous moves, Heuer describes how, in the beginning, the institution operated out of a temporary office space at 105 Hudson Street in Tribeca in the Fine Arts Building in close relation to other alternative art spaces such as *Artists Space* and *Printed* Matter, and how its first exhibitions were held in various alternative art spaces throughout the city, starting with the show "Memory" at *C Space* in Leonard Street. Indeed, over the course of 30 years, the museum had changed its location four times; however, while Heuer focuses on this early history of the "Museum in the Sky" she does not reflect on the New Museum's institutionalization and expansion during the 1980s when it abandoned its early flexible spatial model to settle for a permanent space in what is today known as "The New Museum Building" on Broadway, slowly resembling the layout and spatial structure of a traditional museum.

Instead of integrating this stabilized spatial situation, Heuer, in re-appropriating the New Museum's early concept of the "Museum in the Sky", continues to draw from the early New Museum's nomadism and flexibility, arguing how the museum is not limited by its physical location and how the New Museum's architecture is at the same time a symbol, a real space and a continuation of its early history: "the Museum had an architecture designed to accommodate its unique hybrid program of exhibitions, education and events, the SANAA building has become both a symbol and a real space of the Museum's activity; however, the New Museum continues to operate beyond this singular site" (Heuer 2012: web).

Another key aspect of the New Museum's current identity program is collaboration, building on the flexible institutional idea of "operating beyond a singular site" (Heuer 2012: web). Collaborative organizational practices in alternative art spaces challenged the conventional system of representation and art production which, in turn, influenced the spatial understanding of space as place. (See Beck 2002: 249-279) In the early days

of alternative art spaces, collaboration was understood as a way of navigating around the traditional administrative hierarchies of the art world.

The New Museum today emphasizes its collaborative activities on various institutional levels and within numerous curatorial programs. On the museum's website, the term 'collaborations' appears in the website's navigation bar next to 'visit', 'exhibitions', 'calendar' and 'learn', introducing the New Museum's collaborative and intra-institutional programs which range from new partnerships in collecting art, education, and networking. All this is done to expand the notion of the museum as a container of objects and to permeate the boundaries of a singular site. Projects such as the "Three Museum Project" focus on the establishment of shared collections among various museums with similar agendas; "Museum as Hub" initiates a dialog with other institutions on the future of museum practice; "The Art Spaces Directory" presents and connects the large variety of independent art spaces which the New Museum considers itself part of (The Art Spaces Directory: web).

Planned without actual storage space, the New Museum on the Bowery specifically supports collaborations with other institutions and private collectors. With a focus on practices of lending rather than acquiring, a project enabling exchange between the institution and collectors was presented through the exhibition series "The Imaginary Museum" in 2009 which intended to make the New Museum's exhibition space available to collections which would otherwise be inaccessible to the public. While "The Imaginary Museum" was discontinued, another project, already inaugurated in 2004, continues to re-evaluate museum collection practices. Permeating the idea of the museum as a container of objects, the "Three Museum Project" or "3M" integrates a flexible and collaborative ethos. In a partnership with the *Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago*, the *Hammer Museum* in Los Angeles and the *New Museum*, the "3M" intends "to jointly commission, exhibit, and acquire important works of contemporary art by artists whose work has not yet received significant recognition. All three museums share a collaborative vision and entrepreneurial spirit, and the belief that ambitious projects on a national scale can be produced through

efficiency, knowledge, and resource sharing" (3M: web). The "Three Museum Project" builds on Marcia Tucker's model of a semi-permanent collection, conceived in 1987, to destabilize conventional collection practices and to solve the issue of how to build a collection as a contemporary art museum.[28]

On a more global level, the New Museum engages in projects urging flexibility and collaboration in connecting with other like-minded spaces in the world, which Phillips denotes as 'hubs', as points of connection: "We also envision the New Museum as a cultural hub for artists, for curators, for the community residents, and for tourists. But we see this hub as one of interconnected hubs elsewhere" (Phillips 2010: 11). The partnership "Museum as Hub" focuses on expanding the understanding of curatorial practice and institutional collaboration in order "to enhance our understanding of contemporary art. Both a network of relationships and an actual physical site located on the fifth-floor of the New Museum Education Center, Museum as Hub is conceived as a flexible, social space designed to engage audiences."[29] Building on this model of the museum as a point of interconnection, the "Art Spaces Directory" aims at a more global perspective on collaboration in order to establish collaboration between independent art spaces around the world. Distributed as a publication and online research facility on the New Museum's website, it serves as "an international guide to over 400 independent art spaces from ninety-six countries" (The Art Spaces Directory: web). This independency is used synonymously for the notion of alternative art space:

> "The New Museum was founded as an alternative space in the heyday of alternative art spaces. Thirty-five years later, this urgency is only magnified as the museum has grown and as current events, developments in technology and expanding definitions of artistic practice demand increasingly rapid

[28] However, its temporary conception, the "Semi-Permanent Collection", developed into a permanent collection of about 2000 artworks. (See: Goldfarb 1995)

[29] Members include: *Insa Art Space* (Seoul, South Korea), *Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo* (Mexico City, Mexico), *Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art* (Cairo, Egypt), and *Van Abbemuseum* (Eindhoven, Netherlands).

> responses from arts organizations. In spite of many changes in the landscape – and in some cases, because of them – the same need that instigated the founding of the New Museum remains a vital force in contemporary art, and our hope is that this book serves to acknowledge the immense possibilities manifested by independent art spaces" (Phillips, "The Art Spaces Directory" 2012: web).

More recently, this aim to recreate the institution as an alternative, independent institution through the notions of collaboration and flexibility has become even more clear in the New Museum's spatial and programmatic expansion. The opening of the institution's adjacent "incubator" marks the museum's further delve into a collaborative engagement at the intersection of art and economy. Conceived and supported by Lisa Phillips and Karen Wong of New Museum, it is run as a separate institution by director Julia Kaganskiy. Conceptualized as an extension of the Museum's mission of "New Art, New Ideas", "NEW INC" aims at expanding the institution's profile as an innovative space that goes where no museum ever has gone before.[30] Kaganskiy describes "NEW INC" as "the first museum-led incubator for creative practitioners and creative entrepreneurs working at the intersection of art, design, and technology" (Kagansky (b) 2014: web). The basic concept of "NEW INC" is to offer its members twelve month residencies to envision an enhancement of a collaborative exchange between various creative fields of art, design and technology. Unlike most artist residencies, members have to pay for space and service. Various price categories that relate to the availability of desk space make it possible to benefit different incomes. As the name suggests, "NEW INC" is influenced by incubator models from the technology and economy sector, yet "putting a spin on the incubator model and adapting it for our cultural context" (FAQ, NEW INC: web).

[30] See Emily Zimmerman's interview with Julia Kaganskiy in "Bomb Magazine" where Kaganskiy describes the ambitions for this new institution as a platform for production in the 21st century (Kaganskiy (a) 2014: web).

When the New Museum expanded in 2008 with the purchase of the neighboring building on the Bowery, the institution's press release stated that "the availability of an adjacent property is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a dynamic and growing institution" (New Museum Press Release 2008: web). It was a chance for the New Museum to preserve and contain the character of the old, scrappy Bowery, which had in the past couple of years been shaped by urban redevelopment and rejuvenation, transforming and distorting its horizontally oriented architecture by luxurious condominium towers. The building that was bought in 2008 and is now for the most part occupied by "NEW INC" was previously used for restaurant supply storage and sales and, even before that, as studio space by artists such as James Rosenquist and Tom Wesselman (Bowery Gentrification Watch: web). Julia Kaganskiy, director of "NEW INC", sees the institution's potential in reinforcing "the Bowery as a place of meaningful innovation" (NEW INC Call for Application: web). In contrast to "The Bowery Artist Tribute", "NEW INC" not only aims at retracing the Bowery's half-forgotten history, but it also strives to restore and repatriate its lost artistic spirit. As rent and property prices on the Lower East Side have been going through the roof in recent years, studio space on the Bowery is becoming unaffordable for most artists.[31] With "NEW INC", the New Museum attempts to foster the artistic production on the Bowery, endangered and erased by the gentrification which the museum itself had helped to bring about.[32]

Constantly looking for ways to permeate the boundaries of museum space "beyond the walls of the Museum into the greater sphere of culture" (FAQ, NEW INC: web) in projects such as "Ideas City" and "The Art Spaces Directory", "NEW INC" marks a spatial commitment to the institution as a productive unit in order to "re-envision the role of the museum" (ibid.). The

[31] A three bedroom apartment in the Deuce Coop complex on 2 Cooper Square at the corner of Bowery and East 4th Street is available for up to $20,000 per month (2010); a one bedroom apartment in the same building costs over $ 6000 per month (in spring 2015). See the blog "NY. Curbed" for further information.

[32] Critical of Manhattan's gentrification in general, and with a special interest in the Bowery, Joey Arak of "NY Curbed" asks in a similar way, whether the purchase of the museum's neighboring building "was a preemptive move by the New Museum to protect it from the monster it helped create?" (Arak 2010: web).

program permeates the museum container on several levels, as the institution believes that “museums have to think differently in the twenty-first century” (ibid.). Rather than objects placed in space and concealed in time, works are conceived and produced onsite and in real-time. The New Museum’s incubator creates a permanent basis for collaboration and exchange, offering 8,000 square feet of mixed use space on the building’s second floor, featuring open plan, communal work spaces for part-time and full-time members, conference rooms, a small fabrication lab and an event space for screenings and flexible use when there is no program.

Again laying emphasis on the collaborative aspect, “NEW INC” is understood as a forum for collaboration and the notion of the museum is expanded as the institution itself becomes a site of collaborative production. “NEW INC” describes itself as a non-profit platform to join forces and offer creatives “space for new models of cultural production” (About, NEW INC: web). In an interview with Emily Zimmerman, Kaganskiy mentions the research undertaken to develop “NEW INC’s” concept and identity. Eager to offer a new model for production, a wide range of supportive structures in the education and business sectors served as an inspiration: business incubators, co-working spaces, university research-labs, and “historical alternative schools like the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College as well as contemporary alternative education programs like Public School, Trade School and things like Skillshare” (Kaganskiy (a) 2014: web).

Looking at “NEW INC” in more detail, its similarities to historic alternatives become apparent. Essentially, “NEW INC” can be interpreted as a recalibration and crossover of various forms of art presentation and production, developed in historic alternative art spaces. “NEW INC” aims at fostering production adapted to the contemporary cultural industry. While supporting projects which do not fit into existing categories of funding programs in art, design and technology, “NEW INC” is looking to engage in cooperations with corporations and private investors: “We wanted to create a space positioned somewhere between a business incubator and an artist residency program, something that provides an alternative for the countless projects that fall through the cracks because they don´t [sic!] really fit either

model" (About, NEW INC: web). While interested in the commercial aspects of fostering private investment in art, "NEW INC's" concept quotes various programmatic qualities, developed in earlier alternative spaces. Here, "NEW INC" primarily draws upon the idea of an exhibition space as a flexible site of production and collaborative engagement, having been explored notoriously in spaces such as *112 Greene Street* in the 1970s.

Founded by artists Jeffrey Lew, Alan Saret and Gordon Matta-Clark in 1970 on the ground floor of a building formerly housing a rag-salvaging factory in the then run-down, postindustrial SoHo, *112 Greene Street* existed several years without a formal concept or program.[33] Dedicated to the production of art and art as a process, it also functioned as an alternative to the establishment, offering space for process-oriented art production. Anyone who was brave enough was welcome to exhibit. The spatial rawness of *112 Greene Street* contributed to the artists' freedom to produce artwork on-site and in examination of the architecture, as Jeffrey Lew pointed out in an interview in "Avalanche Magazine", arguing that the artwork "isn´t [sic!] canned" (quoted in Baer 1971) by its environment. *112 Greene Street*'s spatial rawness also allowed for a great flexibility in the installation of artworks and the growing forms of installation art.

First historicized by Robyn Brentano and Mark Savitt in 1981, *112 Greene Street* continues to be revisited in the contemporary art discourse. Jessamyn Fiore noted *112 Greene Street*'s influence on art production in 2012: "112 Greene Street was more than a physical space – it was a locus of energy and ideas that with a combination of genius and chance had a profound impact on the trajectory of contemporary art. […] [I]ts permeable walls became the center of an artistic community that challenged the traditional role of the artist, the gallery, the performer, the audience, and the work of art" (Fiore 2012: Foreword). This recent interest in historic alternative art spaces, and in particular in *112 Greene Street*, has taken odd

[33] The art organization moved spaces and was later renamed *White Columns.*

turns, as commercial galleries appropriate the alternative notion of space and turn it into a productive vehicle to sell art.[34]

"INC" takes this notion of collaboration and flexibility into the 21st century to form "a kind of share-happy, postmillenial commune" (Kennedy 2013: web). The museum as a container is replaced by the museum as a locus of production and technology. What kind of understanding of art production and culture does this concept point to? And who is served by this current form of an alternative, "lab-like environment and framework for the development of new ideas, practices, and models in the pursuit of innovation"? (About, NEW INC: web).

"NEW INC" points not only to a new model of production – the incubator, it also refers to 'inc' as in "incorporated", expanding the understanding of museum practice through an embrace of commerce. Borrowed from the tech industry, business incubators are programs that "provide new entrepreneurs with mentorship, advice and practical training on technical, business and fundraising topics to help them get from idea to product to launch and beyond. They typically take a small piece of equity in exchange for a small amount of cash and entry into the program" (Mac 2012: web). "NEW INC's" identity program is, however, designed to cautiously avoid "NEW INC" to be mistaken for a tech incubator, as Julia Kaganskiy stresses: "a lot of the language that is out there about incubators, accelerators or artists-in-residence programs, is fraught with all kinds of connotations and expectations. Essentially, baggage we don't [sic!] necessarily want to bring into the new initiative" (Kaganskiy (a) 2014: web). "NEW INC" uses this corporate/tech language as a trajectory to reassess the notion of the museum as a productive unit.

[34] In 2011, gallerist David Zwirner put on a retrospective titled "Energy & Abstraction" of Gordon Matta Clark's work produced in the context of 112 Greene Street, curated by Jessamyn Fiore.

4 Analysis and discussion

From this study it is clear that the notion of alternative space may not be relegated to historicizing narratives alone. Alternative spaces have become urban myths, told to counter SoHo's gentrification, vigorously implemented and re-appropriated by institutions such as the New Museum. The notion of the modern museum as a container of objects, as an "institution of confinement" (Smithson 1972: 154) has been transformed, partially due to the radical questioning of museum space and institutional critique in the 1960s and 1970s. Postmodern institutions today appear to be informed by what Ault called the alternative art movement (Ault 2002: 396). Alternative spaces, once defined by their fleeting, raw esthetics and their radical collaborative practices, are today institutionalized, commodified spaces that highly resemble the institutions they once opposed. Their 'alternative' institutional history can, however, be an asset, a historic dwell they can draw upon, within their institutional and corporate identities. In this particular case, the identity program of the new New Museum serves specific purposes: to connect with its own institutional memory and with the history of alternative art spaces and to contextualize it within its neighborhood as not just another new high-rise development.

While the New Museum continues to address its own history and that of alternative art spaces, "NEW INC" rather orients itself towards the future. Run as a separate yet connected entity, it has the image of an avant-garde institution devoted to innovation, creativity and collaboration. Notions of space from the alternative discourse do not explicitly appear in "NEW INC's" discursive output, as the institution is more future oriented in its identity program.

However, "NEW INC" continues to build on the concept of alternative space, as it aims at extending the institution beyond a physical site through its cooperations and programs as well as through its self-understanding as a site for production. In addition to this, an inner-institutional ideology appears, unfolding in the language used to describe "NEW INC", to a

degree already present in other projects such as the "3M" and "Museum as Hub", embracing a specific neoliberal tinge.[35]

Acting according to their mission to expand the institution beyond the museum walls and to foster "New Art, New Ideas", "NEW INC" and the New Museum boldly explore this neoliberal style language and terminology, over and again repeating words associated with the neoliberal cultural turn: creativity, flexibility, innovation and collaboration. "NEW INC" replaces 'artists' by 'creatives', "working in unique ways that are cross-disciplinary, collaborative, leveraging technology, and increasingly straddling the line between culture and commerce" (About, NEW INC: web).

Once again the notion of collaboration is made viable for a New Museum project, however, it is transformed and adapted to the commodified cultural sphere, feeding from a creative industry discourse.[36] Spontaneous acts of collaboration, tried loosely in alternative spaces, are here spatially curated and designed, as is its community.[37] The institution's stride towards commodification is furthermore, as mentioned before, underlined by cooperation with companies, private investors and collectors – with visible effects in the institution's architecture, programming and public profile. The New Museum is certainly not the only institution affected by the need to stand out in a densely crowded cultural sphere and it is not the only former alternative art space that thrives from its alternative history.

Non-profit art institutions today are in the precarious position to keep up with current developments in the field, while continuing to develop new

[35] See Marnie Holborow's analysis of keywords, pointing to a neoliberal ideology as adopted in the university context in recent years (Holborow 2013: web).
[36] For more on the topic of the creative industry discourse in cultural policy circles see Ben Eltham´s Cultural Policy Blog (Eltham 2010: web).
[37] The architect's office SO-IL, responsible for the redevelopment of the "NEW INC" building on 235 Bowery, underscored this in its press release: "['NEW INC'] is a collaborative space for a highly selective, interdisciplinary community of one hundred members to investigate new ideas and develop a sustainable practice. With 11,000 sq. feet of dedicated workspace, labs, social areas, and event space, NEW INC offers an ideal environment for seeding and testing creative enterprises. SO-IL's design organizes the space to maximize chance encounters, interaction and cross pollination, in line with NEW INC's mission" (SO-Il: web).

models of funding. These institutions see themselves confronted with an urban cultural landscape which, as Jesko Fezer described it, is governed by a form of neoliberalism which is neither homogeneous nor universal, exercising its powers within social life on an individual level, absorbing transformative social energy only to re-articulate it "in favor of consensus and unanimity in place of social conflict and protest", making an outside of culture near to impossible (Fezer 2010: web). This form of neoliberalism has been associated with biopolitical production, producing "social life itself in which the economic, the political and the cultural increasingly overlap" (Hardt 2001: preface xiii). Art institutions and former alternative art spaces are complicit in this process and have to find ways to survive while keeping their criticality. This is not an easy task.

Even though critical practices of space production appear to be impossible at times, a critical assessment of the commodification of the urban environment is as relevant as ever. In light of the crisis of neoliberalism and its destructive effects on urban spaces, critical urban theorists (Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer, 2012: 296 pp.) ask again how critical social movements can take action on a spatial scale, resisting processes of commodification and the possibilities inherent in the production of democratic space. [38] In search for 'real alternatives' to the hypercommodification of the urban environment, the authors are looking at socio-spatial theories that urge for a 'right to the city'; theories that have been influential for the production of alternative spaces and spatial resistance in the late 60s and early 70s.

As urban social movements in New York were closely linked to the local art scene, critical practices and practices of space production frequently happened in and around alternative art spaces, circumventing the traditional system of representation, while establishing their own (Wallis 2002: 164). In this light, the transformation of former alternative art spaces opens the question whether there is a sustainable option for critical spatial practices

[38] Brenner et al. described the current global economic crisis as one of the commodified environment: "producing devalorized, crisis-riven urban and regional landscapes in which labor and capital cannot be combined productively to satisfy social needs" (2012: 4).

and to what extent these spaces could use their countercultural histories to exemplify how critical (spatial) practice could unfold today. Fezer argues more practically in line with Chantal Mouffe for a "common symbolic space" (quoted in Fezer 2010: web), to "facilitate confrontation. To create such a space would be a design task in the widest possible sense of the term" (ibid.).

The New Museum takes up a singular role in this cultural landscape. It appears to have accepted its status as complicit in the commodified cultural landscape that no longer offers any real space for alterity. Instead, the institution is looking to find ways to create a sort of critical approach from within, to introduce innovations and bring about change through a certain positivistic compliance with the cultural-commercial complex as a progressive institution. The question remains, and it is a tricky one, whether the New Museum lives up to its own reputation and history of an alternative to the establishment even though there is no real place for alterity any longer. Do the New Museum's concept of innovation, its mission of "New Art, New Ideas" and its program, intended to "permeate the museum container" (Heuer 2012: web), satisfy its legacy as a 'common symbolic space' (Mouffe 2000: 13) and to counter its immediate surrounding's gentrification?

5 Conclusion

This study has investigated the representative role of culture in the gentrification and urbanization of entire neighborhoods from a discursive point of view, using the example of one particular institution – the New Museum in New York City. With this focus in mind, the author inquired how alternative history today is re-performed as part of the New Museum's identity program as a narrative in the context of the institution's relocation.

This re-appropriation and re-location of the New Museum has to be seen in the context of a growing cultural sphere, demanding increased visibility and originality in an art institution's branding, programming and architecture. Spatial expansions of art museums in recent years give evidence of this competitive cultural field and illustrate the strong representative function of landmark architecture and branding as tools to raise an institution's profile, as well as a neighborhood's reputation. Alternative art spaces and anti-museums as postmodern institutions not only had to adapt to the expanding cultural landscape, they also continue to serve as agents in this scenario, having to find ways to counter the bitter overtones of gentrification, however, they are not always successful in doing so.

In order to access the subject of space and its representation, the author has looked at spatial theories that understand urban space as a social product, formed by their users and makers alike, via their representative function of identity branding. The New Museum makes a good example for an institution well aware of its representative and transformative role in a neighborhood's gentrification, drawing upon its critical alternative history in several "touch points" (Wheeler 2009: 2). As the author studied texts provided by the New Museum (from the institution's website, on flyers, and in publications), she has identified key themes repeatedly re-appropriated by the institution in order to permeate the so-called museum container: flexibility and collaboration in service to re-mythologize the Bowery and the New Museum. The New Museum marks an institution that manages to foster some form of criticality, however, the author has observed that these

topics are merely reproduced on a surface level without raising the question of how to deal with the negative aspects of the Bowery's transformation.

What can be learned from these alternative spatial practices and what should be avoided? As there seems to be no real place for actual alterity any longer, and art institutions are increasingly complicit in the cultural-commercial complex, the question remains whether the commodification of alternative art spaces can serve as a lesson for future critical institutional practices which are aware of their potential agency in gentrification, taking real steps to counter their co-option and rethink models of growth.

To begin with, a reflective historicizing perspective on the commodification of urban social movements and their spatial practices, considered in the early 70s as real alternatives, is key to avoid repetition. Understanding the history of these alternatives and their transformation, have to be given when creating new idealistic scenarios for post-neoliberal cities and institutions on the intersection of art, design and spatial politics, as Jesko Fezer stated (2010: web).

In the case of the New Museum, the author has come to believe that there is a potential for its critical spatial practice; however, a more cautious re-appropriation of its historic legacy is suggested in order to pay respect to the immediate surroundings and neighborhood. Ideally, businesses and residents on the Bowery would not only be included on the surface as a part of architectural design solutions, but instead there should be a focus on real physical cooperation and discourse, in setting up community circles and conversation panels to foster communication which integrates institutions, builders, residents and also the critical voices of the Bowery's gentrification, i. e. the "Bowery Gentrification Watch" on "NY. Curbed", Hrag Vartanian from "hyperallergic" and the authors of the poster campaign "~~Anti~~ Establishment" in order to discover together – as a neighborhood – how to make living and working on this storied street affordable and interesting.

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7 Appendix

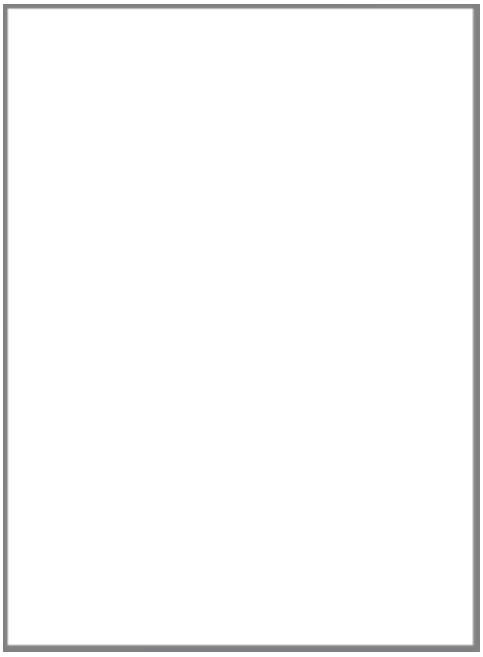

Fig. 1.: Poster affixed on Manhattan's streets in 2010 displaying the New Museum collaged over with a pattern which was taken from Dakis Joannou's yacht (originally designed by Jeff Koons). This poster was designed by Adam Wissing, Kenny Komer, and Boris Rasin as an urban visual protest campaign against the controversial exhibition "Skin Fruit" in 2010. Retrieved from Vartanian, Hrag. "New Museum Ethics Quagmire Gets Its Own Unofficial Ad Campaign." March 9, 2010. Hyperallergic. Web. October 3, 2014. http://hyperallergic.com/3732/new-museum-ethics-ads/

Fig. 2.: The New Museum's merchandise: ball point pens, illustrating the New Museum's mission of "New Art, New Ideas". Image retrieved from Vartanian, Hrag. "New Museum Ethics Quagmire Gets Its Own Unofficial Ad Campaign." March 9, 2010. Hyperallergic. Web. October 3, 2014. http://hyperallergic.com/3732/new-museum-ethics-ads/

8 Abstracts

English

The new New Museum in New York City is an architectural icon, a brand, a name and a container of objects. Even though the institution engages a fresh perspective on museum making in every aspect of its programming devoted to "New Art, New Ideas", it continues to draw from and build on its legacy of an institution founded as an in-between of an alternative art space and a museum. Raw, scrappy, flexible, collaborative – alternative spaces exhibited early installation-based practices that morphed the understanding of exhibition space altogether and helped to break open conservative museum practices in order to incorporate ephemeral, installative, performative and political art practices, making them more accessible for a new public. These notions of alternative space are today used merely as reference points in the reconceptualization of institutions and their branding. From a discursive perspective, this study investigates the representative role of culture in the gentrification and urbanization of a formerly run-down neighborhood in Manhattan that is now rejuvenated and gentrified, with the help of an institution that made its streets fashionable. With this discursive focus in mind, the author inquires how alternative history today is re-performed as part of the New Museum's identity program as a narrative to balance the negative implications of the institution's relocation and its spatial effects on the "Bowery".

German

Das neue New Museum in New York City ist ein architektonisches Symbol, eine Marke, ein Name und ein Behälter von künstlerischen Objekten. Mit einer frischen Perspektive auf den Möglichkeitsraum Museum, das dem Neuen in allen Aspekten des institutionellen Programmes von "New Art, New Ideas" gewidmet ist, bezieht es sich weiterhin auf ein Erbe als einer Institution die ursprünglich zwischen einem alternativen Ausstellungsraum und Museum gegründet wurde. Roh, und zusammengestückelt, flexibel und gemeinschaftlich organisiert: frühe alternative Ausstellungsorte präsentierten künstlerische Praxen, die die Vorstellung von dem, was ein Ausstellungsraum sein sollte aufbrachen um Installationen, Performance-Art und politische Kunst einer neuen Öffentlichkeit zu präsentieren. Der Begriff des alternativen Ausstellungsraums wird heute nunmehr eher als Referenz in der Reorganisation von daraus hervor gewachsenen Institutionen und deren Branding verwendet. Von einem diskursiven Standpunkt aus beschäftigt sich diese Studie mit der repräsentativen Rolle von Kultur in der Aufwertung und Urbanisierung eines vormals heruntergekommenen Viertels in Manhattan, auch mithilfe des nun ansässigen New Museum. Unter diesem diskursiven Fokus setzt sich die Autorin mit einem Teil der Corporate Identity des New Museum auseinander, das von der Appropriation der eigenen alternativen Geschichte geprägt ist und damit auch den negativen Implikationen der Urbanisierung und der eignen Komplizenschaft in der Gentrifizierung der "Bowery" entgegenwirken möchte.