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Galleries of Control:

Art Collection, Exhibition and Museum Culture under Totalitarianism

Throughout History, museums and cultural institutions have existed in dialectical relation to society at large. Traditionally, museums have been conceived as passive entities; reflecting and preserving the culture of the world through the collection and arrangement of physical objects. Yet museums, through their pretense of objectivity, possess the power to forge new realities and shape public perception. In their acquisition and display of objects museums communicate social, moral and political systems of value, all of which can be connected directly to inherent dynamics of power. The concept of the museum has its origins in the personal collections the Renaissance period, wherein which wealthy and powerful individuals would display their collections, known as "Cabinets of Curiosities" to selected visitors ¹ These displays often featured a bizarre and random assortment of objects, including fossils, medical oddities, historical relics, fine art, among other things. The intention of these displays was both to entertain and to educate the visitors. They also gave collectors the power to establish their own socioeconomic rank by demonstrating their wealth and superior intelligence. For monarchs such as Charles I of England and Rudolf II Holy Roman Emperor, their

¹ Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, "Remarks on the Collections of Rudolf II: The Kunstkammer as a Form of Representatio", *Art Journal* 38.1, pp 22

collections functioned as a display of their own power and magnificence². The Cabinets of Curiosities gave collectors the ability to shape an image of the world in accordance with their own vision. During the Enlightenment period, museum collection shifted away from the sprawling and arbitrary approach of the Renaissance towards a model of “organization and taxonomy”.³ Museums began to view themselves as the arbiters of cultural value, only collecting and displaying objects they deemed valuable. Historical exhibitions were able to express a cohesive vision of human civilization, what Michel Foucault termed ‘total history’.⁴ Museums developed in concordance with the rise of the modern ‘nation-state’, and played a central role in the development of national identity. This connected heavily to culture of Western colonialism, with museums often showcasing the plunders of colonial conquest. Just as the cabinets of curiosities had signified the individuals assertion of power and status in society, modern museums allowed nation-states to assert their position as key players in the global stage. The 20th century saw the rise of modern totalitarianism in the form of fascist and communist dictatorships. Consequently, museums gave totalitarian powers the ability to enforce a form of cultural hegemony, re-orienting history and culture according to their own doctrine. This essay hopes to examine the role of art collection and exhibition in

Thomas, "Charles I of England: The Tragedy of Absolutism", A.G. Dickens, *The Courts of Europe* (London) 1977, pp 201

³ [http://www.mukpublications.com/resources/Museum%20\(pdf\).pdf](http://www.mukpublications.com/resources/Museum%20(pdf).pdf)

⁴ “The project of total history is one that seeks to reconstitute the overall form of a civilization, the principle –material or spiritual- of society, the significance common to all the phenomena of a period, the law that accounts for their cohesion – what is called metaphorically the ‘face’ of a period.” (Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge: And the Discourse on Language*. Translated by Sheridan Smith. London: Routledge, 1982.)

totalitarian dictatorships, and in doing so demonstrate the inherent connection between the museum as an entity and the concept of totalitarianism.

The terms “totalitarianism” and “authoritarianism” broadly describe systems of government where in which political freedoms are greatly diminished or eliminated in favor of state power. In both systems, political plurality is limited and all political power is monopolized by the ruling entity or party. Often this takes the form of a dictatorship, where in which political power is centralized upon an individual leader. Totalitarianism differs from authoritarianism in that it seeks to assert total control over every aspect of culture and society, including education, economy, art, science as well as the public and private life of its citizens. Totalitarian governments seek to instill widespread fear and obedience, and in this sense assert not only political but psychological dominion over the public. This is enforced by various control tactics such as terror, surveillance, repression, censorship, indoctrination and propaganda.

While authoritarian governments do not exert the same form of universal control, they also employ similar tactics in order to maintain power over the public.

Totalitarian systems are typically driven by a unified ideology and set of values. These ideologies may be fundamentalist or superficial in nature, often serving as justification for the brutal and oppressive behavior of the state. They may take the form of a pre-existing political philosophy, such as Marxism or Fascism, interpreted and altered to fit the particular political circumstances. In the case of dictatorships, ideologies are also beholden to the temperament and eccentricities of the individual

leaders. Therefore they are often inconsistent, and subject to change depending on the leader's interpretation.

Just as totalitarian governments can vary in terms of scope and brutality, they also differ in their attitudes toward art and culture. These differences can be attributed to subtle role of cultural history and ideology. All totalitarian governments seek to forge an entirely new cultural and national identity. Often this identity can be seen as a reaction to the nations's pre-existing cultural heritage. In the case of nationalist dictatorships, this can involve appropriating elements of the nations heritage in order to return to supposed "true" national identity. Marxist dictatorships instead seek to erase national history in favor of a new identity in keeping with the "revolutionary" model.⁵ In both cases, history and culture are radically re-framed in order to shape a new narrative of national identity. Ultimately, the arts are seen as yet another tool for furthering this political agenda and asserting state power. In this respect, art under totalitarian governments becomes virtually indistinguishable from propaganda. Art is either manufactured explicitly for the purposes of propaganda, or is repurposed to suite propagandistic means. Art that does not fit these purposes is often banned, discarded or destroyed. Naturally, museums and art exhibitions offer a platform for state powers to re-contextualize art to convey sanctioned narratives and shape public perception.

In the totalitarian model all art must clearly convey the state-sanctioned ideology or else is seen as threat to the system and denounced as subversive, degenerate or counterrevolutionary. Ambiguity and intellectualism are seen as the enemy. Instead art

⁵ Arendt, Hannah. *The Origin of Totalitarianism*. London: & U., 1967. pp 241

must be simple and explicit in its message so as not to confuse the masses. This is in accordance with the basic model of propaganda, as laid out by Adolf Hitler in his 1925 manifesto *Mein Kampf*. Totalitarian states often hold a very low opinion of the general public, whom are viewed as crass, unintelligent and incapable of understanding nuance. Therefore, propaganda must be visceral and direct, appealing to the emotions of the people rather than their intellect. “The greater the mass it is intended to reach” Hitler writes “ the lower its purely intellectual level will have to be.”⁶ Under totalitarianism, all art is either manufactured explicitly for the purposes of propaganda or is re-purposed and appropriated in order to suite propagandistic means. Museums and cultural institutions often play a key role in re-contextualizing culture in order to shape certain narratives or mythologies that benefit and enforce the power of the state. Propaganda efforts often utilize mass spectacle such as elaborately choreographed rallies and marches, which function as visualization of the power, order and unity of the state and the people. Museums are also seen as an extension of this form of totalitarian theatre. Often more emphasis is placed on the architectural grandeur of the building themselves rather than the work contained within them. Museums can also be intended as a display of power directed at a global audience, in order to give the appearance of a thriving national culture.

Art collecting and exhibition played an essential role in culture of Nazi Germany. The Nazi party placed a particular importance on art and visual imagery, to such a degree that their aesthetic concerns could not be separated from their fundamental

⁶ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, translated by Ralph Manheim. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943.

ideology. In Nazi ideology, moral virtue was associated with visual beauty, whilst evil was synonymous with ugliness. Many prominent Nazi figures, including Adolf Hitler, Herman Goering and Joseph Goebbels, possessed a personal background in the arts. Their artistic taste heavily manifested itself in Nazi culture and doctrine. Hitler not only had a background as a painter, but considered himself to be incredibly knowledgeable about art and art history. Much of his attitude towards art was informed by his personal experience as a failed artist in Vienna from 1908-1913. In reading *Mein Kampf*, it is clear that Hitler's overall worldview is inseparable from his personal grievances and experience of rejection. In his early years, Hitler gradually developed a strong bitterness towards the city and culture of Vienna, which he describes in detail in a chapter entitled "Years of Study and Suffering in Vienna": "even today" he writes "this city can arouse in me nothing but the most dismal thoughts". Hitler associated Vienna not only with his rejection and failure, but with the overall moral and social decay of German culture. Much of his hatred was directed towards prevailing artistic trends of Vienna at the time, namely the rise of modern art, literature and music. Among these rising movements included Fauvism, Cubism, Dada and Surrealism. Modern art tended to eschew traditional forms of expression and meaning in favor of abstraction and experimentation. This infuriated Hitler, who believed that all art needed be simple and direct in its message. Hitler valued traditional beauty and craftsmanship, and felt sickened by the radical techniques of the avant-garde, whom he called "dilettantes" and "canvas smearers".⁷ Hitler's hatred of modern art became a defining feature of the Nazi

⁷ Sax, Benjamin. *Inside Hitler's Germany: History of Life in The Third Reich*. 1st ed. Toronto, CA: Heath & Company, 1992.

movement. Many other Nazi figures were (perhaps not coincidentally) failed artists or writers who bore a personal grudge against modernism.⁸ The Nazis, whose anti-semitic worldview was all-encompassing, often conflated modern art with “Jewishness” a term which under the Third Reich became synonymous with moral corruption. Hitler greatly favored classical Greek and Roman art, which he saw as “uncontaminated by Jewish influences”⁹. Hitler believed that classical art embodied his ideas of racial purity, heroism and valiance. Thus the Greco-Roman aesthetic served as the model for all art under the Third Reich.¹⁰ The Nazi Party began a crusade against the growing trends of modern art, adopting the term “degenerate art” to denounce works that they believed “insult German feeling, or destroy or confuse natural form or simply reveal an absence of adequate manual and artistic skill”.¹¹

Following his ascent to power in 1933, Hitler quickly began to implement a full scale purge of what he deemed as degeneracy. This initially included book burnings as well as defamation and dismissal of artists and curators, later leading to arrests and executions. During these early years, the Nazi Party struggled to agree upon a clear definition of degenerate art. Some including Joseph Goebbels, supported certain products of modern art such as Expressionism, saying “we National Socialists are not unmodern; we are the carrier of a new modernity, not only in politics and in social matters, but also in art and intellectual matters”.¹² However, Hitler in 1934 declared that

⁸ Among these include Joseph Goebbels, failed novelist and playwright, Julius Streicher, failed poet and painter, Alfred Rosenberg, failed philosopher (Grosshans, 8)

⁹ Grosshans, p 86

¹⁰ Grosshans p. 87

¹¹ Spotts, Frederic (2002). *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*. The Overlook Press. pp. 151–68. ISBN 1-58567-507-5.

¹² Adam, Peter (1992). *Art of the Third Reich*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. ISBN 0-8109-1912-5

there would be no room for modernist experimentation in the Reich, and Goebbels there by adjusted his own personal tastes to fit the Hitler's mandate. It became apparent that Hitler himself would be the sole arbiter of what was and was not acceptable. Gradually, the concept of degeneracy became solidified and further enforcement was implemented. In 1937, plans were made for an exhibition entitled Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung ("Great German Art Exhibition") to take place at the House of German Art in Munich. The idea of the exhibition was to showcase officially state-approved artworks. This was to feature artworks which Hitler had determined to be sufficiently "Aryan", a concept which was also vaguely defined, leading to some debate amongst the jury. Among the 900 works ultimately exhibited, the works most predominately featured were bronze statues of tall and muscular nude figures, in keeping with a neo-classical tradition. Other styles represented included genre scenes, still-lives, landscapes, war and mythological paintings, all of which depicted blond and blue eyed Aryan youth. The individual artworks were not of particularly importance. Rather the museum as a whole was meant as an emblem signifying the glory and triumph of Hitler over the corrupting forces of modern art. Many pageants and ceremonies were held in anticipation of it's opening. Upon it's opening, Hitler delivered a incendiary speech, denouncing modern art and declaring the exhibit "the beginning of the end of the stultification of German art and the end of the cultural destruction of our people"¹³ The regal pageantry was echoed by its location; the "Haus der deutschen Kunst" an ostentatious structure built specifically for the exhibit.

¹³ Sax, Benjamin. Inside Hitlers Germany: History of Life in The Third Reich. 1st ed. Toronto, CA: Heath & Company, 1992.

During the final stages of preparation, Joseph Goebbels conceived of an alternate exhibition to be staged concurrently only a few blocks away. It was to be titled *Die Ausstellung Entartete Kunst* ("The Degenerate Art Exhibition") and was to showcase works that were deemed to be promote "decadence", "weakness of character", "mental disease" and "racial impurity"¹⁴ The idea of the exhibit was to contrast with the main exhibition, thus highlighting its greatness. Upon Hitler's approval Goebbels appointed Adolf Ziegler, who oversaw a hastily organized effort to confiscate over 15,000 works of degenerate art from various museums and art galleries throughout Germany. Of these works, 650 of them were included in the final exhibit. Among them included paintings and sculptures by artists such as Paul Klee, Otto Dix, Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall and Wassily Kandisky. The arrangement of the exhibition was designed in order to present the works in the most unappealing, vulgar and derisive manner possible. This was meant to emphasize the artistic and moral decay of German culture under the Weimar Republic. The works were deliberately mangled and haphazardly arranged. Paintings were poorly hung, displayed without frames, and were often obscured by inflammatory slogans which were crudely painted across the walls of the exhibit. These slogans included phrases such as "Revelation of the Jewish racial soul", "The ideal—cretin and whore" and "Nature as seen by sick minds". Many pieces were intentionally misidentified, such as Ernst Kirchner's *Peasants at Midday*, which was titled "German peasants as seen by the yids" or Ernst Barlach's *The Reunion*, which was titled "Two

¹⁴ Ginder, Ursula. "Munich 1937: The Development of Two Pivotal Art Exhibitions." USCB Department of History. June 2004.
<http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/classes/133c/133cproj/04proj/GinderNaziArt047.htm>.

monkeys in nightshirts".¹⁵ The works were divided into nine categories. Among these included: A section devoted to the misuse of color, a section of works which mocked or derided religion. The third group was made of works which incited anarchy or marxism. The fourth group showcased mockery of German military and courage. The following sections contain lewd or pornographic works, works that demonstrated the idiocy of modern artists, and works by Jewish artists. The final section was entitled "Utter Madness", and featured works that were particularly complex or abstract. The viewer was encouraged to mock the works for their snobbery and pretension. The intent of the exhibit was made overwhelming clear by a printed catalog, which was made available to the attendees. The catalog included text from Hitler's speeches highlighting the threat of modern degeneracy and Bolshevism, as well as the decline of German art and culture.

Although visitors were encouraged to attend the Degenerate Art Exhibition alongside the adjacent Great German Art Exhibition, the public was far more attracted to the perverse spectacle of the former. Within the first four months of its opening, the exhibition was attended by over two million visitors, averaging at around 20,000 visitors per day.¹⁶ Josephs Goebbels' true intentions behind the exhibition remain questionable. Some have argued that Goebbels, as an art connoisseur, recognized the weakness of the Great German Art Exhibition and sought to overshadow its shortcomings.¹⁷

Goebbels was uniquely aware of the value of art as both a cultural and financial

¹⁵ Groshanns, 107

¹⁶ Grosshans, 109

¹⁷ Ginder, Ursula. "Munich 1937: The Development of Two Pivotal Art Exhibitions." USCB Department of History. June 2004.

<http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/classes/133c/133cproj/04proj/GinderNaziArt047.html>

commodity, writing in his diary “we hope to at least make some money of this garbage”¹⁸. Of the 15,000 works seized, most were sold to foreign collectors. A commission was created specifically for the disposal of confiscated degenerate art works, deciding which works were to be sold and for what price. Works that could not be sold were methodically destroyed.

As World War II commenced, Hitler’s fixation with art played a central role in Nazi Germany’s imperialist conquests. As their military presence expanded into Europe, Nazi troops were ordered to plunder occupied territories, often looting libraries, museums and personal collections in search of valuable artworks. This effort largely overseen by Herman Goering and the *ERR* (Reichsleiter Rosenberg Institute for the Occupied Territories) headed by Alfred Rosenberg. Goering, like Goebbels, had a strong interest in art, and used Germany’s looting efforts in order add to his own personal collection. By the end of the war, Goering's art collection included 1,375 paintings, 250 sculptures and 168 tapestries, with an estimated value of two million marks.¹⁹ In addition to purging and destroying Jewish art, Hitler sought to obtain Europe’s great “Aryan” masterpieces for his personal collection. These works were to be displayed in an imagined museum, tentatively titled *Führermuseum*. As early as 1925, Hitler had been developing for a “German National Gallery” which was to featuring his favorite German paintings and himself as director. Early sketches indicated a clear architectural design and

¹⁸ <http://www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/bria-13-2-b-the-suppression-of-art-in-nazi-germany>

¹⁹ Artinfo. "Despots, Dictators And The Art They Loved." The Huffington Post. December 07, 2017. Accessed May 02, 2018. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/artinfo/terrifying-taste-21-despo_b_2535030.html.

arrangement consisting of two buildings, one with 32 rooms, the other with 28. Upon visiting Italy in 1938, Hitler was left “overwhelmed and challenged by the riches of the Italian museums.”²⁰ This inspired him to expand his initial plans, striving to instead create the greatest museum in the world. The *Führermuseum* was to be built in Linz, Hitler’s hometown in Austria. The overall goal was to establish Linz as a major cultural landmark, overshadowing his detested Vienna as the new cultural capital of Nazi Germany. Hitler worked with architects, art dealers historians and curators in realizing his plan, which was set for completion in 1950. For Hitler, the museum gave a platform to flaunt the spoils of his conquest, and fulfill his deep rooted desire impose his aesthetic taste upon the world at large. Hitler never lost sight of his artistic beginnings, and saw the museum as a chance to vindicate himself as an artistic visionary. Both the *Führermuseum*, and the Degenerate Art Exhibition demonstrated the Nazi’s desire to both destroy and distort cultural heritage in accordance to their will. They offer an example of remarkable power of the museum setting, and the importance of art exhibition as a tool for dissemination of power.

As a dictator, Hitler was not alone in his predilection for the arts. Both Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse-Tung were aspiring poets in their youth, demonstrating notable skill and appreciation for classical literature. However, they eventually abandoned their earlier classicism, instead favoring artistic styles that were more in accordance with the dogmas of Marxist-Leninism. Mao, echoing Lenin, believed that art played an essential role in the proletarian cause, saying in a 1942 speech “All literature and art belong to

²⁰ Fest, Joachim C. Hitler. Winston, Richard and Winston, Clara (trans.) New York: Vantage Press, 1975. pp. 530–531

definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes, art that is detached from or independent of politics".²¹ In contrast to Nazi Germany, both Communist China and Soviet Russia carried a much more complex relationship to the avant-garde. Both states initially embraced avant-garde art, seeing its radical aesthetic as symbolic of the revolutionary spirit, renewal and purge of traditional culture, which was viewed as bourgeois. Among the figures of early Soviet avant-garde was artist, designer and architect El Lissitzky. Lissitzky developed the theory of "active exhibition", a new approach towards art exhibition which sought to utilize the physical exhibition space as the embodiment of the Marxist spirit. Lissitzky argued that traditional forms of exhibition ('passive exhibition') could only demonstrate what had been done before, and therefore did not suite a revolutionary environment.²² In an 'active exhibition' the art objects were to be subsidiary to the space itself. New spaces were to be constructed for each exhibit. The physical labour of the installation process was to be emphasized, rather than hidden.²³

Gradually, as the totalitarian power of the Soviet state grew, avant-garde fell out of favor. After taking power, Stalin began to implement a full-scale transformation of Soviet culture, enforcing the doctrine of Marxist-Leninist ideology upon every aspect of cultural life with unprecedented rigidity and brutality. In 1934, the Congress of Soviet

²¹ "Talks at the Yen'an Forum on Literature and Art" (May 1942) From Mao, Tse-Tung. Selected Works. Translated by Bruno Shaw. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.p. 86.*"

²² Martin, Randy. The Routledge Companion to Art and Politics. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015.

²³ Groys, Boris. In The Flow. Verso Books, 2018.

Writers, with Stalin's approval, codified the theory of "Socialist Realism".²⁴ The doctrine laid out four guidelines, stating all art must be: "Proletarian:(art relevant to the workers and understandable to them) Typical: (scenes of everyday life of the people) Realistic: (in the representational sense). Partisan: (supportive of the aims of the State and the Party)."²⁵ Socialist Realism was to be the only acceptable art form in Soviet Russia. As a result, experimental and non-confirming artists were forced to disavow abstraction and adopt a more representational style in keeping with the doctrine. Those that did not submit were imprisoned or executed.²⁶

This aesthetic shift resulted in a transformation of Soviet museums, giving rise to a new wave of militantly Marxist art curation and exhibition. Among these exhibitions included titles such as "Art of the Capitalist Era" and "Art From The Age of Imperialism".²⁷ These exhibitions were conceptualized by Marxist art theoreticians Alexei Fedorov-Davydov and Nikolai Punin. Similarly to the Degenerate Art Exhibition, these exhibitions sought to showcase modernist art from the pre-Soviet era in an intentionally disparaging and denigrative manner. Among the works shown included painting by Vasily Kandinsky, Alexandr Rodchenko and Kasimir Malevich. Large banners were placed next to the artworks with descriptions such as "bourgeois art in the blind alley of formalism and self-negation". One banner, mounted alongside Malevich's

²⁴ Simkin, John. "Socialist Realism." Spartacus Educational. September 1997. <http://spartacus-educational.com/RUSrealism.htm>.

²⁵ Juraga, Dubravka and Booker, Keith M. *Socialist Cultures East and West*. Praeger, 2002, p.68

²⁶ Berlin, Isaiah. "The Arts in Russia Under Stalin." *The New York Review of Books*. October 18, 2000. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2000/10/19/the-arts-in-russia-under-stalin/>.

²⁷ Adam Jolles. "Stalin's Talking Museums." *Oxford Art Journal* 28, no. 3 (2005): 431-55. pp 432

Haymaking, read: “the attempt to objectify the artistic method is unrealizable, as bourgeois art is transparently individualistic”.²⁸

Soviet defamatory museums were not limited to the arts. Beginning in 1929, Stalin carried forth a campaign to convert churches and cathedrals throughout Russia (most of which had been closed following the revolution) into anti-religious museums. Among the churches appropriated was the Cathedral of St. Isaacs in Leningrad. A towering sculpture depicting a cog was erected within the cathedral, cloaked in a giant banner bearing Soviet insignia reading “A fight against religion is a fight for socialism”²⁹ On top of the cog was a large bow and arrow aimed towards the heavens. These museums, nicknamed *samogovoriashchie muzei* (“talking museums”) did not need to contain any artwork at all, their mere construction was a statement in itself. These museums sought to redefine the pre-existing symbology, reframing all of artifacts of history as relics of class subjugation. Visitors were clearly directed through the exhibition space, often lead by a museum guide. Emphasis was placed on the correspondences between the artifacts displayed. Objects were displayed in an arrangement that clearly conveyed the overarching narrative of capitalist injustice. The exhibitions intentionally utilized visual methods in order to make the message immediately comprehensible to the peasantry, who were predominately illiterate. Artifacts were supplemented by dioramas, featuring wax depictions of oppressed workers. One anti-religious museum featured an elaborate installation designed to

²⁸ Jolles, 433

²⁹ Jolles, 432

“reveal the progressive alienation and abstraction of religion from labour”³⁰ The installation reconstructed iconography from various periods, from pre— historical cave paintings to ancient Rome and the dawn of Christianity, leading to emergence of Islam and the Inquisition, culminating a section which depicted “the role of the missionaries in the colonies, the military forces that force the blacks to submit, a negro who carries a capitalist drinking whiskey”³¹ The Soviet ‘talking museums’, in their own perverse way anticipated many of the developments of modern museology in terms of their immersive and subversive use of space and emphasis on accessibility.

The significance of museums in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia speaks to the fundamentally “totalitarian” nature of collection and curation. Museums, through collection and arrangement, imposes ideologies and value systems upon the objects of objects. This practice mirrors the basic concept of totalitarianism, which is defined by an desire to impose a totalizing ideology upon all aspects of society and human life. By consequence, museums offer the ideal for platform for totalitarian powers to distill their broader political practice. Totalitarian states use museums as instruments of social and psychological control. The Nazi’s Degenerate Art Exhibition and Stalin’s ‘talking museums’ both radically subvert original context in order to forge a new historical narrative. In their attempts to denigrate artistic modernism, both exhibitions unintentionally anticipate a post-modern mode of curation, highlighting in their very construction the active role played by curators to shape and alter the work. The organization of totalitarian society mimics the process of curatorial selection. Totalitarian

³⁰ Jolles, 446

³¹ Jolles, 433

powers seek to arrange a reality according to their own aesthetic and ideological judgement. Human civilization of the past, present and future becomes reoriented through the lens of their ideology. The museums of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia are demonstrative of the power of art exhibition as an instrument of aesthetic, political and historical violence.

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