

Ilayda Seyhun Gören

Ariane Karbe: Museum Exhibitions and Suspense: The Use of Screenwriting Techniques in Curatorial Practice 2024

<https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/21899>

Veröffentlichungsversion / published version

Rezension / review

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Seyhun Gören, Ilayda: Ariane Karbe: Museum Exhibitions and Suspense: The Use of Screenwriting Techniques in Curatorial Practice. In: *MEDIENwissenschaft: Rezensionen | Reviews*, Jg. 41 (2024), Nr. 1, S. 25–26. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/21899>.

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer Creative Commons - Namensnennung 3.0/ Lizenz zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu dieser Lizenz finden Sie hier: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a creative commons - Attribution 3.0/ License. For more information see: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

Medien/Kultur

Ariane Karbe: Museum Exhibitions and Suspense: The Use of Screenwriting Techniques in Curatorial Practice

Abingdon: Routledge 2023 (Routledge Research in Museum Studies), 175 S., ISBN 9781003153962, GBP 120,-

In *Museum Exhibitions and Suspense: The Use of Screenwriting Techniques in Curatorial Practice*, Ariane Karbe takes us on an intellectually stimulating journey through the world of museum curation, offering a fresh perspective that merges the worlds of art and storytelling. In this thought-provoking book, Karbe explores the exciting possibilities of incorporating screenwriting techniques into curatorial practices, ultimately enhancing the museum-going experience for both seasoned art enthusiasts and casual visitors alike.

The central research intent of this book is to highlight relations between suspense techniques. Karbe dives deeply into techniques used in Hollywood movies, she describes insightfully what suspense exactly is and how exhibitions utilize suspense techniques. The question is: Can museum exhibitions be as exciting as films? (cf. p.2). The author sets three Hollywood masterpieces – *All About Eve* (1950), *The Conversation* (1974), and

Chinatown (1974) –, in comparison to three exhibitions: *Sawn: A Crime Featuring Baroque Backdrops* (2023-2014), *Mountains, a Mysterious Passion* (2007-2014) and, *The Passions: A Drama in Five Acts* (2012). It is absolutely necessary to see the movies in the book in advance, because it can be boring to only read about them while trying to associate them with the screenwriting techniques as well as the exhibitions. Karbe contends that by applying cinematic techniques, curators can create exhibitions that are not only visually striking but also emotionally gripping.

One of the book's standout features is its comprehensive examination of the intersection between the art world and the world of cinema. Moreover, it was thrilling to read the book's introduction, wondering how Karbe could have connected these two art worlds: films and exhibitions. My own attention had been drawn into the book by decoding the similarities to create suspense for making the audience curious about what they read or saw, as it is indicated

in the book: „No matter which approaches they choose, screenwriters will do anything to reach their audience. In this sense, they can inspire curators to place the audience even more consistently at the centre of museum work... Never be boring! And the opposite of boredom is? Suspense!“ (p.17). Karbe often highlights the narrative quality and constitution of exhibitions.

Karbe's writing style is accessible and engaging. Therefore, complex concepts in both curation and screenwriting are easily accessible for readers from various backgrounds. One of the book's key strengths is its exploration of various screenwriting techniques and their potential applications for curatorial practice. Especially the in-depth explanations of screenwriting techniques in the context of suspense – such as telegraphing, dangling cause, dramatic irony, dramatic tension, planting, and payoff – provide readers that are not experts in film studies with valuable information. Moreover, Karbe shows how these techniques are used for museum exhibitions that are not only visually stunning but also emotionally immersive. The book may also be an insightful read for curators who aim at suspenseful exhibition storytelling.

Additionally, Karbe's incorporation of case studies is a highlight of the

book. These real-world examples bring the theoretical concepts to life, demonstrating how curators have successfully employed screenwriting techniques to engage and captivate their audiences. The case studies provide concrete evidence of the effectiveness of the ideas presented, offering a practical roadmap for those eager to experiment with these concepts in their own curatorial work. Personally, I sensed the usage of suspense and screenwriting techniques when I was reading the film analysis part of the book; in consequence, I became curious to read the comparison to the exhibitions; I also felt some kind of thrill when Karbe designed the storytelling and background information for the three exhibitions, making the reader comprehend the correlations.

In conclusion, Karbe invites us in *Museum Exhibitions and Suspense* to view the art world through a new lens – one that is both illuminating and deeply engaging by demonstrating how screenwriting techniques can elevate the impact of museum exhibitions. This book is a thought-provoking and insightful addition to the literature on museum curation, and it has the potential to shape the future of how we experience art in galleries and museums.

Ilayda Seyhun Gören (Marburg)