The ‘curator’ has historically been identified as someone who looks after a collection in an art gallery or museum. The term is also used to refer to a guardian or a keeper. However, since the late twentieth century, the term curation has strong connections with art management, art criticism, and close collaborations with artists. The curator is a project manager who puts together a collection of art works with clear curatorial concepts and with carefully designed installation plans to present his or her ideas on a variety of perspectives of life, politics and society, among other things. The curator is also someone who selects and interprets art work, and furthermore, the curator also writes catalogue essays and supports the exhibition teams at galleries and museums.

Paul O’Neill argues that during the 1960s, the primary discourse around art-in-exhibition began to shift from the focus of the art work as an autonomous object of study to a form of curatorial criticism, in which the exhibition itself was given critical precedence over the objects of art (O’Neill, 2007). Hence, the idea of ‘contemporary curation’ began to appear during the 1960s, and the curator has been given more attention ever since. A significant development in contemporary curation is its increasing cross-continental, trans-national and multi-national scale, which contributes to the phenomenon of internationalism in contemporary curation.

The topic of this special issue for the International Journal of Cultural and Creative Industries is ‘Contemporary Curation: Theory and Practice’. It explores both theoretical and practical aspects of contemporary curation and covers key aspects of the history, theory and practice of curating from the 20th century until the present day. The selected essays research and reflect upon a wide range of curatorial contexts from exhibitions, off-site projects, events and the theoretical perspectives of contemporary curation. The focus of this special issue is the application and dissemination of defined curatorial contexts and strategies from policy, strategic, experimental, empirical or theoretical perspectives.

Gonca Aslan and Cagri Bulut’s essay, “The Role of Curator in Postmodern Epoch: A Manager, A Leader, An Innovator or All?”, explores the concepts of contemporary curation and argues that contemporary curators tend to undertake multiple tasks when managing curatorial projects. Benjamin Hruska’s “Platform of Memory”: Morphing Aircraft Carriers from Weapons of War to Cultural Destinations examines how curators have transformed World War II US Navy aircraft carriers from military to educational roles. By studying Hans Ulrich Obrist and Marina Abramović’s lives and works, Elisabeth Pil-
hofer’s “The Curator is Present - [Ex]changing Roles of Curator and Artist: Hans Ulrich Obrist and Marina Abramović” explores the traditional and contemporary roles of curators and artists.

Alex van Egmond’s article, “Openness in Curation: The Dutch Case of Boudewijn Büch”, investigates the roles of museums and cultural institutions in the changing society of the Netherlands, and specifically examines how the collection of artefacts by Boudewijn Büch makes consumers become curators. In “Aboriginal Exhibitions and Aboriginal Communities: Contemporary Curation in Australia”, Gretchen Stolte demonstrates that not only do institutions need to properly budget for the processes of consultation but they also need a period of consultation to scope the involvement of Aboriginal stakeholders in the exhibition development process. Jay Younger’s essay, “Difference or Dissent? Curating Indigenous Women’s Artworks in Government-commissioned Public Art”, analyzes two significant government commissioned permanent public art projects from the curator’s point of view. In particular, the paper considers the commissioning process and reception of works by two indigenous women artists, giving consideration to the links between difference and democracy, critical engagement and visuality, the commissioning process and the artworks’ political reception in the media. “Communicating the History of War to the Community”, by Małgorzata Lisiewicz, compares two exhibitions organized at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, dealing with the experience of trauma caused by World War II. The focus is an international group-show and a solo retrospective, constituting two disparate ways of representing communal history, both of which were conceived and curated by Anda Rottenberg, at that time the director of Zachęta.

Finally, my article, “Post-humanist Desire: Visualizing Cyborgs and the Hybridized Body”, explores a recent curatorial project, *Post-humanist Desire*, which was an international exhibition staged at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Taipei. The project challenged conventional methods of display, and introduced academic research as one of the curatorial considerations when identifying and selecting the artists and their works.

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Guest Editor*