

Institution:	Goldsmiths, University of London
Unit of Assessment:	34 – Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
Title of case study:	<i>Actors Agents & Attendants</i>
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)	

Andrea Phillips has worked with numerous institutions in the public realm to address questions about the commissioning of public art. This commenced with an AHRC-funded research project, *Curating Architecture* (2007-08), and in 2009 upon the invitation of a Dutch public art foundation [SKOR] she co-founded a research project called *Actors, Agents and Attendants* (AAA). This comprised public dialogues, expert meetings, and publications that brought together the expertise of commissioners, politicians, curators and directors to investigate the role of art in the shaping of public, social life. The project coincided with major changes to the Dutch arts funding system, and its activities and outcomes were widely disseminated and influential in this context. Thus for example SKOR has changed its shape since 2012, its new approach having been significantly influenced by the outcomes of Phillips’ collaborative research. Her expertise in this area also led to her co-curating the public programme of the 2013 Istanbul Biennial on the highly topical issue of citizen’s rights to, and use of, the public sphere. The Biennial was attended by over 350,000 people including local and national politicians, commissioners, philanthropists, collectors, artists and curators, many of whom took part in the public events.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)
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Phillips is currently Reader in Art at Goldsmiths, having been appointed in 2003 as a Lecturer. The research underpinning the present case study started in 2007 and has been disseminated regularly in public talks, publications and exhibitions all of which have examined claims that art commissioning in the urban realm and more broadly is beneficial for its ‘public’.

In 2007 she was awarded £154K from the Arts & Humanities Research Council [AHRC],^[1] under its competitive responsive-mode funding scheme, to develop theoretical research and an exhibition which examined how exhibitions might develop debates about the built environment and the citizen within it. Professionals in the fields of curating, architecture and urban planning were involved in the research; these included Rem Koolhaas, Walid Raad, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Cynthia Davidson, Eyal Weizman, Iwona Blaswick, Achim Borhardt-Hume, and Andrew Benjamin. Always conceived of as a highly collaborative project, *Curating Architecture* ran for two years starting from January 2007 and received additional financial support from the British Academy, the Henry Moore Foundation, the Japan Foundation, and Goldsmiths Department of Art; it was sponsored by Colourlink, a leading brand and colour management company. Working alongside Phillips were curators Lisa Le Feuvre, Andrew Renton, and Edgar Schmitz, themselves also then based at Goldsmiths.

The commissioning of art and temporary architecture in the public realm is widely regarded as socially beneficial to communities and as having the capacity to enhance certain forms of social cohesion. However the research project highlighted a disconnection of the curatorial practices in this area from broader political and philosophical criticisms that those concepts of cohesion may be retrogressive and socially manipulative - for example, with regard to high profile ‘starchitect’ exhibitions that are shown globally but pay little or no attention to the daily use of urban space. Phillips noted a lack of understanding of these concerns at institutional level.^{[2][3][5]}

She has explored these issues further through her longstanding involvement with arts and cultural organisations including the Architecture Foundation (London); Stroom den Haag, a foundation and centre for art and architecture in the Hague; the Barents Arts Foundation (Norway); and SAMUSO, an arts centre in Seoul. She has published several articles based on dialogues with them concerning their work and the role of public art and art commissioning in the current social climate.^{[4][7][8]}

In 2009 Phillips was invited by the Dutch Foundation for Art and Public Domain [SKOR - *Stichting Kunst en Openbare Ruimte*] to initiate a series of public symposia. SKOR was founded in 1999, with government funding, to advise on, develop, and create art projects in public spaces and to develop new practices for the field. Since its establishment it has developed an international profile through forming institutional alliances and initiating innovative forms of public/private commissioning practices. It has worked collaboratively with public service organisations such as healthcare

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providers, housing associations and local government organisations, and with project developers and architects, to deliver artistic projects to these organisations' users. Importantly, it actively seeks to involve the public in all aspects of its work.

This invitation therefore gave Phillips a unique opportunity to investigate the ways in which artists and commissioners imagine and implement relationships between audiences and artworks in the public realm. Her research found that notwithstanding a high level of engagement in commissions developed between SKOR and social providers, little attention was paid to the needs and desires of the people who encountered and were expected to engage with the results of their commissions. This appeared to reflect shared and rather unquestioning assumptions about who 'the public' is and what it needs in the commissioning of art in the public domain more generally, contrasting with more sophisticated understandings of 'publics' in other disciplinary fields.

In collaboration with architect Markus Miessen and SKOR Director Fulya Erdemci, Phillips devised a four-year research project called *Actors, Agents and Attendants [AAA]*. This entailed a detailed examination in three of the primary sites of SKOR's activities: healthcare, housing and community education. Each of these themes was examined as an edition of the AAA project; the first on healthcare, the second on social housing and the third on community education (to be realised in 2015-16 with SKOR International – see *below*). The first commenced in 2010, a time at which the Dutch government was in the process of dismantling its welfare state policies and encouraging public / private partnership in all of these fields. Phillips noted in this situation both a looming impact on the way Dutch (and by extension many European) arts institutions commissioned and disseminated art, and a set of broader questions regarding art's ambiguous role in the development of perceptions of what is public and what private. She has articulated these issues in the publications listed below as well as in numerous talks.^{[7] [8] [9] [10]}

Phillips directed the overall shape and content of the AAA project, chairing several thinktanks as well as two symposia (at which she gave keynotes). She interviewed and worked with local politicians, hospital directors, doctors, nurses, patients, housing providers, housing activists, social historians, community planners and organisers. These individuals participated as project advisors, contributing to the thinktanks and/or symposia in Amsterdam, of which the two key ones focused on healthcare (2010) and housing (2011). Each had an audience of about 400, comprising artists, commissioners, social service and welfare provision professionals, arts funders, and members of the general public. Books on both themes were subsequently co-edited by Phillips, and published by Sternberg Press in association with SKOR.^{[9][10]} As one result of her involvement in this research, Phillips was invited in 2012 to take up the role of co-curator of the 13th Istanbul Public Programme,^[11] the focus of which was urban transformation and the public domain.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

The international standing of this research is reflected in particular in the range of publications and public lectures to which it has given rise – in particular, those at the Biennales of Venice, Liverpool, Sofia, Istanbul, Taipei, and Gothenburg; and at the Serpentine and Whitechapel Galleries, Tate Britain, Documenta 13 Kassel, Tensta Konsthall Stockholm, Moderna Museet Stockholm, With de Witte Rotterdam, and MMK Frankfurt.

1. AHRC grant to Phillips (PI) and Renton (Co-I): *Curating Architecture: Researching the influence of architectural ideas in contemporary curatorial practice*, £153,729, 01/07 to 12/08, AH/D00179X/1 [Final Report available from Goldsmiths Research Office]
Curating Architecture website: [here](#).
2. Phillips A (2009) Curating Architecture. In Hirsch et al (Eds) *Institution Building: Artists, Curators, Architects in the Struggle for Institutional Space*. Sternberg Press, Berlin/New York. ISBN 978-1-933128-54-2 [chapter in book]
3. Phillips A (2008) Curating Architecture. In Moritz Kung (Ed), *Belgian Pavilion* catalogue, Venice Architecture Biennale 2008. de Singel, Antwerp. [book chapter]
4. Phillips A (2011) Making It Up: Aesthetic Arrangements in the Barents Region. In Methi and Tarnesvik (Eds) *Hotel Polar Capital*. Sami Art Festival, Kirkenes, 2011.

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ISBN 978-82-998333-4-9 [book chapter]

5. Phillips A (2011) A Short Plan for Art Institutions Post-participation. In Kolowratnik and Miessen (Eds) *Waking Up from the Nightmare of Participation*. Expodium, Utrecht. ISBN978-94-90474-00-3 [book chapter]
6. Phillips A (2010) Art building, architecture building, curating politics. In Wizniewski (Ed) *Florence: Curating the City*. Edinburgh College of Art. ISBN 978-0-9559706-0-5 [book chapter]
7. Phillips A (2009) Doing Democracy. In Condorelli (Ed) *Support Structures*. Sternberg Press, Berlin/New York. ISBN 978-1-933128-45-0 [book chapter]
8. Phillips A (2009) Building Democracy. In *Public Art: Architecture and Participation* (Seoul: SAMUSO, Seoul) ISBN: 978-89-93535-02-0. [book chapter]
9. Phillips A and Miessen M (2011) *Caring Culture: Art, Architecture and the Politics of Public Health*. SKOR/Sternberg Press, Amsterdam/Berlin. ISBN: 978-1-9341-5-71-9 [edited book]
10. Phillips A and Erdemci F (Eds) (2012) *Social Housing - Housing the Social*. SKOR/Sternberg Press, Amsterdam/Berlin. ISBN: 978-3-943365-17-7 [edited book]
11. Istanbul Public Programme: [‘Public Programme’](#)

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The AAA project, run in collaboration with SKOR, had a long-lasting impact on how SKOR now approaches commissioning new works itself, and on the recommendations it provides for commissioning practices by organisations in the Netherlands and internationally in its new institutional forms (see below). The full team of 20 SKOR curators and coordinators attended both the key symposia,^{[1][2]} which were widely publicised; they attracted over 400 professionals from the arts funding sector, social services sector as well as artists, curators, architects, urban planners, health and housing professionals, journalists and critics (visitors came from Germany, France, Scandinavia, the UK, the USA, Spain, Albania, Mexico as well as from all over the Netherlands: 50% of the audience were members of the general public). SKOR conducted an Impact Assessment at the end of the project, and considers it to have been extremely valuable and effective in stimulating new approaches. Comments in the report^[3] include the following:

- *‘This project is a great example of the impact and contribution of AAA-symposium series to new forms of commissioning ... Traditionally a commissioner approaches SKOR to commission a work of art, and after initial discussions a short-list of artists is being prepared. However in this case AAA served as a catalyst, and the artist laid out the blueprint for a future commissioning project. As part of the symposium programme, SKOR invited a selection of artists to reflect on recent precarious developments in healthcare. Martijn Engelbregt came up with the proposal to set up a broad research exhibition on the impact of health, in close collaboration with the commissioner of Haaglanden Medical Centre. This byproduct of the symposium is now being developed into an exciting new commission examining the potential beneficial effect of art, if measurable. On 9 November 2012 a publicly accessible research exhibition has opened in Haaglanden Medical Centre. For the first time a scientific answer is sought to the question: What is the effect of art on our health?’ [SKOR Business Director]^[3]*
- *‘SKOR has directly changed its traditional way of thinking about audiences and audience participation, because of the AAA symposium series’*
- *‘Because the topics are directly addressing socio-political issues, such as healthcare and social housing, we were able to appeal to a much broader audience than a merely art-related one, allowing health workers, professionals, policy makers, opinion leaders to engage with contemporary art from another perspective.’*

Facing cuts to its budget due to changes in government policy, SKOR reshaped its activities in 2012 into four separate organisations of which two were directly influenced by the AAA project:

(a) TAAK:^[4] SKOR’s international cultural platform to develop and present art that relates to societal issues such as ecology, civic awareness, social design and human rights. It pioneers placing topics of public interest on the agenda of arts institutions in the Netherlands, and using art to investigate how new types of social initiatives and citizenship can be developed. Working with its partners

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Haaglanden Medical Centre, TU Delft, EGBG, GEMAK and Hersencentrum, it set out to investigate the effects of art on (public) health, a question that was initially posed through AAA, via a project called *Better: the Art of Health* - a research exhibition and symposium open to the public from 09/11/12 to 08/02/13. About 50 artworks were displayed in the Haaglanden Medical Centre and Convenience, both in The Hague, and their possible health benefits explored through investigations which took place in waiting rooms, meetings rooms, corridors and operating rooms. Some patients were asked to take artworks home as part of the investigation. The findings, published as a report,^[5] and an end-of-project symposium in June 2013 attended by the public and politicians, scientists, doctors, and artists set out policy recommendations.

(b) SKOR International: This is now linked to the European Network of Public Art Producers, which SKOR helped to found in 2010; Phillips and Erdemci are advisors to it.^[6] Its activities, which have been influenced by findings from the AAA project, include large-scale presentations of permanent and temporary art projects, symposia, and the development of institutional alliances. Phillips and Erdemci are currently working on the third edition of *Actors Agents and Attendants* under SKOR International's aegis, and in 2016 will assist it to co-produce the next Sonsbeek festival in Arnhem, with a specific focus on artistic and political futures of the public.

Istanbul Biennial 2013

The expertise Phillips demonstrated through her leadership of the AAA project led to her being invited by Erdemci (overall curator of the Istanbul Biennial) to co-curate a public programme at the Biennial focusing on transformations of the public realm, particularly in Istanbul itself.^[7] This involved organising three large events (each with discussions, lectures and performances) between February and May. The themes related directly to Erdemci and Phillips' research: Art's role in the production of cultural capital in the city; the connections between this and gentrification; and the privatisation of public space and the ways in which this impacts on citizens' experience of and right to the city.

Asking these questions and organising these events in Istanbul at a time in which major urban clearances were being sanctioned by the Turkish government in order to develop new private housing, retail, and tourist facilities proved explosive. Turkey has no public institutions in the Northern European sense, and the concept of public space is itself contested and differentiated through Ottoman and Islamic tradition; protestors therefore singled out the Biennial for its participation in the very forms Phillips and Erdemci were attempting to question. The Biennial was attended by over 350,000 people, and the public programme (to be published in book form in 2014, with a long article by Phillips) proved to be a major locus of protest for local people, preceding by a few months the events in Taksim Square and Gezi Park that captured world headlines.^[8]

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. SKOR symposium 2010, *Actors, Agents and Attendants I: 'Speculations on the Cultural Organisation of Civility'*: [here](#).
2. SKOR symposium 2010, *Actors, Agents and Attendants II: 'Social Housing-Housing the Social'*: [here](#).
3. Outcomes of the AAA project: These various observations are published in SKOR's Impact Report on the project, available on request from the Goldsmiths Research Office or from the Director's Office at SKOR International.
The Director is willing to provide further corroboration if requested [contact details provided separately]
4. TAAK: [here](#) and [here](#).
5. *Better - the Art of Health*: see [here](#).
6. A letter from the Financial Director of SKOR is available on request from the Research Office.
7. Istanbul Biennial: the [public programme](#).
8. Media reports on the Biennial and the events in Taksim Square and Gezi Park: [Guardian report](#); [The New York Times](#); [The Financial Times](#); and [Artforum](#) (see also [here](#))