

Documenta 12, 2007

Artistic Directors: Roger M. Buergel and Ruth Noack



“How does documenta gain access to specific knowledge in the world? And how can it communicate this knowledge?  
One possible approach was found with documenta 12 magazines.

90 publications with different formats, orientations and focuses, as well as art, culture and theory media from around the world were invited to think collectively about the motifs and themes of documenta 12. They actively took on the exhibition’s guiding questions, discussing them at editorial level and passing them on to writers and artists.

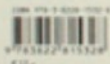






Documenta 12, 2007: Magazine Project - Around 90 independent cultural magazines from across the world formed the core of the earlier Documenta. These magazines were used both to develop and discuss the core leitmotifs of Documenta 12 around *Education*, *Bare Life* and *Modernity* as well as became the network through which the curators accessed artists across the world

**DOCUMENTA  
MAGAZINE  
N° 1, 2007  
MODERNITY?**



**DOCUMENTA  
MAGAZINE  
N° 2, 2007  
LIFE!**



**DOCUMENTA  
MAGAZINE  
N° 3, 2007  
EDUCATION:**



# Roger Buergel returning to Arnold Bode's Documenta 1955

- Public constituted on the groundless basis of aesthetic experience – the experience of objects whose identity could not be identified. Here there was nothing to understand, no preconceptions, which is precisely why it was possible and essential to talk about everything, to communicate about everything....
- Art and viewer share a single space but the viewer is required to possess the gift of unpreconceived gaze. The possibility of not understanding, of a total failure to relate, must be actively affirmed in order to enable other ways of understanding, other forms of relation.
- The exhibition oscillates, remaining undecided between a physical, individualised form of existence and a mode of being in the form of dispersed connectedness within the universe.
- It is through exhibition as a medium that the community actually learns to see, understand and develop itself as a community.
- Documenta as a laboratory – an ontological lab in which to create, display and emphasise the ethics of co-existence.













## Documenta 12 at Kassel

Lisette Lagnado

*This bright excitement generated by the display cannot be found in the catalogue, with its carefully conceived, minimalist layout of images. This is an interesting point, because in no way could the reception of the work be the same as its inventorising. A positive step for curatorial language? There was no common identity for the exhibition and the publishing project - another unfulfilled expectation. Two official versions of the same documenta exist, which are symmetrically opposed in aesthetic terms: what the exhibition space wanted to confirm, and what the publications can offer whilst being a separate and autonomous support to the exhibition.<sup>5</sup> The publication, which claims the status of catalogue, is no more than a guide: it has nearly 400 pages, with a short text for every double-page spread, written in a colloquial style and presented in both English and German. What happens is that, despite this reversal of importance (a guide as a general catalogue), the entries follow a chronological order, and there is no identification of the artist's place of origin (nor is there on the labels within the exhibition). Within the exhibition space, the period when the work was made was mentioned in very rare occasions. It seemed like the curators imagined a visitor cleansed of any knowledge that could serve him or her to immediately determine the work, even before getting the chance to venerate it. A 'neutral' visitor, one could say - a visitor who has never seen an exhibition. But that is difficult to find: it is like asking a painter to paint a rose, whilst forgetting all the roses ever painted while he does it. A lesson from the mature Matisse: 'The first step in the direction towards creation is to see each thing in its own truth...'.<sup>6</sup> But are we not creatures with saturated visual memories?*

<https://www.afterall.org/online/documenta.12.at.kassel#.X7X-pWUzbIU>











































