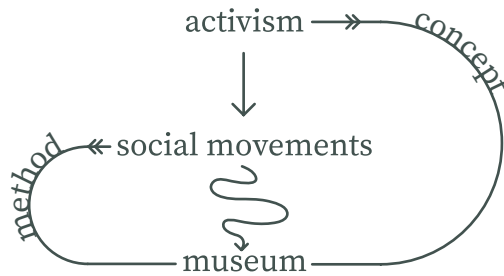


Registering Activism in Museums

Paula Chang



One significant factor to shift from ‘the Museum’ to ‘museuming’ is about stirring up the structural hierarchy. It refers not only to the relationship between the institution and its visitors but also to the entanglement within the walls of the institution, such as the artists, the staff, and even the board.

Under such frame, I would like to propose adopting the methodologies of social movements to the curatorial realm, particularly the grassroots and peer-driven characteristics. One important goal of developing social movements lies in the support from the general public in order to generate tangible political impact.

For the museum domain, that means connecting through emotions to move the stakeholders, and consequently attracting and obtaining attention, which could later on open the door for meaningful dialogue between different parties. In essence, what I am proposing is to replace ‘display’ with ‘discomfort’; the discomfort that sparks criticality and critical reflection.

In practice, how ‘activism’ could enter the field of art? How it has influenced artistic practice and what lessons could we pick up from the past and bring them to the modern context? Where is the balance of generating discomfort while handing out cordial invitations? This is a proposition to shake the status quo of museums into ‘made by many, for the many’.