An aerial, high-angle photograph of a large group of construction workers on a construction site. The workers are wearing various safety gear, including hard hats (white, orange, and blue) and high-visibility vests (yellow and orange). They are engaged in different activities: some are standing, some are bending over, and some are holding tools or materials. The ground is a light-colored, dusty or sandy surface. In the upper right corner, there are stacks of red and blue plastic containers. The overall scene depicts a busy, organized construction environment.

# AGENCY, AMBIVALENCE, ANALYSIS

***Approaching the Museum  
with Migration in Mind***

**edited by  
Ruth Noack**

*Agency, Ambivalence, Analysis*

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**Mela\***Books



# Agency, Ambivalence, Analysis

Approaching the Museum  
with Migration in Mind

edited by Ruth Noack



**MELA BOOKS 06 – RF04 CURATORIAL AND ARTISTIC RESEARCH**

Published by Politecnico di Milano

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The following collection of essays and images could not have been assembled in what was an unbelievably short time span without the generosity of a great many people. Authors agreed to write their papers in a few weeks or supply previously published texts; Amy Patton translated with speed and precision; artists graciously allowed us to use their work freely; while colleagues from Afterall helped out with image sourcing. Both institutions involved in this research publication, the Royal College of Art in London and Polimi in Milano, lent their full support and shared their resources liberally; Naren Barfield, Jane Pavitt, Jamie Gilham, Áine Duffy and Francesca Lanz paved the way. My family was kind enough to forgive my absences from real life. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to them all. But chiefly, I have to thank Octavia Reeve, Sarah MacDonald and Anna Clifford, who toiled with me to bring the book about.



## A small number of useful contributions towards building an argument about the role of museums in a migratory society that takes into account artistic practices, collections, exhibition- and audience-making

→ RUTH NOACK

→ I

‘Today, the contemporary (the fictive relational unity of the historical present) is transnational because our modernity is that of a tendentially global capital.’ I advance this quote from Peter Osborne’s essay ‘To Each Present, Its Own Prehistory’ at the very beginning of this research publication on issues of museums and migration, because its assertion is fundamental. Were we less prone to obfuscate the power relations surrounding topics that, if looked at honestly, threaten to put the privileged in uncomfortable positions, we might bypass the stating of Osborne’s assertion. Unfortunately, this is not the case. In the face of a discourse that more often than not aims to create an entity called ‘the migrant community’ in order to benefit another constructed entity, that of the ‘majority, i.e. citizens’, and in the face of a practice that more often than not serves to identify and target a migrant audience for its need of education and integration rather than to approach people on equal terms, it must be emphasised: *all of us are – from different positions but nevertheless inextricably – involved in the signification of nationality and ethnicity, because none of us are outside of a postcolonial capitalism that performs transnationally.* Contemporary art, which is the focus of this book, as well as institutions such as art history, museums and exhibitions, perform in relation to this transnational capitalism. How then do we, art works and institutions connect?

When starting to approach the museum with migration in mind, I was reasonably confident that I could bring some competences to this endeavour. More than aware of the discussions around the cultural

PREVIOUS PAGE —  
‘documenta 12’, Roger M  
Buerger, 2007



diversity of museum audiences, I had previously spoken in opposition to Germany's policy of 'cultural education'.<sup>1</sup> Against this term (and its governmental rationale of creating social cohesion without granting equal rights to all members of its populace), I had posed the idea of an 'emancipated audience'. Questions of audience were thus going to be a focus of this publication from the outset. As a curator, I had also found many instances in which artists were confronting these issues with an ethos and understanding of social and political responsibility, which – to my mind – should have been, but seldom were reciprocated by art institutions. Only a few of these artistic practices appear in this book, but those that do are to be understood *pars pro toto*, by which I mean to indicate that there resides in art a potential that might in future be brought to the discussion.

This publication should be seen as a starting point. I offer no more than a small number of useful contributions, stones from a vast quarry. Some of the stones, dealing with questions of audience or interpreting artistic practices, make sense within the existing discourse on museums and migration. They are chosen above others because of a particular urgency or quality of their argument. But some of the stones, pertaining to the issue of collections, I have obtained solely in the hope that they can be utilised in building a future argument about the role of the museum in what remains for me the most urgent question: *how do we want to live together?* These contributions are all sound in themselves, yet my extraction of them and compilation in this book, is speculative. I do not have a ready argument, just a thesis, which I can only start to put forth, and which will have to be articulated further, beyond this book, before it can be substantiated or refuted.

This is how I have laid out my thesis:

1. If we are to believe Andrew Dewdney and Victoria Walsh that cultural diversity policies clash with the value system of a museum which bases its curatorial practice on modernist aesthetics, (p. 149–63) it seems reasonable to extend the discussion of the relationship between museums and migration beyond the site of the audience, i.e. to delve further into the institutional structure.
2. Institutional structures can be looked at in organisational terms. One would ask, for example, what are the subject positions from which the power of signification can be wielded?
3. Institutional structures can also be looked at in terms of their materialisations. One would ask, for example, how have social and cultural practices sedimented?
4. Sedimentation can take different forms, but if one focuses on forms prevalent in museums, one might say that they are institutions that collate things into collections, relate them to each other in specific formations of display, or attach them to specific topoi of exhibition and archive.

1 'Die Ausstellung als Medium: Das Bildungskonzept der documenta 12', public lecture at the conference Das Museum als Laboratorium kultureller Bildung,



IMG. 01 — Mary Ellen Carroll, 'No. 18', GAIA Soil demonstration with the Learning Council, residents of Jwacheon with Simone Frazier and Peter Park for the Busan Biennale 2012

5. Collections tend to stay, even when human agents or their curatorial strategies change. Collections are important, because of their resistance to the present – they are linked to the past and future by different timings to those of humans. They thus have the potential to transgress human conceptions of the way things are.

6. We must analyse collections, because if they are sedimentations of social and cultural practices, not only do they themselves bear both the potential and the limitations of what can be said about the world, but their particular formations equally give a framework to what can be figured or not figured, visualised or not visualised, or, to adapt Clémentine Deliss' title, remediated or not remediated.

7. We must put collections to use, if we are to address the role of the museum in our migrant society seriously, with equality in mind.

## → II

The question of how to make an exhibition that would allow for the emergence of an emancipated audience has loomed large for some time. Operating with a politicised concept of aesthetic experience, my curatorial partner Roger M Buergele and I had argued that the irritation people experience when confronted with the indeterminacy of the aesthetic object could be put to use in propelling them towards gaining tolerance in the face of the unfamiliar and taking control of the meaning-making process that calls itself an exhibition. While generating *documenta 12* (Kassel 2007), we focused on the lay audience, whom we believed more capable of adjusting to an anti-Western curatorial poetics, simply because they had less to lose than the professional viewers, who were implicated in the art world system.<sup>2</sup> In response to our predecessor Okwui Enwezor's

2 Roger M Buergele, Ruth Noack and documenta GmbH (eds), *documenta 12 catalogue*, Cologne: Taschen Verlag, 2007.



IMG. 02 — Roger M Buerger, 'documenta 12', 2007

expansive policy – he had acknowledged the fact of contemporary globalisation by organising platforms in Lagos, Berlin, Vienna and Saint Lucia – we sought the world *in* Kassel, a city with high unemployment, a depressive urban landscape and a large, unacknowledged migrant community. One of the functions of the local advisory board that we set up (see Ayşe Güleş, 'Learning from Kassel') was to find out what kinds of conditions and structures would need to be established in order to make it worthwhile for people to engage themselves in the exhibition process.

Whether this experiment in audience development was deemed successful or not depends very much on who is doing the judging. For *documenta's* CEO, it mattered that the number of local visitors to the show doubled in comparison to the previous year. Roger M Buerger and myself were happy to be informed – and indeed *formed* – as curatorial subjects, by extensive discussions with the *documenta* Local Advisory Board. The board influenced our choice of venues and artists, it helped us understand the necessity to make part of the show accessible free of charge, and it determined our approach to education. But in her essay, the spokeswoman of the Local Advisory Board, Ayşe Güleş, comes to the conclusion that 'the advisory board members... had less to gain from the *documenta* exhibition' (p. 135). If museums want 'to redirect their relevance as institutions in migrant society' (p. 135), she argues, they need to forge even longer-termed cooperation with non-art entities.

Güleş is not alone in her demand for a more democratic museum. Like her, Carmen Mörsch, Gangart, Clare Carolin or Victoria Walsh and Andrew Dewdney, to name but a few of the authors assembled here, suppose that equality or some similar criterion is of value in the discussion of the role of art institutions in society, and they gauge equality by looking at the nature of exchanges taking place in the museum. Institutions and their curators seldom address their potential publics clearly, sometimes confusing audiences with partners for cooperation. While this might be profitable for both sides, giving the institutions a possibility to learn from the interaction, and the cooperating outsiders a chance to get a foot in the door, often the power to determine the relationship remains with the institution.

Carmen Mörsch relates such a tale in her essay 'Über Zugang Hinaus'. When Linz was European cultural capital in 2009, the city and the county's job centre asked migrant women to volunteer as cultural guides (*Kulturlotsinnen*), who would lead visitors around the city. They were not paid, nor were they encouraged to inhabit the role of experts, rather, they were pushed to recount personal tales and later turned into passive objects of research. Mörsch concludes that institutions actively cultivate their ignorance towards their own misconduct, as it enables them to 'enact routines of institutional privilege in the name of intercultural competence, dialogue and exchange' (p. 57). But even where cooperation is clearly defined, conflicts can ensue from diverging interests of the individual parties.



In their essay 'Gastarbajteri – 40 Jahre Arbeitsmigration' the artist's group Gangart discuss an exhibition for which they acted as artistic advisers and exhibition designers (Wienmuseum, Vienna 2004). Its topic was the foreigners who had been invited to come and work in Austria from the 1950s onwards. While the museum director wanted to present the migrant's 'material culture', the cooperating NGO *Initiative Minderheiten* saw its contribution as part of larger anti-racist politics. According to Gangart, this resulted in a clash about the aesthetics of the display, the institution bemoaning the lack of three-dimensional objects in the show, the activists rejecting a representation of migrants via authentic objects as exoticising.<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly, Clare Carolin makes a similar argument with inverted poles. Bringing the work of Guatemalan artist Regina José Galindo into an English institutional framework, Carolin is aware of the risk that the primarily middle-class audience might exoticise the work, and by implication, the artist. Galindo and Carolin intervene into audience (mis)perceptions with an action designed, at the outset, to starve the viewers of the aesthetic object and thus allow them to reflect on the complex ideologies of spectatorship in which they themselves are implicated.

Yet not all the authors of this book focus on audience, and where audience does constitute a category in their arguments, its meaning differs. This is for the simple reason that the art institutions themselves approach audiences with different concepts and attitudes in mind. Walsh and Dewdney, for example, conclude from their research into Tate Britain: 'Audiences may now be thought of as customers or consumers whose experience of visiting can be enhanced or enabled through additional programmes, but audiences are not thought of as a source of cultural authority and a generator of cultural value' (p. 162). *documenta 12*, on the other hand, imagined its audience as agents of the exhibition proper, without which there would be no cultural value to the curatorial practice.

To perceive of audience in curatorial terms changes exhibition-making in a radical way. It influences not only the programming *after* the show, but enters the creative process itself, the choice of art works and of display, the duration and timing of the show, and the exhibition space as one that is experienced, inhabited *and used* by people – in sum, all core subjects of curating are affected. To follow through on this is difficult for exhibition makers to do, as it goes against all received knowledge and training. Therefore even the effort is taken as a sign of success, or at least of change. What this covers over, however, is the fact that more often than not, the category of 'audience' is left undefined, perceived somehow as a given.

For when the doors open, a number of people enter to look at the works on display; thus in an empirical sense, audience is defined by default. It would seem to me that this *pragmatic* approach more often than not

3 The exhibition is also analysed in the comprehensive publication Regina Wonish and Thomas Huebel (eds), *Museum und Migration: Konzepte – Kontexte. – Kontroversen*, Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012.

results in participatory stagings and, for the most cases, these simply serve to integrate or even interpellate real people in such a way that they are fixed as visitors in rather stereotypical and one-dimensional identities, for example as migrants – see Andrew Dewdney and Victoria Walsh. A second approach would be to extrapolate a definition of audience from theories of aesthetic experience or spectatorship, as we did for *documenta 12*. This *conceptual* approach has two distinct advantages. On the one hand, it is more conducive to the conceptual modus of curating and thus can be brought deeper into the core of the practice, by informing it, interacting with it, even challenging it. On the other, it affords a greater complexity as to what can be folded into the categories of audience *and* exhibition, by privileging, for example, migratory experience over the figure of the migrant. In some respect, this definition of audience does the opposite to the previously described. But it is equally problematic, for it has no way of taking the actual appearance of visitors into account. The conceptual audience is made before the doors to the museum open.

At *documenta 12*, both approaches were meant to overlap and the work undertaken within the Local Advisory Board was supposed to be the site where this overlapping was being enacted. Open ended as a process, with no prescription of a final aim and an awareness that functionalisation needs to be avoided if at all possible, the more or less implicit idea was to prepare the coming exhibition and at the same time induce the coming audience. For a variety of reasons, some of which are discussed by Ayşe Güleş, this intention was only partially realised. Some members of the board felt imbued with cultural authority and were seeing themselves as participating in the generation of cultural value, but equally, some members of *documenta 12*'s mass audience of 750,000 visitors took it upon themselves to become experts in the art presented, in the curatorial issues propagated, such as the 'migration of form', and in creating diverse fora for discussing, criticising, challenging the exhibition.

The lessons learned by the Local Advisory Board were further developed in last year's *Garden of Learning* (Korea 2012)<sup>4</sup>, and both experiences allow me to assert with reasonable certainty that a dialectic between pragmatic and conceptual audience is probably the most promising curatorial strategy to generate an emancipated audience. Nevertheless, we are far from being able to call this a method, or even to gauge the curatorial strategy as to its actual effects on an audience in any empirical sense. Furthermore, an emancipated audience might be a step towards greater equality, but as long as an audience is tied to the ephemeral event of an exhibition, and art institutions fail to provide audiences with the opportunity to turn their new knowledge and subject positions into something of lasting value, talk of equality remains rhetoric and the process riddled with ambivalences. I do not propose that any curatorial practice might have the power to truly effect political or social change. Nor can I state unequivocally how a common ground can be held for any

4 *Garden of Learning* was the title of the 2012 Busan Biennale. Artistic director: Roger M Buergele, General Exhibition Lay-out: Ruth Noack.



IMG. 03 — Abstract for 'The Migration of a Few Things We Call – But Don't Need to Call – Artworks'

length of time if people do not share in its symbolic and economic reward. If it were at least possible to figure out how an audience might acquire the agency to enter into the production of meaning of an exhibition and contribute as to the what, how and for whom of its sedimentation in the museum...

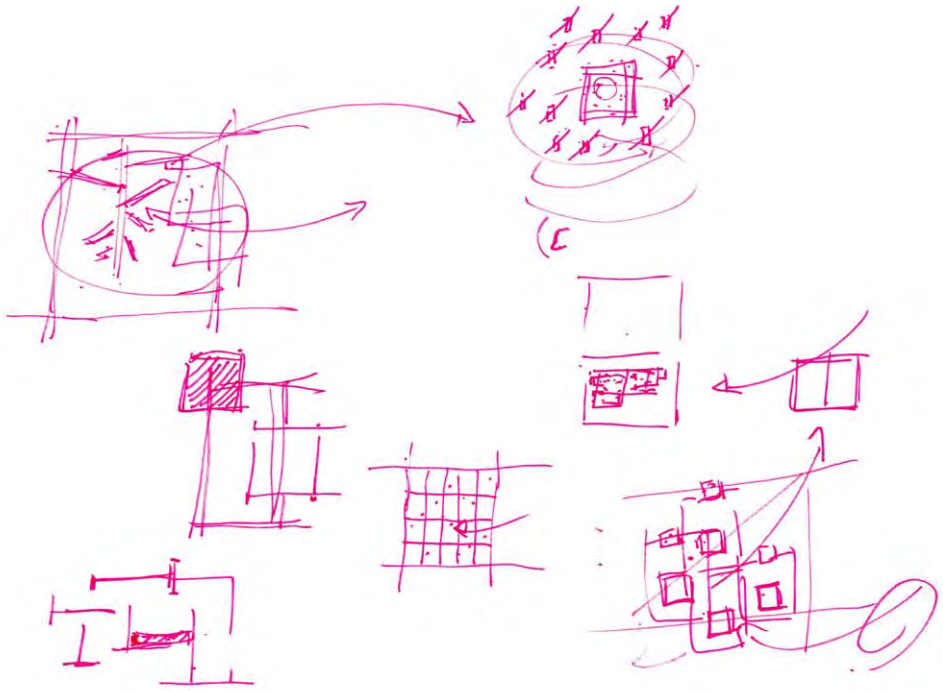
→ III

The fourteen contributions in *Agency, Ambivalence, Analysis: Approaching the Museum with Migration in Mind* were collected according to the three subjects previously mentioned: audience, artistic practice, and museum collection and display. The first, I have addressed in this essay to some extent; the third has been sketched out in a rather haphazard thesis; the second is barely mentioned. Here my duty as an editor clashes with my self-valuation as an exhibition maker. Because this book is no exhibition, though there are cases in which books have acted as exhibitions, the artistic practices are represented 'once removed', through reproductions and interpretive texts. Were I to represent my academic profession, which is art history, this would pose no further problem, yet for some time now, I have been itching to explore the question of how to do curatorial justice to art work in written or spoken words. A role model might be found in Lucy Lippard's seminal *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*,<sup>5</sup> though I prefer Carl E Loeffler and Darlene Tong's *Performance Anthology. Source Book of California Performance Art*<sup>6</sup> – one of the most radically inclusive source books I have ever come across. It manages to reiterate the most profound aspect of the art work and art scene represented in their book, which is its transgression of the limits of medium-based production. Contrary to Loeffler and Tong, the present publication cannot show its constructive principle by sheer number of entries; the fact that the texts themselves are complex and diverse in subject matter, method and in position to the institutions of both, academia and art, might all too easily be configured into an image that is fragmented, incomplete. I beg to differ. For that purpose, I have concocted a commentary that guides the reader through the book and gives an order to the texts. The reader might come to the conclusion that this is what Victoria Walsh once coined curatorial 'retro-rationalisation'. Yet I hope it will be read differently, as an indication that there are many ways in which this compilation might make sense.

Editorial Note: Though the majority of texts are published in English, three of the essays (including two reprints) have been added in German. This is an editorial decision. Its purpose is twofold: to underline the fact that the publication consists of a collation of research materials. And to honour the 'European' spirit of the MeLa research. This seems of particular importance at a time when the country of origin of this publication is contemplating secession from the EU.

5 Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972: A Cross-Reference Book of Information on Some Esthetic Boundaries...*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.

6 Carl E Loeffler and Darlene Tong's *Performance Anthology. Source Book of California Performance Art*, San Francisco: Last Gasp, 1989.

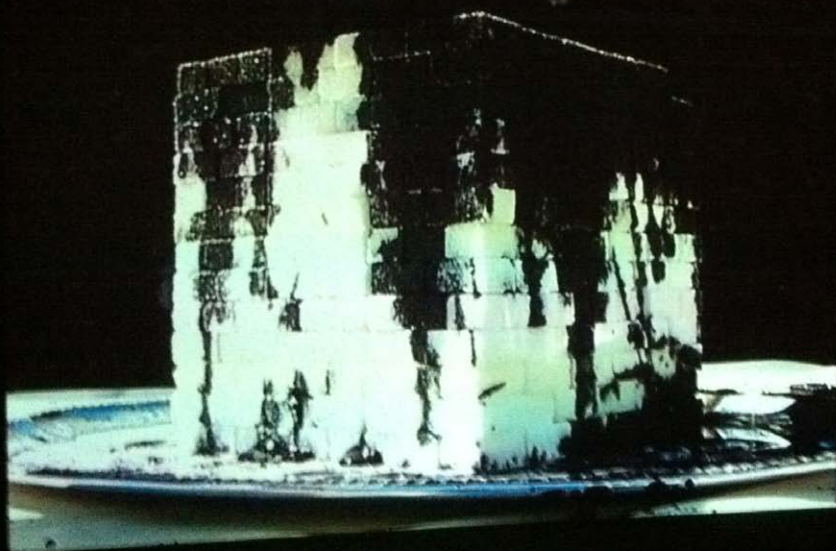




# 1. Cleaning House (Analysis of Power)

What is to be avoided at all costs, as one sets out to approach the museum with migration in mind, is a kind of cultural neutralisation, attendant to state-sponsored multiculturalism and the commodification of political cultures. The first step must thus be the analysis of institutions that operate upon particular notions of nationality and transnationality. Philosopher Peter Osborne and artist Dierk Schmidt (via proxy of critic Clemens Krümmel) take on museums and art history, aiming to explode the given.





Kader Attia born 1970

Oil and Sugar #2 2007

Single screen video projection, colour

Sound

Duration: 4 minutes, 30 seconds

Tate. Purchased using funds provided by the Middle East North Africa  
Acquisitions Committee 2010  
T13180

## To Each Present, Its Own Prehistory

→ PETER OSBORNE

*This essay is a lightly edited version of a talk delivered to the conference ‘What is British Art?’ held at Tate Britain, London, on 10 October 2008, in a session entitled ‘The Production of Knowledges in British Art’. The talk aimed to problematise some of the assumptions underlying the way in which the question of ‘British art’ had been posed for the conference by its organisers. It draws on material that has subsequently been developed in a more systematic context in my book, *Anywhere or Not At All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art* (2013). However, the particular focus provided by the Tate event endows this text with a certain documentary autonomy that, hopefully, retains some interest in the context of this current collection.*

→ I. (S)TATE BRITAIN

‘What is British Art?’ This simple, stark, almost shocking question provokes (in me, at least) not an answer – not even, initially, a search for an answer – so much as a proliferating series of further questions about the question itself. Questions such as ‘what *kind* of question is this – this “What is...?” question’ – when asked of something so deceptively simply stated, but ultimately deeply mysterious as ‘British Art’? Are we to *assume* that ‘British art’ exists, and that we already have some knowledge of it, but not enough – that this knowledge is inadequate in various (ideologically specific) ways, and thus needs expanding or correcting? This would be one rather literal, empirical interpretation of our task. And in one sense, yes, one could certainly interpret the question like that, and do some useful work; although whether one would thereby know any more about what ‘British art’ is, is debatable. For at another level (a level of analysis I invite you to consider here), the terms of the question are far from being transparent, and the question itself is almost impenetrable. Neither ‘Britishness’ nor ‘art’ offers itself up to easy or unproblematic operationalisation. This is, of course, among other things, part of their interest. And their combination compounds the difficulty – especially, I shall argue, *today* (I will come back to this ‘today’) – although the

PREVIOUS PAGE — ‘Oil and Sugar’, Installation shot. Kader Attia, 2007, Single screen video projection.

combination of terms can also function to cover over the difficulty, when an empirical interpretation of one is used to anchor the other, and vice versa, in a kind of mutual cultural neutralisation.

However, the resistance of these terms – ‘British’ and ‘art’ – to unproblematic empirical specification is not itself, at base, an empirical matter. Rather, it is something to do with the kinds of concepts they are; and I am not just talking about their being what some analytical philosophers used to call (in a rather meekly daring way) ‘essentially contested concepts’, with irreducibly multiple and contradictory associations. (The idea of essentially contested concepts was a noble attempt by Walter Gallie, back in 1956, at a politicisation of ordinary language philosophy.) Rather, it is to do with the related but deeper fact that these are social and historical concepts, the *historicality* and *sociality* of which pose deep, *logical* and *ontological* problems, respectively, about their unity. I shall not pursue those problems directly here. Instead, I shall make some polemical points about the category of ‘British Art’ from the standpoint of its historical status, before moving on to consider the profound *non-contemporaneity* (but by no means ‘untimeliness’) of the question ‘What is British Art?’ itself.

To anticipate my conclusion, in order to help steer a way through what follows: in my view, *there is no good answer to the question of ‘What is British Art?’*, in any strong sense of the present tense in which it is formulated. There are only answers to the question ‘What was British art?’ Or to put it in another (Heideggerian) way, ‘British art’ is only in the temporal mode of its fundamental having-been-ness. The implications of this for the underlying, actual topics of this essay – namely, institutional failure to recognise the practice of certain ethnic or ‘raced’ artist-subjects in post-war Britain – are not immediately clear; but that there are implications, I am certain. Here, I am primarily concerned to offer you a historical framework and set of terms within which to think about these two topics in a way that problematises the more straightforward manner in which they have been introduced.

The basic problem, for me, may be reduced to the form of a syllogism:

Premise 1: The question ‘What is British Art?’ only makes sense from the standpoint of the (S)Tate, and in particular

## (S)Tate Britain

Premise 2: Thinking about *contemporary* art no longer makes sense from the standpoint of the Nation-(S)Tate

Therefore

Conclusion: Putting the question of nationality to art today in Britain (or thinking about art from the standpoint of nationality) threatens that art’s contemporaneity, and hence its critical significance – even when it is intended to highlight certain ideological mechanisms

of exclusion (in this case, ethnic or 'raced' exclusion) which *persist* within the present, within the arena of both state and market.

If, to use the succinct phrase of my ex-colleague Francis Mulhern, nations are markets with flags – and it is *states* that make up these flags and pin them on markets – it is nonetheless the case that markets, as Boetti's famous 1979 *Map* shows, themselves have developed transnational dynamics that have transformed the economic, political and cultural significance of these flags (or signifiers of nationality), placing them beyond the purview of the in-many-places-still-dominant problematic of nationalism, postcolonialism and metropolitan multiculturalism, from which the idea of cultural exclusion as *exclusion from nationality* gains its meaning.

Two domestic art-institutional symptoms of this recoding of nationality may serve to illustrate it here. The first is the distinction, internal to the institutional structure of the Tate Gallery, between 'Tate Britain' and 'Tate Modern' – that is, between 'Britain' and 'Modern'. This is a frank statement of an otherwise often repressed fact: namely, that Britain (which one may read here as a metonym for 'nationality' more generally) is not modern.

## Britain is not modern

This is a fact that, once recognised, leads immediately, within the British side of the opposition, to a reactively modernising agenda, of which, in some small way, this essay is itself a part. Institutionally, Tate both defines Tate Britain by its *lack of modernity* and sets it the task of *struggling against* this lack – a struggle in which it must necessarily fail, but in which it is constantly exhorted to 'fail better', as Beckett would say. Today, Tate Britain is failing better at being modern than it did when Tate Modern was founded. In fact, it is in this precise combination of lack of modernity and reactive modernisation (in Nietzsche's sense of an opposition between reactive and affirmative forces) that the authentic 'Britishness' of Tate Britain resides: failing better to be modern.

## Failing better to be modern

A second, minor art-institutional symptom of the recoding of nationality may be found in the fact that even so august a manifestation of artistic nation-statism as the national pavilions in the Giardini at the Venice Biennale has begun to be breached by the choice of 'foreign' artists: Liam Gillick in the 2007 German pavilion, for example. This is a nice example of combined and uneven development in state-sponsored nationalism. Interestingly, it has caused little controversy in Germany. (It is hard to imagine a similar insouciance about the British pavilion, although a not-dissimilar dynamic has gradually problematised the original self-

conception of the Turner Prize.) This is a game played with nationality between two of the main partners within Fortress Europe, rather than in relation to either its external or its internal (immigrant) ‘outside’. And in this regard its significance is limited. Nonetheless, the underlying structural dynamic is significant; it derives from the constitutive *migrancy* of contemporary artists, which reflects a (rather different) condition of migrancy more generally.

The deeper (one is tempted to say ‘true’) meaning that is carried by the Tate’s nominal opposition of Britishness to modernity is actually slightly different: namely that, for all the contradictions of its modernity, ‘Britishness’ in art still stands fairly flatly opposed to *contemporaneity*. After all, the historical meaning of Tate Britain’s Britishness is essentially that of a colonial modernity, which necessarily persists, ambivalently, as ‘heritage’ within its subsequent postcolonial form. (The 2008 exhibition, *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting*, is a good example of the Tate’s highly reflective self-consciousness of this fact.) This is the sense in which Tate Britain is the appropriate venue for this conference, not merely because it has been framed in terms of Britishness, but more fundamentally because of its *challenge* to the prevailing cultural terms of ‘British Art’. For the managed sustenance of this challenge is dialectically essential to the intellectual and political credibility of Tate Britain’s ‘Britishness’ itself. This is the familiar dialectical trap of state-sponsored multiculturalism, to which Rasheed Araeen has referred (Araeen 2008). But it cannot wholly be avoided, and must thus always be negotiated, politically, with care and cunning.

That Tate Modern takes a conscious distance from the contemporary, via its name, disavowing and thereby considerably complicating its aspiration to contemporaneity, indicates the depth at which Britishness defines the Tate brand as a whole, dialectically infecting the ‘modern’ to which this Britishness is opposed, in turn. Contemporaneity is an intensifier of modernity, to the point of the internal transformation of its temporal structure.

## **(Tate) Modern is not contemporary**

Indeed, it is this structural deficit of contemporaneity in Tate Modern, produced by the residual Britishness of its modernity, which opens the space within the historical economy of the Tate system for the contemporary dimension of Tate Britain’s hyper-modernising reaction to its own deficit of modernity. Hence what we might call Tate Britain’s ‘torn halves’ of modernity (*The Lure of the East* and the *Tate Triennial*); halves that do not, of course, add up to one.

Nonetheless, despite the thin contemporaneity of this intensified reactive modernisation, and despite the accompanying ongoing unavoidability of nationality as a terrain, I want to suggest that it is the notion of the



contemporary that holds open the critical possibilities for thinking about both the ethnic and raced exclusions to which Araeen refers, and a more expansive conception of the actual geo-political dynamics of contemporary art, in Britain, as elsewhere.

In essence, then, I propose that we *oppose* the notion of contemporaneity to that of Britishness in art, however empirically broadly or inclusively ‘British art’ may be construed. I take this proposal to be in line with the analysis of what Gayatri Spivak has called the ‘new postcoloniality’. Before I say something briefly about what Spivak means by this new postcoloniality, however, and what it might mean for art in Britain, and our understanding of the practices of ethnic and raced artist-subjects, I need to say a little more about how I understand the concept of the contemporary.

## → II. THE IDEA OF THE CONTEMPORARY

In its most basic form, the concept of the contemporary is that of the coming together, the unity in disjunction, or the *disjunctive unity of times*.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, it refers to the coming together of the times of human lives within the time of the living. Contemporaries are those who inhabit (or inhabited) the same time. Interestingly, the term ‘contemporaries’ is primarily used in conjunction with the past tense: ‘we *were* contemporaries’. The utterance ‘we *are* contemporaries’ is redundant, since it is performatively tautological; although this has not stopped its increasingly insistent performance, wittily parodied by Tino Seghal in his piece in the German pavilion at the 2005 Venice Biennale.

## **We are so contemporary, contemporary, contemporary...**

As a historical concept, the contemporary thus involves a projection of unity onto the differential totality of the times of lives that are in principle, or potentially, present to each other in some way, at some particular time – and in particular, ‘now’, since it is the *living* present that provides the model of contemporaneity. That is to say, the concept of the contemporary projects a single historical time of the present, as a *living* present – a common, albeit internally disjunctive, historical time of human lives ‘the contemporary’, then, is shorthand for a certain *projection* of the historical present.

## **‘The contemporary’ projects a historical present**

1 The concept first sketched here is elaborated in detail in Osborne (2013a).

Such a notion is inherently theoretically problematic but increasingly inevitable.

It is theoretically problematic, in short, because as a totalising concept it exceeds possible experience. In particular, it projects into presence a temporal unity that is in principle futural or horizontal and hence *speculative*. The relational totality of the currently coeval times of human existence remains, empirically, fundamentally socially disjunctive. There is no actual shared subject-position of, or within, the present from the standpoint of which its relational totality could be *lived* as a whole, in however temporally fragmented or dispersed a form. Nonetheless, the idea of the contemporary functions *as if* there is. That is, it functions as if the speculative horizon of the unity of human history had been reached. In this respect, the contemporary is a utopian idea. In rendering present the absent time of a unity of times, *all constructions of the contemporary are fictional*.

## The contemporary is a fiction

More specifically, the contemporary is an *operative* fiction: it *regulates the division* between the past and the present (via its sense of the future) within the present. Epistemologically, one might say, the contemporary marks that point of indifference between historical and fictional narrative that has been associated, since the critique of Hegel, with the notion of speculative experience itself.

It is the fictional ‘presentness’ of the contemporary that distinguishes it from the more structural and durational category of modernity, the inherently self-surpassing character of which identifies it with a permanent transitoriness, familiar in the critical literature since Baudelaire. In this respect, the contemporary involves a kind of *internal retreat* of the modern to the present. As Terry Smith has put it, contemporaneity is ‘the pregnant present of the original meaning of *modern*, but without its subsequent contract with the future’ (Smith 2006, 703).

Furthermore, the disjunctive, antagonistic unity of the contemporary is not just temporal, but equally – indeed, in certain respects primarily – spatial. This is the second aspect of the theoretical problematicity of the contemporary: the problem of the disjunctive unity of times is the problem of the unity and disjunction of social space – that is, in its most extended form, the problem of the *geo-political*. The idea of the contemporary poses the problem of the disjunctive unity of space-time as the problem of the geo-politically historical. The temporal dialectic of the new, which gives qualitative definition to the historical present (as the standpoint from which its unity is constructed), but which the notion of the contemporary cuts off from the future, must be mediated with the complex global dialectic of spaces, if any kind of sense is to be made of the notion of the historically contemporaneous. Or to put it another way, the fiction of the contemporary is necessarily a geo-political

fiction. This considerably complicates the question of its periodisation, or the durational extension of the contemporary 'backwards' into the recent chronological past. It leads us to ask question: '*When did the present begin?*' And this question has very different answers depending upon *where* you are thinking from, geo-politically. Hence my title, 'To Each Present, Its Own Prehistory' – meaning, to each *geo-politically differentiated construction* of the present, its own prehistory (which is a bit less snappy). Competing constructions of the contemporary give rise to competing periodisations of 'contemporary art'.

Despite their theoretical difficulties, constructions of the contemporary as a historical concept increasingly appear as inevitable because growing global social interconnectedness gives meaningful content to these fictions, filling out their speculative projections with empirical material ('facts'), and thereby effecting a transition from fictional to historical narrative. Because of this global inter-connectedness, constructions of 'the contemporary' have increasingly acquired the transcendental status of a condition of the intelligibility of social experience. This is not merely their relevance, but the *demand* they make upon art: to be equal to this form of social experience, the experience of the fiction of the contemporary.

### → III. COMPETING PERIODISATIONS OF 'CONTEMPORARY ART'

In current critical writing, one can detect three main competing periodisations of contemporary art, within the wider time-span of an 'autonomous' Western modern art – three durational extensions of the contemporary 'backwards' answering the question '*When did the present begin?*'<sup>2</sup> They represent three overlapping genealogies or historical strata. Three privileged 'nows', each of which selects the rupture of a particular historical event, by privileging a particular geo-political terrain.

First, there is what I call 'the publishers' definition' of contemporary art as 'art after 1945', or art since the end of the Second World War – which is also, in part, *Third Text's* periodisation of its interest in 'British Art'. The year 1945 represents both the start of the international hegemony of US art institutions, and thereby of US art itself, and also the institutional advance of the so-called neo-avant gardes. Chronologically, this is the broadest periodisation of contemporary art in use. It is in certain respects too broad, at the same time as being, in other respects, too narrow. Do we really still inhabit the same present, art-critically, as Abstract Expressionism, for example? But is the Duchamp of the years of the First World War really so distant from us as to fall outside the category of 'contemporary art'? Such contradictions draw attention to the inadequacy of any merely chronological conception of the time of art history. Nonetheless, even within such crude periodisations, there is always a suppressed qualitative aspect: the moment of the break, in this case, the beginning of the period at issue, the beginning of the 'Post-

2 The first part of this section draws on Osborne (2006a); it is further developed in *Anywhere or Not At All*, pp. 18–22.



war'. Reflecting on this moment from the standpoint of the present raises a question that is familiar from Japanese debates since the 1960s, but is rarely asked in Britain: namely, when will the Post-war end? Has it not, in fact, already ended (Osborne 2011)? It is those offering an explicit affirmative answer to this question who have the sharpest, most critically delineated sense of the contemporary, represented by the third periodisation. On the broad definition, however, we are still essentially, art-critically, living in an extended Post-war. For all the television drama that would have us believe this, I do not believe it to be so.

The geo-political terrain of this broad periodisation is formally worldwide – marked as it is by the end of a 'world' war. Yet it is effectively an artworld seen (and selected) from the standpoint of the USA. Art-historically, this was made possible by MOMA's institutional appropriation of the work of the pre-war European avant gardes during the 1930s, which allowed for the subsequent narration of post-war US abstract art as the authentic continuation of this project, and thereby of the 'Western' artistic tradition as a whole. That is familiar ground.

If the first periodisation is geo-politically epochal in character – registering the weight within Western art history of the deepest political determinations – yet also parochial in its backward-lookingness, the second periodisation focuses more tightly, in its framing terms, on developments immanent to artistic practices and their art-institutional recognition. This is a periodisation that conceives contemporary art as beginning some time in the early 1960s, in that ontological break with prevailing object-based and medium-specific neo-avant garde practices represented by a range of new types of work, of which performance, minimalism and conceptual art appear, retrospectively, as the most decisive. From this point of view, in my own terms, *contemporary art is post-conceptual art*.

## contemporary art is postconceptual art

The 'event' marking this rupture is not a precisely chronologically datable one, but rather 'the Sixties' itself – that complex conjunction of social, political and cultural radicalisms that swept through not just North America and Western Europe (Crow 1996), but whole swathes of the globe – from South America, to South East Asia. Politically, it is often conveniently epitomised in the figure of '1968', but its artistically decisive manifestations took place much earlier in the decade. This was also the decade of an initial internationalisation of contemporary art *within* its largely North American and residually European hegemonic frame. Japanese and South American artists, in particular, were incorporated into the internationalising US hegemony. As Charles Harrison has recently reminded us, in the late 1960s, London remained by and large provincial, in an international art context.

Despite a conceptual focus on the ontology of the work of art, which derives from a predominantly US narrative frame, this periodisation is thus, ironically, more geo-politically expansive in its sense of the artistic terrain than the previous one – although it tends to exclude ‘second world’ (state socialist) art of the 1960s and 1970s from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China, or at best to include it only as retrospective and aberrant supplement (‘after 1989’). One reason for this expansiveness is that the opening of this period coincides with the intensification of anti-imperialist struggles for national liberation, which had decisive domestic political effects within Western states. This is its postcolonial aspect, which remains at that point mainly contextual. Another, more simply, was the development of commercial air travel. Nonetheless, it is the radically dispersed, materially distributed character of the art – associated with its incorporation of non-traditional, often mass media, means – that is the unifying principle of the periodisation. Here, contemporary art deploys an open infinity of means, and operates with an institutionally and philosophically grounded generic conception of ‘art’ that exceeds the historically received conventions that had previously defined artistic mediums. A significant amount of the institutionally validated art currently produced still fails to attain contemporaneity in this sense.

The third main periodisation of contemporary art one finds in current art-critical discourse is more recent: ‘art after 1989’ – symbolically, the breaching of the Berlin Wall. With respect to the Cold War, 1989 is the dialectical counterpart to 1945. After 1989, the Cold War is finally over. But with respect to world politics, 1989 is the dialectical counterpart to 1917 (the Russian Revolution). If 1917–89 is a genuine ‘period’ in world history, the argument goes, then surely contemporary art must now be redefined as *art after 1989*: after the collapse of the division between the three worlds and the institution of a *globally transnational capitalism*. From this standpoint, the most significant work since the 1980s has *ignored or refused or criticised or recoded* nationality as a cultural criterion or positive value, *including* postcolonial nationalities, in themselves, rather as continuing relational elements in political (and political-economic) conflicts.

Politically, ‘1989’ signifies the end of historical communism (or ‘actually existing socialism’), the dissolution of independent Left political cultures, and the decisive victory of a neo-liberal globalisation of capital – incorporating the current engine of the world economy, state-capitalism in China. (The current meltdown of financial institutions has not affected this situation.) This corresponds artistically to three convergent features of institutionally validated art since the 1980s: the apparent closure of the horizon of the avant garde; a qualitative deepening of the integration of autonomous art into the culture industry; and a globalisation and transnationalisation of the biennale as an exhibition form.

One reason for this is that the increasing integration of autonomous art into the culture industry has imposed a more immediate and pragmatic

sense of historical time onto the institutional framing of contemporary work – although this remains a profoundly contradictory process. For this integration is by no means an outright negation of autonomy by commodification and political rationality, so much as a new *systemic functionalisation* of autonomy itself – a new ‘affirmative culture’ (Osborne 2006b). This new systemic functionalisation of autonomy (this new ‘use’ of art’s ‘uselessness’) corresponds to the global transnationalisation of the biennale as an exhibition form, and its integration into the logics of international politics and regional development, as well as the market. From the point of view of *this* periodisation of the contemporary, art must reflectively incorporate this new context into its procedures if it is to remain ‘contemporary’. Within the market for this art, significations of nationality, ethnicity and raced identities function *both as elements* within *broader* transnational sets of geo-political relations, condensing particular contemporaneities, *and* as means of commodification of political cultures. This is its basic, often productively, contradictory dynamic.

#### → IV. FROM NATIONAL ART TO CONTEMPORARY ART

Today, the fiction of the contemporary is increasingly primarily a global or a planetary fiction.

## The contemporary today is globally transnational

More specifically, a fiction of a global transnationality has recently displaced the 140-year hegemony of an *internationalist* imaginary, 1848–1989, which came in a variety of political forms. This is a fiction – a projection of the temporary unity of the present across the planet – grounded in the contradictory penetration of received social forms (‘communities’, ‘cultures’, ‘nations’, ‘societies’ – all increasingly inadequate formulations of social form) by capital, and their consequent enforced interconnection and dependency. In short, today, the contemporary (the fictive relational unity of the historical present) is transnational because our modernity is that of a tendentially global capital. Transnationality is the putative socio-spatial form of the current temporal unity of historical experience.<sup>3</sup>

This form is constituted by a series of ‘demographic shifts, diasporas, labour migrations, the movements of global capital and media, and processes of cultural circulation and hybridisation’,<sup>4</sup> which Spivak has argued have rendered the twin geo-political imaginary of a culturalist postcolonial nationalism and a metropolitan multiculturalism at best problematic and at worse redundant:

3 For a recent extended elaboration, see Osborne (2013b).

4 Spivak quoting Toby Alice Volkman, *Crossing Borders: Revitalising Area Studies*, New York: Ford Foundation, 1999, p. ix.

*What we are witnessing in the postcolonial and globalising world is a return of the demographic, rather than territorial, frontiers that predate and are larger than capitalism. These demographic frontiers, responding to large-scale migration, are now appropriating the contemporary version of virtual reality and creating the kind of parastate collectivities that belonged to the shifting multicultural empires that preceded monopoly capitalism.* (Spivak 2003, 3, 15)

We are experiencing a transition from national postcolonialities to transnational postcoloniality – a new kind of postcoloniality. Territorial frontiers or borders (basically, nation-states) are subject to erosion by this process in two ways. First, they have an increasing, albeit still restricted, physical ‘permeability’. ‘Borders are easily crossed *from* metropolitan countries, whereas attempts to enter from the so-called peripheral countries encounter bureaucratic and policed frontiers, altogether more difficult to permeate’ (Spivak 2003, 16). People mainly cross borders from the so-called periphery to the metaphorical centre only as variable capital – including as art labour. (Art is a kind of passport. In the new transnational spaces, it *figures* a market utopia of free movement, while in actuality it embodies the contradiction of the mediation of this movement by capital.) Second, informational technology makes possible the constitution of new social subjects, and the maintenance of the unity of fragmented older ones, across national frontiers, in a new way.

But how is this geo-politically complex contemporaneity to be experienced or represented? This is the challenge posed to current art practices and their criticism, from all their different geo-political standpoints of production – ‘Britain’ included. And it is as much a question of the manifestation of a *will to this* contemporaneity – to forcing the multiplicity of coeval social times together, under certain conditions – as it is a question of representation.

From the point of view of an intellectually serious art criticism, there is no longer any ‘British Art’.

The kinds of maps that Boetti remade are part of our prehistory, and not just because borders have been added or redrawn, but because their form of imagination of social space is less and less a part of our actual present. New map works will be needed to figure much more complicated (non-Euclidean) forms of social space, in quite different ways.

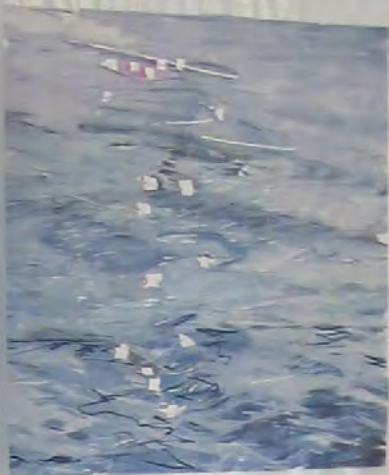
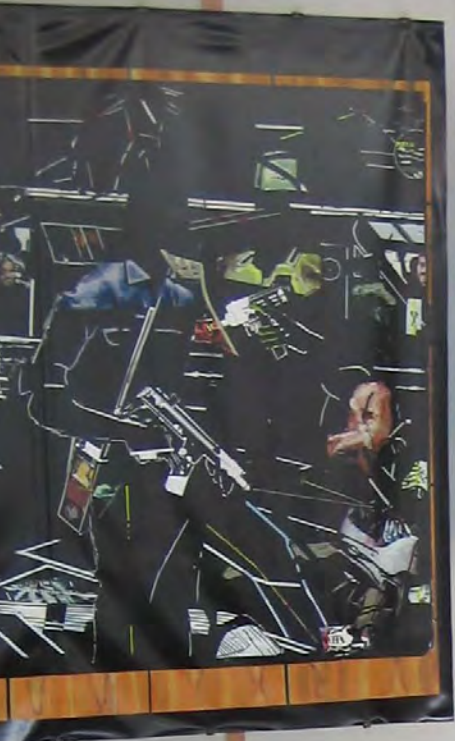
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# The Raft of the Historical Image

## Dierk Schmidt's Painting Against Painting

→ CLEMENS KRÜMMEL

*This article was first published in Dierk Schmidt (ed), SIEV-X: On a Case of Intensified Refugee Politics (Berlin: B-Books), 2005, as an introductory text for the conference reader. SIEV-X stands for Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel X, and is the acronym given by the Australian government to an Indonesian boat that sank off their coast with 397 refugees aboard.*

For several years now, Dierk Schmidt's painterly and textual works have been critically investigating a special possibility of painting: the possibility of working, well beyond the mere depiction of historical events, with an expanded definition of historical painting – under the concept of the historical picture.

Was this kind of artistic work abandoned too early, or was it inherited too superficially? If this was the case, then it might have resulted, simply speaking, in the naturalisation of the historical picture's claim to truth, particularly in the media of photography and film/video. Or historical painting was criticised due to its (historical) burden as a purely affirmative form, merely following the image politics of those in power. No serious reference to historical painting can be made today without calling upon a complex system of self-reflection. In this context, Dierk Schmidt endeavours to construct a complex critique of historical painting by making historical reference to art-historical findings, through comparative research in information media, in the painterly appropriation of the most varied image and text materials, and by means of creating montages of deliberately 'broken' images. In regard to the excerpt of his work documented here, the point of departure of Dierk Schmidt's painting project, which goes far back in time, consists of examples from the heyday of French historical painting – the period between the French Revolution and 1870, during which the historical picture was transformed from being representational to depicting an event, something which tapped ever new, pre-modern spaces of symbolisation and meaning. Two

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Exhibition view, 'Com  
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exemplary paintings of the epoch, *Liberty Guiding the People* (1830) by Eugène Delacroix and, in particular, *The Raft of the Medusa* (1819) by Théodore Géricault, which are both still hanging in their original places in the Louvre, form something of a painting–historical approach for Schmidt – not, however, due to a simple form of iconographic similarity. They are of particular interest to Schmidt as two sides of artistic work, each standing in a complex relation to the government policy of their respective society, in the form of an either–or with regard to conformity and rebellion. For Schmidt, Delacroix and Géricault’s paintings interact, both in terms of picture and content, with the images – or rather the unavailable images, the ‘non-images’ – of a far more recent event: the sinking of an Indonesian refugee boat with 397 people aboard off the coast of Australia on Saturday 19 October 2001.

The Australian government gave the boat the acronym ‘SIEV-X’. This was a terrible event, and numerous pieces of circumstantial evidence suggest that the Australian government not only allowed this event to occur, but actively brought it about – a state crime, then, which one assumes should have caused a lasting political scandal. Schmidt could only research the factual background with great effort in the form of an incomplete puzzle comprised of, in part, contradictory data from the internet. Until today, the Australian government has made no official statements clarifying the extent of the active or passive responsibility of the authorities and individuals who degraded refugees to mere ‘human material’, to ‘hostages’ shifted back and forth between political and bureaucratic systems, between the interests of domestic policy and drastically restricted asylum programmes. The difficulties arising during Schmidt’s research can be regarded as typical for the meanwhile familiar journalistic ‘real-time’ reality of the internet. On the one hand, it transforms ‘attention’ into a quantifiable commodity; on the other, this attention becomes impossible because, due to the ‘content providers’, historical, political and social contexts are not established – to a certain degree deliberately. In a more general sense, Schmidt’s references to the resulting perspective never mistake pieces of information for insights. His image research is not concerned with a naive and direct communication of information that can always be known, but at all times focuses on the respective fragmentary character of pieces of information as particles of an information politics – and subsequently on an analysis of the possibilities that painting possesses, as opposed to alternative media.

When looking at some of the pictures reproduced and newly combined in the exhibition, the required (but rarely realisable) complexity of this analysis becomes evident, for example in the picture showing Delacroix’s *Liberty Guiding the People* in direct proximity to Géricault’s *Raft of the Medusa* as an historically comparative superimposition. An historical and a present-day view place both works – pivotal references, of course, not only for Schmidt – in a frame spanning the huge historical distance. Here, the juxtaposition, which in the Louvre is today part of the canon, creates a pair of opposites that are close to each other in painting–historical terms, functioning as a dialectic of historical painting. In the



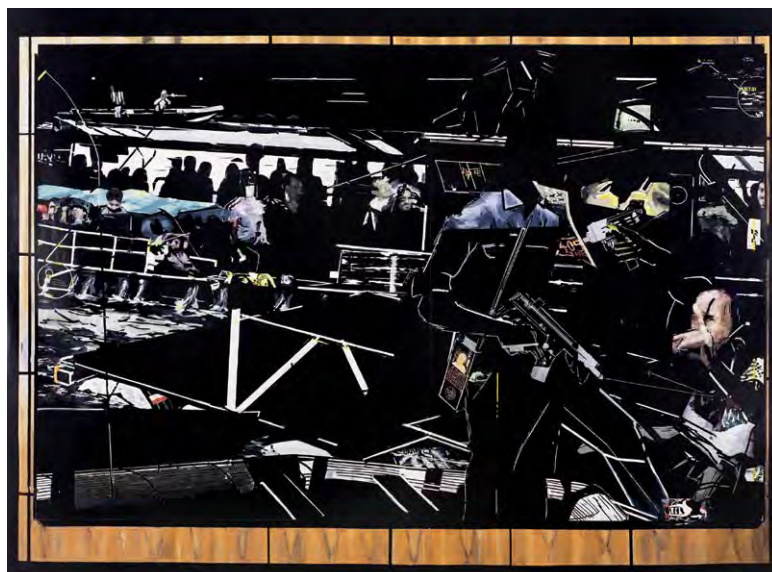
IMG. 01 — Dierk Schmidt, 'Untitled (Salon Carré 1819, Louvre 2001)', 2001/2. Oil on canvas, © VG Bild-Kunst, Courtesy the artist and Städel Museum, Frankfurt/Main

revolutionary allegory of the victory of Liberty, a pictorial celebration that when initially shown was already outdated due to the restoration of the Bourbons, the bourgeois system of representation was given an historical painting as a new national coat of arms, the intention and meaning of which were subject to a decisive shift. The universal – and therefore also universally re-interpretable – allegory is juxtaposed with a prime example of historical Enlightenment in European art history: Géricault's painting. For Schmidt, the *Raft of the Medusa* becomes an early test case for the possibilities of painterly research, which, by being involved, is able to set apart its interest from art-historical research. This model doesn't waste time with the 'painterly' details of the heroically extreme research methods of Géricault, something which ought to be repeated in a reactionary manner; he instead encounters this 'model' with scepticism from the very start, by contextualising it. From his earliest works, Schmidt's approach was explicitly analytical and contained textual components. Especially in the area of that which was called the 'political' in painting, Schmidt soon dealt with the common features of information derived from research and its painterly realisation in pictures: the fact that they are made. The techniques of dematerialising, breaking and de-essentialising images have resulted in an extraordinarily rich aesthetic apparatus. The abstraction of image sources as outlines, lines of reference, graphical representations, as surfaces that were painted over, censored, masked, overlapped, and quite often omitted, allow him to relate 'made' facts to each other in a highly differentiated way; the use of unstable or not very representational materials such as plastic foils, photocopy paper or aluminium plates as the base for his paintings robs his montages of the last characteristics that one could usually attribute to magistral examples of historical painting. What emerges is a practice of his own that repeatedly connects the formal

and content-related references to painting with drawing, writing and film editing.

As a triptych, *SIEV-X* refers to the exact dimensions and distances of the paintings in the Louvre. The ‘black painting’, hanging first in the series on the left, demonstrates perhaps most impressively the polymorphism of the techniques: in its layering – black pond tarpaulin; wooden panels copied in painting from a fictitious official context; second black ground; omitted elements and elements alluded to in black and white and in colour next to each other – it shows no more than what can be shown based on the given information – and thus develops the fragmentary subjectivity of the ‘researcher’ as a figure representing far more than epistemological critique. The emotionality emerging from the black knowledge gaps and the empty outlines are just about balanced by a deliberately sober, geometrical lineation, which makes the overall picture appear not so much researched as calculated. The third picture, to the right next to the Louvre picture, is most clearly cinemagraphic: by superimposing images from a Nike commercial that shows the Brazilian football star Ronaldo dancing across customs barriers at an international airport, it adapts a sequence from mass-media images that, in its smoothness, appears to negate the foot-locks of political research. In formal terms, it shares the same wooden ground as the ‘black picture’, so it could be read as part of one and the same investigation in the inquiry of an authority for global border legislation. One example that can perhaps mediate between the dramatic oppositions in the conceptions of art of the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries is to be examined more closely here. In 1917/18, during the final years of the First World War, a several-minute-long film was shot by Winsor McCay (1871–1934), who became well-known due to his influential *Little Nemo* comic strips. It was one of the first cel animation films and produced at about the same time as Abel Gance’s Zola adaptation, *J’accuse*. After initial experiments, this film, too, remained a mixture of live-action and animation techniques. Among other things, it was the first ‘serious’ animation film that dealt with a political event in the form of a special feature. One first sees ‘live-action’ images of the author, McCay, who with the help of the witness statements of a Mr Beach and the image material available at the time – a painting can be seen in the film – tries to gain information that is as precise as possible about a certain horrific war event: the German torpedoing of the passenger steamer *Lusitania* on 1 May 1915, leading to more than 1,200 civilian passengers being killed. In 1917, McCay worked for William Randolph Hearst’s *New York American*, but he conducted his film experiments on his own accord and against the will of his employer. He does, however, list an editorial team of researchers legitimising his information.

McCay’s research work is noteworthy in this context not only because of the continuity of the recurring theme of shipwreck since Géricault. The film is an early example of a modern attempt to face the crisis of historical painting at the level of media-technological progress. What we see here is perhaps the origin of the historical ideology of truth, which 3D animation still bears today: only an object that has been completely



IMG. 02 — Dierk Schmidt, 'Shipwreck scene, dedicated to the 353 drowned asylum seekers who died on the Indian Ocean, on the morning of October 12, 2001', 2001/2. Oil on pond insulation foil



IMG. 03 — Dierk Schmidt, 'Untitled - Freedom', 2001/2. Oil on PVC foil, © VG Bild-Kunst, Courtesy the artist and Städel Museum, Frankfurt/Main

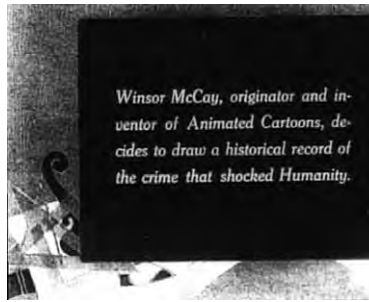
encompassed appears credible. The quest for an image that puts all aspects of a scandalised event into a spatial perspective already dominated the composition of Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*, with its complex staggering arrangement of depths pointing to the negative, the empty vanishing-point of the Argus coming to the rescue. Can one say that the modern discourses on truth, maybe even parallel to the history of the optics of aerial warfare, tended to spatialise? At any rate, McCay 'discovered' the poly-perspectivism of 3D emerging in 1914: truth and conceivability, for



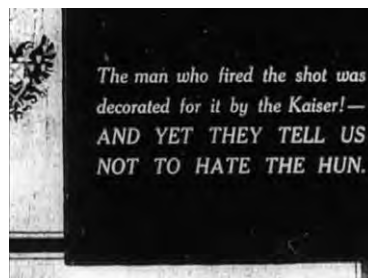
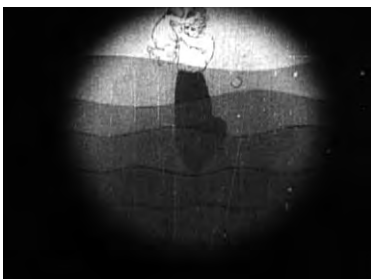
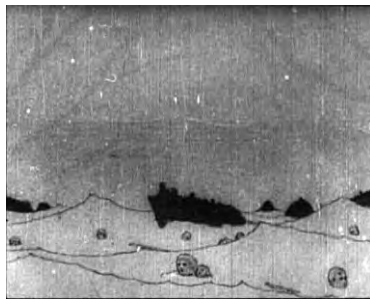
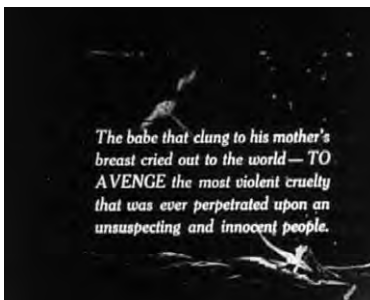
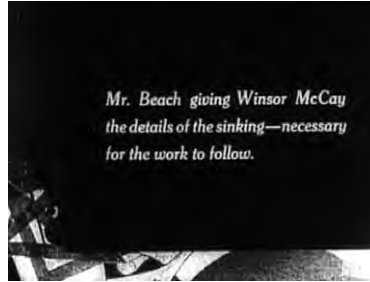
him, were apparently two sides of the same coin, when he enthusiastically examined the three-dimensional representation of waves, the driving ship, the fish scared away by the torpedoes, the explosion, and the slowly sinking ocean-liner and its passengers. One needn't wait for the final text panel, that refers to the Germans responsible for the disaster: 'And yet they tell us not to hate the Hun.' It is already clear beforehand that this early 'moving history image' is a profoundly propagandistic endeavour, which only on the level of a national sense of belonging, of celebrity, but also of motherhood, adopts the perspective of the victims. Upon closer examination, the claim of *The Sinking of the Lusitania* is solely legitimised by the progressiveness of the medium it utilises and which consists in combining in one structure drawing and live-action film, documentation and drama, enlightenment and entertainment, image and text.

At the present, painting is oddly enough deemed capable of establishing a concrete historical reference, a type of painting that endeavours to make more or less direct reference to historical events, modes of representation, or locations by means of gestures referring to motifs, almost as if the varied critique of historicism in the nineteenth and twentieth century was again made available as something freely negotiable, as if there had never been heated debates about the specific places Jörg Immendorf and Gerhard Richter referred to. With regard to the directness of the references, one could outline the positions that are currently quite successful on the market – in proximity to the outdated concepts of historical painting – according to a scale: it could begin with the classicistically cleansed panel paintings of Luc Tuymans, which predominantly deal with the monumental and melancholic arrestment of historically charged motifs. By appropriating them, they still seem to offer Tuymans certain provocative moments. Recently, they consisted of motifs taken from the history of (Belgian) colonialism and German National Socialism – whereby in the context of *documenta 11*, for example, they were grouped together with genre-referential still lifes in such a way that they became immersed in the ennui-laden signal silence of his well-known pastel shades. In the past years, this stands close to the explicitly 'light', intellectually airy totalitarianism–impressionism of a Norbert Bisky, or Neo Rauch's surrealism that is supposedly detached from the regime of chance and history. And this scale extends up to Daniel Richter's exhausted allegories of historical 'moments'.

Of course, one cannot blame any of those mentioned here for referring to 'history'. On the contrary: it would in fact make sense in view of the way in which historical images and texts are currently dealt with to seek a confrontation with the conspicuous a-historicity of a large part of contemporary art production and to counter them with alternatives. What these examples have in common is the more or less established positivism of a traditional model of an artist, a backward-looking fixation on the format of the large panel painting, and the claim that there is a special area of substantial painting – put in terms of 'progress', falling back behind the works of Fahlström, Kitaj, Fromanger, or the installational painting of a Richard Hamilton, for example. Hamilton's group of works



IMG. 04 — Winsor McCay, 'The Sinking of the Lusitania', 1917/18 (film stills). Photo: RMN – Hervé Lewandowski





from 1981–3, *The Citizen*, comes to mind here: it consisted of the image of an Orangeman, a policeman and a prisoner, with which Hamilton responded to the treatment of IRA prisoners locked up in the high-security prison of Long Kesh in Northern Ireland. In the picture of the prisoner he repeatedly dealt with the representation of institutional spaces. To enforce their demand to be recognised as political prisoners, they painted the walls of their cells with their excrement. In Hamilton's painting, the figure of the prisoner MacCartney wrapped up in a prison blanket is depicted as a 'citizen' approximating the figure of Christ. The 'dirty protest', which reminds one of graffiti, covers the entire left half of the ensemble that is structured as a diptych. There are a number of formal decisions that seem only to be concerned with 'punctuating', as manifestations and modes of staging of historical painting. Hamilton, like Schmidt after him, built his work on image information from television – an overall view of the cell could not be seen on any of the film shots. Hamilton did not just paint copies, he first created Cibachrome blow-ups of stills and then transferred them to the canvas. Not only can the equation of painting with excrements as a painting-inherent criticism of the picture be immediately grasped, Hamilton subsequently expanded the paintings to an installation in 1988 by presenting them in the space of a museum inside a rebuilt cell together with an old mattress, a pillow and smeared walls – something which again undermined the self-understanding of the social position of historical painting, while simultaneously implying a polemical equation between the space of the museum and the prison cell.

An expanded painterly practice also exists for Dierk Schmidt, one that repeatedly responds in an appropriating way to the imageries, iconographies and the referential forms of organisation of art-historical predecessors. Painting is one of the perceivable results of his work. What he now focuses on, as opposed to other artistic models, is the visible resolution to not simply fall back on the historical method of historical painting – to not fall in line with its unbroken claim to representation and a binding interpretation of history – but to 'actualise' it in terms of a critical model. On the one hand, this means that he attempts to act on an historical basis that is grasped and made experienceable in all its contradictions, while not refraining from criticising his sources.

Schmidt's appropriative use of found image material – from magazines, video material, books and web sites, but time and again also his own photos shot during research travels – perhaps sits most obviously in the Warholian tradition of outline drawings that repeatedly attempt to enable abstraction without losing sight of the concrete aspects of the references, prompting one to see the positive *and* negative of an image, of a thing. In contrast to other forms of historical realism, the issue does not centre solely on 'truth' in the positive sense, and neither on the trite criticism of claims to truth made by preceding artistic methods, but rather the operational opening and keeping open of the place of truth together with a pictorial montage, usually supported by text, of historical and contemporary ventures in dealing with the respective historical



IMG. 05 — Detail, 'NOT A SEASCAPE (II) SIEV-4', Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel, 2002



IMG. 06 — Installation view, Generali Foundation, Vienna, 2002 © VG Bild-Kunst, Courtesy the artist and Städel Museum, Frankfurt/Main

events or with the specific feature that mediates between the documented elements. The open character of this montage is meaningful in itself: the way in which the images and texts are arranged on the walls make them initially appear almost arrogantly casual, until it turns out that the visual arrangement points to all directions and could be continued.

For quite a while now, Schmidt has simultaneously been attempting to represent the given form of dealing with historical news, 'facts' and images, and to take this up as a form that is itself 'historical' in that it is not simply available in the way it is applied today – for example, in the sense of a 'new' form of 'historical painting'. To reveal the historicity of one's own historical view, however, is not only an obligatory formalistic

effort – taking it into account fundamentally determines Schmidt's aesthetic practice, his handling of the most various formats, such as painting, drawing, photography, photocopy, writing, diagrams and spatial installation, with the most diverse sources of information, material and immaterial, from paper and digital archives. The historical aspect already determines the basic structure in which Schmidt formats historical and present-day political topics, making them the object of artistic critique. What is the specific artistic feature of his critique? Probably the self-empowering competence that grasps and makes perceivable, beyond linear analyses, the historicity and rhetorical nature of the concrete sources on hand as a condensation. It must be pointed out that Schmidt's concern is not the 'face' of history, the opposite image of a moment, the hierarchy of top and bottom, before and after, arranged in the picture – it is, rather, the perception of the possibility of creating 'meta' pictures of the appropriated images, of profiting from the advanced views of twentieth-century history of art within painting: not to capture the pictures with their own weapons, but to keep them in check at least long enough so that something like a common rhetorical trait becomes visible in them. If one understands this as an attitude, as an attitude of an 'epoche' perhaps, as refraining from judging the different historical findings of the material, as it was part of the phenomenological canon in the stoic-sceptic tradition, one would hit on something, but also miss another important aspect: by embedding the images in a critical apparatus, a subjectivity can be addressed *pars pro toto*, a subjectivity concerned with historical interests, with one's own involvement in what is historical, but also with the possibilities of a pictorial language for the concrete.

## 2. Mirror, Mirror on the Wall (Self-Reflection)

Absence looms large. According to art educator Carmen Mörsch, museums propagate an active ignorance that allows them to speak *for* instead of *with* people they exclude from power. Those working in the seams must unlearn their own privilege within migratory society and open up spaces for negotiation. This in turn demands a certain amount of self-reflexivity, mirrored in artist Lidwien van de Ven's tongue-in-cheek reference to the absence/presence of the mastering eye. The gaze is, photographer Geneviève Frisson seems to suggest, dispersed into a multitude of artefacts.



## Lidwien van de Ven, *Untitled (London)*, 2012

→ GENEVIÈVE FRISSON

Is this in an old photograph, or does the image just pretend to belong to another era? In medium close-up, the camera shows a desktop densely covered with stuff. There are private things, personal belongings like a magnifying glass, a brush, a spectacle case and, quite prominently on the stack of white paper at the centre, a pair of spectacles. Mixed with these mundane objects is a collection of ancient, or ancient-looking, artefacts: Buddha figures, Egyptian gods, but also Western antiquities that correspond to an engraving of a Roman archaeological site or a rug, both mounted on the wall behind. The desktop is a museological arrangement with a vengeance; it attempts to project an absence and an aura. Once someone had been sitting here, right at this desk, someone who had taken notes while listening to the dreams and fantasies people told him while he contemplated the sun god Ra or the polished texture of a dish.

**PREVIOUS PAGE** — Detail of 'Untitled (London)'. Lidwien van de Ven, 2012. Pigmented inkjet print on cottonrag paper





IMG. 01 — 'Untitled  
(London)'. Lidwien van de  
Ven, 2012. Pigmented inkjet  
print on cottonrag paper









# Über Zugang Hinaus

## Nachträgliche einführende Gedanken zur Arbeitstagung 'Kunstvermittlung in der Migrationsgesellschaft'

→ CARMEN MÖRSCH

→ ABSTRACT

*Written for the publication of a conference held in Berlin in 2011, this paper reviews current discourses in the german-speaking countries concerning migration in cultural institutions' learning and outreach work, and poses challenges for this working field. Starting from the critique of the concept of intercultural dialogue – concerning the fact that in most cases, dialogue does not occur on a level playing field, and that the focus on cultural difference and hybridity tends to conceal social and political inequality – the text points to a 'rewarded ignorance' of these objections made since the early 1990s. It goes on to argue for the necessity of unlearning, a reflexive approach and – with Rustom Bharucha – a shift in the position of cultural institutions from representing civil society to an active role as agents and arenas in the political domain.*

→ I. WEGHÖREN LOHNT SICH

In der ersten Dekade des 21. Jahrhunderts (genauer: seit dem Einsturz der Twin Towers in New York am 11 September 2001) ist die Frage nach der Positionierung und den Handlungsmaximen von Kulturinstitutionen in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft ein Thema geworden. In diesem Zusammenhang ist die Vermittlung mit ihrem professionellen Wissen und Können immer dann gefragt, wenn es um 'Publikumserweiterung', um das 'Schaffen von Zugang' oder die Entwicklung 'zielgruppenorientierter Angebote' geht. Das Konzept der 'Interkulturalität' und des 'interkulturellen Dialogs' ist dabei der dominierende Zugang im deutschsprachigen Raum, wie sich an einer großen Zahl von Projekten, Studien, Handreichungen und Konferenzen zeigt.<sup>1</sup>

PREVIOUS PAGE —  
Geneviève Frisson,  
'Untitled', 2012

1 Einige Beispiele: Tagungen: 'inter.kultur.pädagogik', Berlin 2003; 'Interkulturelle Bildung – Ein Weg zur Integration?', Bonn 2007; 'Migration in Museums: Narratives of Diversity in Europe', Berlin 2008; 'Stadt – Museum – Migration', Dortmund 2009; 'MigrantInnen im Museum', Linz 2009; 'Interkultur.

‘Die Kultureinrichtungen sollten den interkulturellen Dialog als eine Schwerpunktaufgabe begreifen. Überwiegend gefördert durch öffentliche Mittel, werden sie damit auch ihrer sozialen Mitverantwortung gerecht’ schreibt der *Nationale Integrationsplan* der Deutschen Bundesregierung von 2007 vor.<sup>2</sup>

Bereits in den 1990er Jahren wurde das Konzept der Interkulturalität aus postkolonialer Perspektive scharf kritisiert. Diese Kritik konnte auch von deutschsprachigen Leser\_innen zur Kenntnis genommen werden. So wies Rustom Bharucha,<sup>3</sup> Regisseur, Dramaturg, Museumsberater und Theoretiker aus Kalkutta, in der Zeitschrift *Theater der Zeit*<sup>4</sup> 1995 darauf hin,

*daß Interkulturalismus weder einfach ein spontanes Zusammentreffen von Unterschieden, noch die euphorische Rückkehr in einen Zustand vor(national) staatlichen menschlichen Zusammenseins oder lediglich eine Frage der Dominanz eines kulturellen Systems über ein anderes ist. (Für letzteres spricht allerdings schon allein die Tatsache, daß Interkulturalismus unverändert vom Westen finanziert, theoretisiert und rhetorisiert wird, während nicht-westliche Kulturen auf Material, Techniken und Sachverständnis unter minimaler Eigenbeteiligung reduziert werden. Vor allem aber sind sie so gut wie gar nicht an der Konzeptionierung des Rahmens beteiligt, in dem eine interkulturelle Begegnung platziert wird.) Wie auch immer, wenn Interkulturalismus auch nicht ausschließlich durch Dominanz entsteht, so doch durch eine Serie von Komplizenschaft zwischen Machtsystemen, die letztlich durch den Staat und zunehmend durch den Markt (was in vielen Fällen ein und dasselbe ist) bestimmt werden. Welche „Autonomie“ auch immer eine interkulturelle Begegnung für sich in Anspruch nimmt, sie wird unweigerlich begrenzt durch dieses größere Szenario. Bharucha 1995, S. 23 ff)*

Die von Bharucha vorgebrachte Kritik geht über das 1992 von dem Philosophen Wolfgang Iser propagierte Verwerfen von ‘Multikulturalität’ und ‘Interkulturalität’ als auf einem veralteten, essentialistischen Kulturbegriff fußenden Konzepten zugunsten einer Idee von ‘Transkulturalität’ hinaus (Iser 1995). Denn sie benennt die fortdauernde Effektivität dieser

Kunstpädagogik Re mixed’, Nürnberg 2012. Forschung/Entwicklung: ‘Creating Belonging’, Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, gefördert von SNF 2008–09; ‘Migration Design. Codes, Identitäten, Integrationen’, Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, gefördert von KTI 2008–10; ‘Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue’, EUProjekt 2007–09; ‘Der Kunst code – Kunstschulen im Interkulturellen Dialog’, Bundesverband der Jugendkunstschulen und Kulturpädagogischen Einrichtungen e.V. (BJKE), gefördert durch das Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung 2005–08; ‘Museum und Migration: Kinder und Jugendliche mit Migrationshintergrund als Zielgruppe von Museen’, Linzer Institut für qualitative Analysen (LIQA), im Auftrag der Stadt Linz und des Landes Oberösterreich, Abteilung Soziales und Institut für Kunst und Volkskultur 2009–10. Publikationen und Handreichungen: Handreichung zum Schweizerischen Museumstag 2010; Kulturkontakt Austria (Hrsg.) (2008): *hautnah. Beispiele partizipativer Kunstvermittlung im interkulturellen Dialog*, Wien; Vera All manritter, Klaus Siebenhaar (Hrsg.) (2010): *Kultur mit allen! Wie öffentliche deutsche Kultureinrichtungen Migranten als Publikum gewinnen*, Berlin: B&S Siebenhaar; Zentrum für Audience Development der FU Berlin (2009): *Migranten als Publika von öffentlichen deutschen Kulturinstitutionen – Der aktuelle Status Quo aus Sicht der Angebotsseite*. Download unter <http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/v/zad/news/zadstudie.html> (16.4.2012).

2 [http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Archiv16/Artikel/2007/07/Anlage/2007-10-18-nationalerintegrationsplan.pdf?jsessionid=B539E5CFD074D936938204F4B9C8FDBE.s3t2?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=2](http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Archiv16/Artikel/2007/07/Anlage/2007-10-18-nationalerintegrationsplan.pdf?jsessionid=B539E5CFD074D936938204F4B9C8FDBE.s3t2?__blob=publicationFile&v=2), (9.4.2012).

3 Ich danke Nicola Lauré al Samarai und Fouad Asfour für ihren Hinweis auf diesen Autor.

4 *Theater der Zeit* ist mit 5,000 verkauften Exemplaren eine der auflagenstärksten Monatsschriften im deutschsprachigen Theaterbereich. Sie wurde 1946 gegründet und erscheint zehnmal jährlich.

Konzepte im Kampf um den Erhalt symbolischer, politischer und ökonomischer Vorherrschaft.

Kritik am 'interkulturellen Dialog', an 'interkultureller Kompetenz', an zeitgenössischen Instrumentalisierungen von 'Integration' genauso wie an einem naiv euphorischen Zugang zu 'Hybridität' wird seit Jahren auch von migrantischen und mehrheitsangehörigen Aktivist\_innen, Kulturschaffenden und Theoretiker\_innen im deutschsprachigen Raum eindringlich und wiederholt vorgebracht.<sup>5</sup> Hier der Versuch, einige ihrer Problematisierungen zusammenzufassen:

Der Begriff 'Dialog' evoziert die Vorstellung eines Austauschs unter gleichberechtigten Parteien. Jedoch bildet ein massives und kaum zu verschiebendes, weil hegemonial strukturiertes, institutionalisiertes und in historisch kolonialen und aktuell neokolonialen Verhältnissen permanent sich reproduzierendes Machtungleichgewicht den Ausgangspunkt von Unternehmungen unter dem Vorzeichen des 'interkulturellen Dialogs'. Der Fokus auf 'Kultur' und 'Hybridität' trägt dazu bei, die Faktoren, die dieses Machtungleichgewicht bestimmen – zum Beispiel die ungleiche Verteilung von Ressourcen wie Geld, Bildung oder Definitionsmacht, die unterschiedlich gute Kapitalisierbarkeit verschiedener Wissensbestände (oder auch gesprochener Sprachen), genauso wie die Allgegenwart von alltäglichem und strukturellem Rassismus – unbenannt und unverändert zu lassen. In Kultureinrichtungen kommt hinzu, dass Vorstellungen davon, was wichtige und im Sinne einer 'integrierenden' Bildungsfunktion geeignete kulturelle Hervorbringungen und Praktiken wären, die Norm darstellen und kaum ernsthaft, das heißt mit entsprechenden Konsequenzen, hinterfragbar sind.

Angesichts der Schwere dieser Einwände stellt sich die Frage, warum Interkulturalität und insbesondere der interkulturelle Dialog so persistente und attraktive Konzepte sind. Warum ist der von einigen Kritiker\_innen vorgeschlagene Gegenentwurf, nämlich ein politischer Antirassismus<sup>6</sup> im Zeichen kritischen Weißseins,<sup>7</sup> der aktiv an der Veränderung von Verhältnissen im Sinne einer Umverteilung von Ressourcen arbeitet,

5 Stellvertretend seien entlang der oben aufgeführten Stichworte hier nur drei Publikationen aufgelistet: Kien Nghi Ha (2004): *Ethnizität und Migration Reloaded. Kulturelle Identität, Differenz und Hybridität im postkolonialen Diskurs*. Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag. Kien Nghi Ha, Nicola Lauré alSamarai, Sheila Mysorekar (Hrsg.) (2007): *re/visionen. Postkoloniale Perspektiven von People of Colour auf Rassismus, Kulturpolitik und Widerstand in Deutschland*. Münster: Unrast. Sabine Hess, Jana Binder, Johannes Moser (Hrsg.) (2009): *nointegration?! Kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Integrationsdebatte in Europa*. Bielefeld: Transcript.

6 Stellvertretend seien entlang der oben aufgeführten Stichworte hier nur drei Publikationen aufgelistet: Kien Nghi Ha (2004): *Ethnizität und Migration Reloaded. Kulturelle Identität, Differenz und Hybridität im postkolonialen Diskurs*. Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag. Kien Nghi Ha, Nicola Lauré alSamarai, Sheila Mysorekar (Hrsg.) (2007): *re/visionen. Postkoloniale Perspektiven von People of Colour auf Rassismus, Kulturpolitik und Widerstand in Deutschland*. Münster: Unrast. Sabine Hess, Jana Binder, Johannes Moser (Hrsg.) (2009): *nointegration?! Kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Integrationsdebatte in Europa*. Bielefeld: Transcript.

7 'Sich mit dem eigenen Weißsein zu beschäftigen, heißt Weißsein in den gesellschaftlichen rassistischen Kontext zu stellen und die eigene Verstrickung darin zu reflektieren.' Elena Bandalise/Fei Kaldrack/Dorothea Schütze: 'Weißsein – was geht mich das an? Verunsicherung als Notwendigkeit' (2006), in: DOKUMENTATION TAGUNG – Transkulturelle Teams. Ein Qualitätsstandard in der sozialen Arbeit?! Mädchentreff Bielefeld. Download unter: [http://www.maedchentreffbielefeld.de/download/doku\\_transkulturelle\\_teams.pdf](http://www.maedchentreffbielefeld.de/download/doku_transkulturelle_teams.pdf), 16.4.2012.



offenbar so ungleich weniger einladend? Warum werden die hier umrissenen Kritiken von den Kultureinrichtungen, genauso wie von den Praktiker\_innen der Kulturvermittlung, den Akteur\_innen der Kultur und Bildungspolitik und von weiten Teilen der in diesem Feld sich etablierenden Evaluator\_innen und Praxisforscher\_innen bislang so selten gehört?<sup>8</sup> Eine Antwort könnte lauten, dass es genau die in der Kritik beschriebenen Effekte sind, die das Überhören nahelegen. Es könnte sich mit Gayatri C. Spivak um eine Spielart 'belohnter Ignoranz'<sup>9</sup> handeln – eine kollektiv perpetuierte Uninformiertheit, die keine Peinlichkeit auslöst, weil sie die Grundlage dafür bildet, die eigene Vormachtstellung zu behaupten. Die Herangehensweise des 'interkulturellen Dialogs' und der Imperativ, 'Zugang für Migrant\_innen' zu schaffen, sichert den Institutionen ihre hegemoniale Position in Bezug auf die oben angeführten Ressourcen und Machtverhältnisse. Sie ermöglichen es ihnen, sich selbst ähnlich zu bleiben<sup>10</sup> und gleichzeitig 'ihrer sozialen Verantwortung gerecht zu werden'. Die Arbeit mit einem sichtbar als 'migrantisch' markierten, aus bildungsbürgerlicher Perspektive benachteiligten und ausgeschlossenen Publikum bedeutet für die Kultureinrichtungen zunächst einmal eine Legitimation von staatlicher Finanzierung.<sup>11</sup> Darüber hinaus wecken die vermeintlich 'Kulturanderen' das Begehren von Kulturvermittler\_innen, die die antileitäre Aufforderung der 1970er Jahre, 'Kultur für Alle' zugänglich zu machen, verinnerlicht haben und versuchen, sie weiterhin als bestimmende Handlungsmaxime in ihre Arbeitswirklichkeit zu übersetzen – ohne dabei aktivreflexiv mit dem Paradox zu arbeiten, dass eine Anerkennung von Benachteiligung und Ausgeschlossenheit immer auch deren Wiederholung bedeutet.<sup>12</sup> Und nicht zuletzt beinhalten die Interaktionen mit solchen Öffentlichkeiten für die Institutionen auch das Potential der Selbstoptimierung im kognitiven Kapitalismus – 'User Generated Content' und durch die Institution selbst definierte Rahmen

8 Wobei mit 'Hören' hier eine aktive Tätigkeit bezeichnet ist, die sich z. B. auch in Einladungs- und Beauftragungspolitiken und Autor\_innenschaften bei o. g. Tagungen, Publikationen und Wegweisungen niederschlagen würde – bisher sind fast alle der an ihnen Beteiligten Angehörige der weißen Mehrheit und in Ausnahmefällen Angehörige von Minderheiten, die beide die dominanten Konzepte affirmieren. Eine Ausnahme bildet aktuell die Einladung von Paul Mecheril als Vortragender auf dem Bundeskongress der Kunstpädagogik im April 2012 in Nürnberg, mit dem Titel 'Interkultur. Kunstpädagogik remixed'.

9 'Wo Spivak von der gestatteten, ja der belohnten Ignoranz spricht – jener Ignoranz also, die nicht blamiert, sondern im Gegenteil die eigene Position der Macht stabilisiert – spricht die kanadische Philosophin Lorraine Code von der Macht der Ignoranz. Eine Ignoranz, die im wissenschaftlichen Diskurs gerne als Objektivität verstanden wird.' Maria do Mar Castro Varela, Nikita Dhawan: 'Breaking the Rules. Bildung und Postkolonialismus', in: Carmen Mörsch und das Forschungsteam der *documenta 12* Vermittlung (2009): *Kunstvermittlung. Zwischen Dienstleistung und Kritischer Praxis auf der documenta 12*. Berlin, Zürich: Diaphanes, S. 348.

10 Laut der Sozialanthropologin Mary Douglas ist das Bedürfnis nach Erhalt des eigenen konzeptuellen und strukturellen Status quo ein konstitutives Merkmal von Institutionen, für das mitunter ein hoher Preis zu zahlen ist – zum Beispiel der der strukturellen Amnesie, des Vergessens der eigenen oder kontextuellen Geschichte zugunsten einer Fortführung von dominanten Selbstbeschreibungen in der Gegenwart, die von dieser Geschichte ins Wanken gebracht würden. Vgl. Mary Douglas (1987): *How Institutions Think*. London: Routledge and L. Kegan Paul. (dt.: *Wie Institutionen denken*. Frankfurt am Main 1991).

11 Siehe Protokoll zum Workshop 'Methoden' von Sidar Barut in ifa – Edition Kultur und Außenpolitik. Kunstvermittlung in der Migrationsgesellschaft/Reflexionen einer Arbeitstagung – 2011. Hrsg. Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa), Institute für Art Education (IAE), Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (ZHdK), Institut für Kunst im Kontext der Universität der Künste, Berlin, 2012.

12 Siehe hierzu den Beitrag von Paul Mecheril und das Protokoll sowie die Reflexionen zum Workshop 'Differenz nicht anerkennen' in ifa – Edition Kulture und Außenpolitik.

von 'Partizipation' lassen sie zeitgemäßer erscheinen, ohne dass das eigene Sich-wohl-und-heimisch-Fühlen der legitimierten Akteur\_innen grundsätzlich bedroht wäre.

→ II. SELTSAM? ABER SO STEHT ES GESCHRIEBEN...<sup>13</sup>

So weit, so abstrakt. Doch Rustom Bharucha leitete seine oben zitierte Kritik an den 'Interkulturalisten' aus einer sehr konkreten Praxis ab, die er 1977 in Kalkutta während einer als 'Chhau' bezeichneten Tanzperformance beobachtet hatte:

*Es war eine Darbietung, die eher unbewußt von einer Gruppe von "Interkulturalisten" aus diesem Teil der Welt, aus Europa und den USA, aufgeführt wurde. Sie waren eifrig damit beschäftigt, während der Performance mit ihren Kameras Fotos zu schießen. Ich erinnere mich an meinen Blick auf ihre Rücken und ein glitzerndes Heer von Fotokameras, Zoom-Objektiven und Videokameras, was für mich zum damaligen Zeitpunkt zum Inbegriff westlicher Technologie und Macht wurde. Durch dieses Bild erkannte ich das Fremde an Chhau. (...)*

*Ich habe mich damals gefragt ohne bis dahin dem Wort "Interkulturalismus" begegnet zu sein: Wer sind diese Leute? Was sehen sie? Und warum scheinen sie die Tausende[n] (Inder) zu vergessen, die hinter ihnen sitzen? Heute denke ich über meine Fragen anders nach: (...) Wurden wir zu Voyeuren unserer eigenen Kultur gemacht, indem wir Chhau durch die Wand aus westlichen Körpern anschauten? Bis zu welchem Grad ist Chhau Bestandteil "unserer" Tradition? Was ist überhaupt unsere "Tradition"? [...]*

Bharucha beschreibt einen Moment diskursiver und struktureller Gewalt, eine kaum reversible, nur durch kontinuierliche intellektuelle Arbeit langfristig in Erkenntnis zu transformierende Intervention in seiner Wahrnehmung. Nicht umsonst übertitelt er seinen Text mit der Frage 'Wem gehören die Bilder?' Als effizienteste Waffe, die bei dieser Intervention zum Einsatz kommt, erweist sich das Vergessen von Tausenden. Die interkulturelle Begegnung muss die vorhandenen Akteure als Gegenüber ausblenden und stattdessen ein Phantasma des 'Fremden' produzieren, um ihre Existenz aus dem Normalen, dem 'Eigenen' heraus abzuleiten zu können und die Privilegien dieses Eigenen als naturgegeben zu behaupten. Die Produktion des Fremden bedingt die Aufbietung einer Ignorierungsanstrengung, die nicht nur in dem Moment, da sie sich jeweils konkret artikuliert, enorm, man könnte auch sagen, monströs erscheint, sondern die durch eine über mehrere Jahrhunderte andauernde Übungspraxis beeindruckt. Entsprechend gut geübt ereignen sich meiner Wahrnehmung nach ständig ähnlich strukturierte Gruselgeschichten im Feld der institutionellen Kunstvermittlung.

Eine davon möchte ich hier erzählen. Ich habe sie gewählt, weil sie für mich als bildendes Schlüsselerlebnis, im Sinne einer Politisierung meines Selbstverständnisses als Kunstvermittlerin, wirkte. Ich besuchte

<sup>13</sup> Verlässliches Ende aller Graphic Novels, die unter dem Titel 'Gespenster Geschichten' von März 1974 bis März 2006 im Bastei Lübbe Verlag erschienen.

im April 2009 eine Tagung in der Landesgalerie Linz mit dem Titel *Migrant Innen im Museum*. Diese zeichnete sich dadurch aus, dass sich zumindest zum Zeitpunkt der Tagung so gut wie keine Migrant\_innen im veranstalten den Museum befanden. Auf der Seite der Redner\_innen gab es gar keine, auf der Seite des Publikums gab es einige wenige. Diese wenigen waren Teilnehmerinnen an einem Projekt mit dem Titel *Kultur lotsinnen*, das Linz als Kulturhauptstadt 2009 in Kooperation mit dem Berufsförderungsinstitut Oberösterreich und dem Arbeitsmarktservice ins Leben gerufen hatte. In diesem führten beruflich gut ausgebildete (und das heißt: wiederum vergleichsweise privilegierte) Frauen, die durch ihren Umzug nach Österreich eine Dequalifizierung erfahren hatten und nun erwerbslos waren, Besucher\_innen der Kulturhauptstadt ehrenamtlich und gratis durch ihr Viertel und erzählten dabei aus ihren Biografien und ihrem Alltag in Linz. Davon erwarteten sie sich einen erleichterten Zugang zum Arbeitsmarkt. 'Ich hoffe, dass sie merken, dass ich interkulturelle Kompetenzen und auch viele andere Kompetenzen besitze und eine Linzerin bin' spricht eine der Beteiligten, die früher einmal ein Hotel geleitet hat und fünf Sprachen spricht, in einer Reportage des ORF in die Kamera.<sup>14</sup> Das Projekt gewann im Herbst des gleichen Jahres den Österreichischen Staatspreis für Erwachsenenbildung in der Kategorie 'Innovation'. Bei der Tagung in der Landesgalerie stellten nicht die als *Kultur lotsinnen* ehrenamtlich arbeitenden Frauen das Projekt vor, sondern die – mehrheitsösterreichische – Erwachsenenbildnerin, die mit ihnen die Touren erarbeitet hatte. Einige Museumsleute waren begeistert und traten gleich in der nächsten Pause mit der Kollegin in Kontakt, um zu erfahren, wie auch sie selbst an Migrantinnen kommen könnten, die ohne Bezahlung durch ihre Institutionen führen würden.

Ich war damals aus mehreren Gründen empört. Über die Deutlichkeit, mit der das Wort 'Migrant Innen' im Titel der Tagung als Fremdbezeichnung zu Tage trat: Nicht mit, sondern über Migrantinnen wurde geredet. Sie waren das Zielobjekt im mehrheitsperspektivierten Marketingvisier der Museumspistole. Vermutungen, dass mit 'Migrant Innen' auch im Museum in leitender Funktion Beschäftigte gemeint sein könnten oder dass der Titel von aktivistischer Seite als Drohung oder Forderung formuliert werden könnte, spielten in diesem Zusammenhang keine Rolle. Ebenso wenig schien die Frage von Belang zu sein, wie sich das Museum als Institution, deren Geschichte unauflöslich mit dem Kolonialismus verwoben ist,<sup>15</sup> durch die Mitbestimmung und Mitgestaltung der adressierten Abwesenden möglicherweise verändern und politisch im Sinne einer Parteinahme positionieren könnte. Empörend fand ich auch die Vergesslichkeit der Institutionen (seien es nun die Kulturhauptstadt oder die gebauten Museen), was ihre hegemoniale Position betrifft. So stellte sich mir die Frage, was es bedeutet, angesichts der Ausstattung

14 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffjH2S0ydDc>, (9.4.2012).

15 Weniger als ein Jahr zuvor hatte in der Landesgalerie eine Ausstellung der Künstlerin Lisl Ponger stattgefunden, die sich unter dem Titel 'Imago Mundi' mit eben dieser historischen Verstrickung beschäftigte. Die Verlagerung der Institutionskritik auf die symbolische Ebene des Displays ist eine weitere institutionelle Praxis der Bewahrung von Strukturen.

der beteiligten Akteurinnen mit symbolischem, ökonomischem und sozialem Kapital im Fall des erwähnten Projektes von einer selbstmotivierten Bereitschaft, unbezahlt zu arbeiten und unbekannten Neugierigen vom eigenen Leben zu erzählen, zu sprechen.<sup>16</sup> Des Weiteren erstaunte mich die selbstverständliche (Selbst)Exotisierung und, damit einhergehend, erneute Dequalifizierung, die sich in den von den 'Kulturlotsinnen' zusammen mit der Erwachsenen Bildnerin erarbeiteten Touren artikulierte: Warum war der biografische Ansatz bei diesen Stadtführungen so zentral? Wie würde es wahrgenommen, wenn eine mehrheitsangehörige Stadtführerin vor allem aus ihrem Leben erzählte, anstatt Informationen über die Stadt zu vermitteln? Warum ist im Diskurs der Erwachsenenbildungsarbeit mit Migrant\_innen so oft von 'Erfahrung' die Rede, nicht aber von 'Wissen'? Und warum ließen sich die Frauen aus dem Projekt auf diese Rolle ein?

Eine andere Kollegin, Vermittlerin am Volkskundemuseum in Wien, stellte auf der gleichen Tagung ihre Arbeit mit Lernenden von Deutsch als Zweitsprache vor. Sie betonte die Produktivität des Lernens am Objekt und der Offenheit des Lernzugangs im Museum für diese Klientel. Sie beschrieb, wie sie als Vorbereitung für die Arbeit mit einer Gruppe von Frauen, die seit über zehn Jahren in Österreich leben, bestimmte Objekte als Gesprächsanlass auswählte, die aus ihrer Sicht etwas mit der Lebenswirklichkeit dieser Frauen zu tun hätten.

Auf meine Frage, welche Art Gegenstände sie für diese Gelegenheiten auswählen würde, antwortete sie 'zum Beispiel Pfannen und große Schüsseln'.

Als ich meine Kritik an diesen Darbietungen im Rahmen einer abschließenden Diskussionsrunde artikulierte, begegnete mir seitens der Veranstaltenden und Referent\_innen vor allem verblüfftes Schweigen und die wiederholte Bekräftigung der guten Absichten. Damals fand ich mich missverstanden und bedauerte, nicht die richtigen Worte und die habituelle Passung für die Kolleg\_innen gefunden zu haben. Heute, viele Gruselgeschichten später, befürchte ich, die Kritik wurde damals genau richtig verstanden. Das Schweigen und die Insistenz auf dem Argument, Gutes zu tun und Gutes zu wollen, deute ich mit Rustom Bharucha als hegemoniale Praktiken des Vergessens, als aktive und lohnende Ignoranz, auf deren Basis sich die Routinen institutioneller Privilegiertheit im Namen der interkulturellen Kompetenzen, Dialoge und Begegnungen ununterbrochen vollziehen können.

### → III. EINE ARBEITSTAGUNG ALS UNTERBRECHUNG

Kritik an Zugängen in einem Praxisfeld wie der Kunstvermittlung bleibt unbefriedigend, wenn sie nicht mit dem Aufzeigen von anderen Denk- und

16 Diese Frage ist selbst wiederum extrem problematisch, weil sie die Gefahr der Viktimisierung der Teilnehmerinnen enthält. Auch in diesem Text sprechen sie nicht 'für sich'. Da ist sie wieder, die paradoxe Anforderung, Differenz anzuerkennen und die ihr zugrundeliegenden Unterscheidungen zu dekonstruieren, von der bei Paul Mecheril sowie in den Beiträgen zum Workshop 'Differenz nicht anerkennen' die Rede ist. Auch Empörung ist selten widerspruchsfrei. Siehe ifa – Edition Kulture und Außenpolitik.

Handlungsperspektiven verbunden ist.<sup>17</sup> Am *Institute for Art Education* der Zürcher Hochschule der Künste versuchen wir uns an der Analyse, aber auch an der Unterbrechung der Routinen. Unser Wunsch ist es, auf dieser Basis Vorschläge für eine Kunstvermittlung zu entwickeln, die den in diesem Text beschriebenen Herrschaftsverhältnissen entgegenarbeiten. Diese Arbeit ist mitunter kostspielig und mühsam, immer zäher und langsamer als kalkuliert, voller Fallen, selbstverunsichernd, und in all dem macht sie zuweilen auch Spaß. Sie gelingt in jedem Fall nur in der – konfliktreichen – Auseinandersetzung mit der bislang fast ausschließlich aus mehrheitsangehörigen Akteur\_innen bestehenden Praxis, deren Teil wir sind, sowie in Zusammenarbeit mit Organisationen und Akteur\_innen, die im Arbeitsfeld der Migration kritische Zugänge pflegen. Aus diesem Grund entschlossen wir uns, der Einladung von Elke aus dem Moore zu folgen, gemeinsam mit dem Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen und dem Institut für Kunst im Kontext der UdK Berlin eine Arbeitstagung für Kunstvermittler\_innen zu konzipieren und durchzuführen, welche (so unsere Hoffnung) die Routinen des aktiven Vergessens zur Sicherung der eigenen Privilegien aufzeigen und Wissen, das selten gehört wird, zum Weiterdenken und zur Entwicklung von Handlungs- und Kooperationsmöglichkeiten ins Spiel bringen würde. Bereits der von Paul Mecheril vorgeschlagene Begriff ‘Migrationsgesellschaft’ im Titel der Tagung verwies auf einen Zugang jenseits der Inter kulturalität: Er verschiebt den Fokus weg von den ‘Migrationsanderen’ in Richtung einer Gesellschaft, für die Migration seit langer Zeit konstitutiv ist. Dies impliziert für die Vermittlung am Museum, weniger über Angebote für wie auch immer imaginierte ‘Migrant\_innen’ mit ihnen zugeschriebenen Bedürfnissen nachzudenken, als darüber, welche Funktionen, Praktiken und Positionen die von der Kunstvermittlung bespielten Räume in der Migrationsgesellschaft einnehmen oder zumindest anstreben könnten – was es bedeuten würde, eine in dieser Perspektive zeitgemäße, und das bedeutet auch entsprechend informierte, Arbeit zu leisten.

Wenn Rassismus und Ausgrenzung strukturell gesehen werden, kann die Vision einer Kunstvermittlung, die Ausschlussmechanismen entgegen wirkt und Kunsträume als Lern- und Handlungsorte gerade für minoritäre Positionen nutzbar macht, das Selbstverständnis von Kulturinstitutionen und Kunstvermittlung nicht unberührt lassen.

Kunstvermittlung soll damit – in Anlehnung an Spivaks Konzept des Verlernens von Privilegien<sup>18</sup> – als Dynamik von Lernen und Verlernen konzipiert werden. Privilegien zu verlernen, stellt die Vermittler\_innen vor besondere Herausforderungen, da grundsätzliche Bausteine ihres beruflichen Selbstkonzeptes eine fundamentale Verunsicherung erfahren

17 Dabei müssen jedoch die Kritiker\_innen und diejenigen, welche die Handlungsperspektiven aus dieser Kritik entwickeln, nicht zwangsläufig die gleichen Personen sein.

18 ‘Unlearning one’s privilege by considering it as one’s loss constitutes a double recognition. Our privileges, whatever they may be in terms of race, class, nationality, gender, and the like, may have prevented us from gaining a certain kind of Other knowledge: not simply information that we have not yet received, but the knowledge that we are not equipped to understand by reason of our social position’, in: Gayatri C. Spivak, Donna Landry, Gerald Maclean (Hrsg.) (1996): *The Spivak Reader*, London/New York: Routledge, S. 4.

– zum Beispiel, dass sie die in der Institution am wenigsten Privilegierten sind (sowohl was das symbolische als auch was das ökonomische Kapital angeht), aber gleichzeitig auch diejenigen, die Gutes tun und darum bemüht sind, die Ausgeschlossenen hineinzuholen. ‘Das Wissen darum, dass es nicht ausreicht “Gutes tun zu wollen” beunruhigt die in der interkulturellen Praxis Tätigen, denn es verlangt nach einem hohen Grad an Verantwortlichkeit und damit einhergehenden Bewusstsein über die eigene Verletzungsgewalt’, schrieb Maria do Mar Castro Varela und nennt die ‘Fähigkeit, sich irritieren zu lassen’<sup>19</sup> als zentral für eine pädagogischen Haltung, die Machtverhältnisse nicht wiederholen, sondern verschieben möchte. Die Soziologin und Psychologin Frigga Haug meint Ähnliches, wenn sie die Praxis, ‘sich selbst zu widersprechen’<sup>20</sup> als grundlegend für das professionelle Selbstverständnis einer emanzipatorischen pädagogischen Arbeit benennt – im Sinne eines Offenlegens von Vorannahmen, die der Produktion der für das eigene Feld konstitutiven Wahrheiten zugrunde liegen, und der Gewalt, die im wohlmeinenden Wollen liegt. Dies sei Haug zufolge notwendig, um ‘zwischen der Scylla eines “innen” hockenden autonomen Subjekts und der Charybdis völliger Durchdrungenheit von Herrschaft einen Weg zu finden, wie die einzelnen sich als Mitglieder einer Gesellschaft erfahren’ und gesellschaftliche Bedingungen gestalten können.

#### → IV. ÜBER SCHULD HINAUS

Sich selbst zu widersprechen und sich irritieren zu lassen, wurde auf der Arbeitstagung intensiv geübt. Dass dies mit enormen Spannungen, Konflikten, mit Druck und Widerständen verbunden war, ist wenig überraschend. Sonst wäre die Problematisierung, die der Arbeitstagung zugrunde lag, nicht notwendig, und wir hätten uns den Aufwand sparen können. Es ist ein Erfolg, dass die Arbeitstagung einen vergleichsweise sicheren Raum für die Artikulation von Differenzen bot, wie es von den Veranstalterinnen beabsichtigt war. Dennoch ist die Arbeitstagung *Kunstvermittlung in der Migrationsgesellschaft* aus meiner Sicht keine Story of Success. Sie endet für mich nicht mit einem Ausrufungs- und auch nicht mit einem Fragezeichen, sondern mit einem Doppelpunkt: Das Wichtigste kommt danach.

Ich möchte im letzten Teil dieser einführen den Nachlese auf einen Punkt zu sprechen kommen, bei dem ich bedauere, dass er im Rahmen von *Kunstvermittlung in der Migrationsgesellschaft* nicht schon vor Ort umfassender bearbeitet und vor allem nicht umgearbeitet werden konnte: Auf den Umgang mit dem Empfinden von Schuld. Wiederholt wurde von

19 Castro Varela, Maria do Mar: *Interkulturelle Vielfalt, Wahrnehmung und Selbstreflexion aus psychologischer Sicht*. Ohne Datum, Download unter [http://www.graz.at/cms/dokumente/10023890\\_415557/0a7c3e13/Interkulturelle%20Vielfalt%2C%20Wahrnehmung%20und%20Selbstreflexion.pdf](http://www.graz.at/cms/dokumente/10023890_415557/0a7c3e13/Interkulturelle%20Vielfalt%2C%20Wahrnehmung%20und%20Selbstreflexion.pdf), (16.4.2012).

20 ‘Das theoretische Problem aber für eine Subjektwissenschaft wie die Kritische Psychologie besteht darin, zugleich von den Subjekten auszugehen, sie zum Sprechen und Forschen zu bringen und zugleich damit einen Fragerahmen so zu gestalten, dass es den einzelnen möglich wird, sich selbst zu widersprechen.’ Frigga Haug: ‘Zum Verhältnis von Erfahrung und Theorie in subjektwissenschaftlicher Forschung’, in: *Forum Kritische Psychologie* 47, 2004, S. 70.



Teilnehmenden geäußert, dass sie mit dem gemeinsamen Nachdenken und Diskutieren nicht weiterkämen, weil sie angesichts der auf der Tagung geleisteten Problematisierungen Schuldgefühle und 'eine Schere im Kopf' spüren würden. Die Diskussion konzentrierte sich dann gerne auf die Frage, 'was man überhaupt noch sagen darf' und mündete in eine Kritik an 'politischer Korrektheit' – ungeachtet der Tatsache, dass sich diese Kritik in eine ultrarechte Diskurstradition einschreibt (Auer 2002).

Die Frage nach dem Umgang mit individuell erlebter Schuld an Gewaltverhältnissen angesichts der Analysen zum Beispiel von kritischem Weiß sein, European Black Studies, postkolonialer Theorie, kritischer Pädagogik, kritischer Museologie oder kritischer Migrationsforschung ist eine komplizierte. Denn es kann nicht einfach darum gehen, Mittäter\_innenschaft von sich zu weisen mit dem Argument, über sie nachzudenken sei für die Entwicklung von Handlungsperspektiven unproduktiv, und die eigenen Freiheitsrechte gingen grundsätzlich vor. Gleichzeitig – und das zeigen nicht zuletzt genau diese Reaktionen – ist das Empfinden persönlicher Schuld ein moralisch strukturiertes Ressentiment, das sich schwierig produktiv machen lässt. Repression führt auch in diesem Fall nicht zur Veränderung von Verhältnissen. Paul Gilroy schlägt dem gegenüber vor, daran zu arbeiten 'to work through the grim details of imperial and colonial history and to transform paralyzing guilt into a more productive shame' (Gilroy 2004, 108). Dabei ginge es darum, die Verantwortung der Mittäter\_innenschaft nicht zu verleugnen, aber auch nicht dabei haltzumachen, sie zuzugeben und sich in den daraus resultierenden Schuldgefühlen – trotzig oder demütig – einzurichten. Stattdessen könnte das Bewusstsein über Mitverantwortung und die daraus resultierende Scham ein Motor sein, um unruhig zu bleiben und in konkreten Situationen Vorstellungskraft und Handlungsweisen zu erzeugen, die den Verhältnissen, an deren Herstellung beteiligt zu sein man fraglos schuldig ist, mit Freude entgegenarbeiten.<sup>21</sup> Dies erscheint mir ein wichtiger Hinweis, der zusammen mit den oben erwähnten, von Castro Varela und Haugg beschriebenen Anforderungen an pädagogische Professionalität gut zu vereinbaren ist.

Doch ich möchte im Zusammenhang mit der Frage nach der möglichen Lösung von durch Schuldgefühle verursachten Imaginations- und Handlungsblockaden zum Ende noch einmal auf den fachlichen Kontext zurückkommen, der auf der Arbeitstagung zur Debatte stand: das Museum. Charles Garoian hat es in seinem Text *Performing the Museum* (Garoian 2001) als einen Ort beschrieben, der einerseits von einer gewaltvollen Geschichte geprägt und als Institution schwerfällig und hierarchisch ist, der aber täglich von den Akteur\_innen, die in ihm arbeiten, die es besuchen und auch von denen, die ihm fernbleiben, neu hergestellt wird. Ein Ort, dessen Ordnungen aufgrund ihrer Performativität auch veränderbar und

21 Ein konkretes Beispiel hierfür wäre, eine möglicherweise neu zu entdeckende eigene Erfindungsgabe zu genießen, wenn versucht wird, die vertrackte Frage 'Woher kommst du?', mit der man wohlmeinendes Interesse an einer Person zeigen möchte, durch einfallsreichere und weniger erwartbare Fragen und Gesprächsformen zu ersetzen. Den Wunsch nach der Vermeidung dieser Frage als 'Schere im Kopf' und damit als massive persönliche Beschneidung wahrzunehmen, wäre demgegenüber die Perspektive, die sich im Beharren auf den scheinbar garantierten, als universal verstandenen bürgerlichen Freiheitsrechten nicht irritieren lässt.

neu zu denken sind. In Bezug auf das Agieren einer Kunstvermittlung in der Migrationsgesellschaft geht es in dieser Perspektive nur auf einer Ebene um die individuelle Verantwortung der Vermittler\_in. Es geht darüber hinaus um ein nur kollektiv herzustellendes und zu pflegendes institutionelles Bewusstsein für die Geschichte dieser besonderen Institution und um eine Arbeit im Zeichen der Frage, wie die historische Verantwortung für die Gegenwart als Motor genutzt werden kann.

Eingeladen, sich zu den Plänen eines *New Asian Museums* in Vancouver, Kanada, zu äußern, wies Rustom Bharucha im Jahr 2000 darauf hin, dass es für Museen unverzichtbar sei zu verstehen, dass sie nicht zufällig in der Migrationsgesellschaft herum stehen. Sondern dass sie seit jeher eine konstitutive Rolle in deren Konstellationen und Interaktionen von Macht und Markt spielten und dass sie daher in besonderem Maße aufgefordert seien, sich reflexiv und aktiv in ihr zu positionieren. Zumindest, wenn sie nicht immer isolierter und mit der Zeit bedeutungslos werden wollten. Er sieht ihre Chance darin, dass sie anstreben, von Räumen der zivilgesellschaftlichen Repräsentation zu Räumen der politischen Aushandlung zu werden, zu Räumen, in denen Konflikte nicht vermieden und durch eine Erzählung zugedeckt werden, sondern in denen sie durch kollektive Bearbeitungsweisen artikuliert werden und Form annehmen.

*While museums are traditionally located within the domain of civil society, they are increasingly more insulated from the emergent cultures of struggle in political society, cutting across nations, languages, and constituencies, which are succeeding in bringing together unprecedented alliances of activists, environmentalists, and cultural workers, who are substantially redefining the very grounds of intercultural meeting, dialogue, and practice.*

*At the start of the new millennium, it would be useful to widen the boundaries of civil society beyond the contestatory claims of its acknowledged participants; we need to recognise the challenge posed to the bastions of 'high culture' in civil society, notably museums, by the new incursions and configurations of public culture in national and global forums. Museums need to confront the insularity of their implicit 'nontrespassing' zones, which have in effect denied vast sections of the population, particularly from the minority and immigrant sectors, not merely access to the museum, but the right to interrogate its assumed privileges and reading of history. It is my plea that instead of shutting ourselves up in the box 'whether it is the 'black box' of theatre, or the ultrawhite, airconditioned, dust free box of the museum that we should open ourselves to those seemingly disruptive energies 'beyond the box' that can enable us to forge new links between the public and the private, the civil and the political. [...] What we need is not a new museumisation of museums, but a new socialisation of its radical possibilities.*

Würde der Vorschlag, sich an einer Umarbeitung des Museums von einer Einrichtung der bürgerlichenzivilgesellschaftlichen Domäne zur einer Akteurin der politischen Domäne zu beteiligen, aufgegriffen – wie es nicht zuletzt von kritischen Kunstvermittler\_innen seit einer Weile gefordert wird (Sternfeld 2010) – so bliebe wahrscheinlich wenig Anlass zur Pflege von persönlichen Ressentiments. Die Frage 'Was darf ich überhaupt noch sagen?'

oder das Gefühl von einer 'Schere im Kopf' würde einem aktiven Zuhören gegenüber einer Zusammenarbeit mit und einem Lernen von denjenigen weichen, die gezwungen sind, sich mit den Effekten einer exklusiv (staats) bürgerlichen Rede, Repräsentations und Handlungsfreiheit täglich auseinanderzusetzen und die auf dieser Basis ihre Handlungsstrategien, oder besser gesagt, ihre Taktiken entwickeln. 'Wesentlich erscheint uns für die Konzeption einer antirassistischen Kunstvermittlungspraxis, dass Kritik und Transformation nicht eine interne Angelegenheit von Vermittlerinnen und Kunstinstitutionen bleiben kann. Veränderungen müssen aus denen heraus entstehen, die als Zielgruppe gezeichnet werden' (2009, 350), schreiben Maria do Mar Castro Varela und Nikita Dhawan zum Entwurf einer postkolonialen Kunstvermittlung.

Die Arbeitstagung 'Kunstvermittlung in der Migrationsgesellschaft' war aus meiner Sicht im besten Fall eine Intervention, um eine Arbeit an Verhältnissen in dieser Perspektive im deutschsprachigen Raum einen Schritt weiter zu bringen. Um anzuregen, sie an den Orten, wo man sich danach womöglich etwas weniger heimisch fühlt, fortzusetzen oder zu initiieren und einzufordern.

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### 3. From There to Here (Transformation)

As Regina José Galindo migrates her art from one geopolitical context to another, curator Clare Carolin counters Western viewing habits with a poetics of translation. Meanwhile, artist Ines Doujak's eccentric archive, based on a collection of textiles from the Andes, prompts writer John Barker to criticise the ways in which ethnography has received or taken, stored and exhibited objects from elsewhere. Both artist and writer posit artistic research as a better form to investigate (neo)colonialism and affect political change.





## Loomshuttles/Warpaths

### Not Dressed for Conquering

→ JOHN BARKER

→ CHAPTER I

In 2002, after a long campaign, weavings belonging to the *ayllu* (indigenous community) of Coroma in Bolivia were returned from the United States and Canada. It was a breakthrough in making UNESCO's Cultural Property Convention effective in practice. Ironically, identification had been confirmed through Polaroid photographic prints the agents of collectors had left behind, those that were out-of-focus and discarded. The prints had been collected and kept by people in the community who at the time were so poor that like other scraps, they had value. It was the same poverty that had tempted some of them to sell the weavings even though they were communal property which, stored in bundles (*qipis*), had survived both the Spanish invasion and the brutal anti-indigenous policies of many Bolivian governments.<sup>1</sup> Cloth had, and still has, particular importance in Andean societies. The Austrian artist Ines Doujak in her introduction to her ongoing artistic research *Loomshuttles/Warpaths* describes them at the time of the invasion as 'characterised by their passion for mathematics and weaving, for administration and music, the exact and the ecstatic'.<sup>2</sup> In the absence of written language at that time in 1533, cloth as well as the famous *quipus* (language with the use of knots) was, apart from its quality of weaving, a medium of communication, in which it was perceived as being alive. One mode of communication is with the past, using ancient cloth to be able to consult ancestral knowledge on current matters of calendars and dilemmas. Such consultation is normal practice for the people of Coroma.

This textile culture of the Andes preceded the Inca Empire that existed at the time of the invasion and the subsequent settler colonialism of the

PREVIOUS PAGE —  
'Loomshuttles/Warpaths'  
(Haute Couture 01 Fires).  
Ines Doujak, 2012, Inkjet  
print on cotton

1 Villagers had been paid \$50–100, and the weavings resold for \$10,000–15,000.

2 FKW – FrauenKunstWissenschaft, INES DOUJAK: Webschiffe, Kriegspfade/Telares, Senda Guerrera/Loomshuttles/Warpaths, Heft 52, 2011.



region. Inca administrative skill systematised the making of cloth that included specialisation for the production of luxury *cumbi* cloth, which could not be matched by the finest of Europe, woven in Flanders. It also involved the creation of *quipu* inventories and archives of varieties of both cloth and alpaca, which shows how nonsensical is the idea that the archive is inherently Western.<sup>3</sup> The Spanish invaders, with a mix of carelessness and a required sense of superiority that could not recognise such quality, nearly annihilated this culture. At the same time the entirely fortuitous European ‘discovery’ of this ‘New World’, thought of as the Indies and so naming its peoples as ‘Indians’, was a whole-world shifter. It kicked off monetised capitalism – the precious metals so cruelly extracted at

IMG. 01 — ‘The Investigator’, Performance Still. Ines Doujak, 2011



Bolivian Potosí mines and elsewhere – and a concomitant monetarised international trading system. Textiles, being light in weight and a basic manufactured commodity, had been traded for millennia, but from the early sixteenth century onwards their production and exchange created a racialised division of labour – as well as further developing its gender aspect – that used both domestic serfdom and deported slavery.<sup>4</sup> This ‘New World’ colonialism also took exclusive rights to the extraction of raw materials, including cloth dyes, from occupied territories. On the one hand some African slaves were chosen for their knowledge of growing indigo, one of two crucial dye plants, and were thus especially valuable to colonial cash cropping, while export from colonial Mexico, of the other, cochineal, was exceeded in value only by gold.

The starting point of Doujak’s *Loomshuttles/Warpaths* is a collection of textiles from the region made over a period of thirty-five years. It includes ancient and modern cloth and clothing; hand-made and mass produced; the use of natural and synthetic fibres; and a variety of techniques, weaving, knitting and embroidery. It is the starting point of an ongoing arts-based research, started three years ago and one of the first to be supported by the Austrian Science Fund. It uses whatever media may be suitable from text to sculpture, and comprises several ‘chapters’. One is

3 The Mughal Emperor Akhbar’s archiving of textiles was unmatched in its sophistication as recorded by Abu Fazl ibn-Mubarak.

4 The gendered division of labour had been institutionalised by the Incas at the same time as the witch hunts in Europe both killed and marginalised women from areas of production and communal land. See the work of Irene Silverblatt and Silvia Frederici on these respective developments.

IMG. 02 — ‘The Investigator’, Performance Still. Ines Doujak, 2011



called *Masks and Masquerades*, for which the figure of the Investigator was invented for travelling performances. Another is an Haute Couture fashion line that involves the design of printed cloth which can be made into clothes, the cloth then being translated into movement and sound ‘operas’. Thirdly it includes the making of ‘an eccentric archive’.<sup>5</sup> This archive follows the trajectory created by the colonial invasion of the Americas, so that the items in the collection are linked to the globalised history and present-day realities of both textile and clothing production, and consumption.

The archive is eccentric in the literal sense of being off-centre, both in its composition and movement. It consists of descriptions of each item in the collection, and responses to them both by the artist herself, in the form of subtly referenced poster collages (an archive in themselves), and by the responses of other writers and artists from all over the world in a chosen media; one of whom, Cristina Bubba, was part of the Coroma campaign to recover its weavings. These responses are part of the movement of the archive. Items brought from the Andean region to Europe have been posted out to responders and have often stayed abroad for months. At the same time the archive is itself mobile, parts appearing at a variety of display spaces, and this quality is enhanced by the use of postcards for compact versions of the Eccentric Archive with the aim that people use them as such, to write and post to friends. The composition of the archive is enhanced by two further texts both of which, Numerical Dates and the names of Cloths or Colours, are announced on Doujak’s posters, with the dates made from woven hair that references actual production. The Dates indicated refer to texts that bring to light the continuing struggles of workers in the textile and clothing industries, and of rebellion by style of dress over the last 600 years, such as when the beggars of eighteenth-century Lima said they were ‘not dressed for conquering’. The Cloths and Colours texts show how entangled with Imperialist history textiles and dyes have been, as well as demonstrating the impacts of shifts in technologies and of colour itself. Thus Cristina Bubba’s response – to a Bolivian felt helmet – is accompanied by a text on Calico that reveals how the severity of European protectionism endeavoured to keep out this Indian cloth until its technique could be copied; and by an account of 2 August of the persecution of Francisco Pro, a young tailor in Lima, for wearing a woman’s cloak in 1803. The date has become the modern day occasion of the Gay Pride march in Lima.

Doujak’s own visual response features the crouching figure of a dark-brown-skinned woman who is at the same time dancing in air above a painted industrial city of the 1930s, tinted so that even the smoke from the factory chimneys is a light brown. She is wearing the felt helmet

5 The title *Loomshuttles/Warpaths* was inspired by the way that among indigenous groups in Borneo, for instance, female weavers held the same social status as headhunters – the highest. The loom was equated with their warpath. In 2006 an exquisitely preserved and elaborately tattooed 1,500-year-old mummy of a young woman from Moche culture was discovered deep inside a mud-brick pyramid in northern Peru. The tomb yielded a rich array of funeral objects, from gold sewing needles and weaving tools to masterfully worked metal jewellery. The grave also contained numerous weapons, including two massive war clubs and 23 spear throwers.



– called *montera tarabuquena* – which is from the Bolivian village of Tarabuco. It is one of the few places where the Spanish were defeated in the battle of Jumbate in 1816 by the Yamparaez warriors, and it mimics, or ‘quotes’, the helmet they would have worn.<sup>6</sup> The woman’s face is turned towards the viewer, with a hair tail that runs down from her neck, down her back and over her buttocks, and a sullen look that hints at a Western mix of fear and superiority towards the dark-skinned people of the world. But there is something else in her look which speaks of her own sense of insecurity in contact with the ‘modern’ city, and as if in the cosmology of her world, the conception of time and space is different.

The composition of the Eccentric Archive including the posters, means that while the especial importance of cloth in Andean culture is recognised, Doujak avoids wading through all those tedious binary oppositions associated with notions of authenticity and modernity; or, equally to

IMG. 03 — ‘The Investigator’, Performance Still. Ines Doujak

6 The victory came from the people of Tarabuco disguising themselves as trees to form a moving forest. A similar tactic was used by MacDuff in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, written over 200 years before.



make a big deal out of ‘hybridity’. It has become too easy for its realities to be made into such an uncritical virtue as to be prescriptive, as when a critic warns diasporas – which are intrinsically mediums of the process – not to ‘idealise the past’. It may be better than performing authenticity, but the all-purpose Other should not be subject to performing hybridity. It is anyway something Andean weavers just do, as exemplified in both items of the collection and in archive texts. A good example is the use of Chinese acrylic thread, admired for its colour but re-spun on drop spindles by indigenous Andean women, as the manufactured synthetic yarn is perceived to be of poor quality in local Quechua aesthetics. Properly spun yarn is finer, and needed to satisfy both these aesthetics, and ancestral rules for highly valued textiles.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps in anticipation, that Peruvian post-Marxist of the 1920s, José Carlos Mariátegui was clear that, ‘Tradition is alive and mobile, quite the opposite of what the traditionalists would like to imagine. It is created precisely by those who want to renovate and enrich it in their resistance to it.’ (Mariátegui 1971)

In the hands of capitalist ideology and its satellites, ‘tradition’ is, instead, a plaything; useful for social cohesion, especially the ‘invented’ variety, but a repressive anachronism when giving cohesion to communal resistance to natural resource or land grabbing (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1986). In the art world, despite the pioneering work of Franz Boas, Robert Farris Thompson and others, communal societies are often regarded by definition as precluding individual creativity, or the development of craft, skill and imagination by artists, who are instead ‘instinctive’ but inherently stuck in unmoving tradition. Such an ahistorical approach in the case of the Andes denies the reality of a continual history of repression and resistance. Equally, this one-sided, hegemonic view of individuality is then confirmed by the outrage of such artists being carefree about the individual signature that ascribes value both ideologically and in practice in the capitalist world. It’s an outrage gleefully described by Eduardo Galeano. ‘Buyers want the Ocumicho potters to sign their works, so they use stamps to engrave their names at the foot of their little devils. But often they forget, or use a neighbour’s stamp if their own isn’t handy, so that María comes out as the artist of a work by Nicolosa, or vice versa. They don’t understand this business of solitary glory. In their Tarascan Indian community, all are one when it comes to this sort of thing’ (Galeano 1989, 227). Most of the items in Doujak’s Eccentric Archive are anonymous too, though one could imagine the Peruvian cap having been knitted by another of her respondents, Juan Quispe, water poured into it to see how well-made the knitting was – judged by prospective parents-in-law of a groom, when the well-made is the main criterion for what is beautiful. The nature of the archive means, however, that anonymity does not lead to the ethnographic basket.

The archive is based on a *respect* that has been made by visiting the

7 The skill in manual re-spinning involves keeping up a constant rate of twist on the spindle, waiting till the moment it kinks back on itself and becomes smooth, and then holding it under tension until it is on the loom bars.

region over many years, when travel has not been easy; the knowledge of textiles and their makers which continues to shape other areas of life; and of learning of other cosmologies with shamans. Such a respect means not having to put what has been collected on a rhetorical pedestal. This is especially welcome and refreshing for, in our own times the important critiques of Eurocentric and frankly racist ethnography and the plundered collections that provided their 'raw materials' (valuable, as are all colonially plundered natural resources) have too often become an equally Eurocentric ethical narcissism. The very process of working with anything from areas of the world homogenised as the 'Third World' or 'the South' has become a minefield of professionalised and highly selective accusation; selective because it would not include the acceptable disrespect of, say, a cursory use of an Andean weaving and its description as a platform for prolonged riffs on the usual male European suspects from Hegel to Heidegger.

## → CHAPTER II

One of the Eccentric Archive posters shows a striped bag, woven with alpaca and used for carrying potatoes. The subtlety of colours of the stripes and their off-centre symmetry are distinctive, but what stands out is how precious it is to its user, how often repaired and how it is in need of repair again. Given the problem of the display of the more fragile items in the collection, this one makes the two-dimensional picture close to tactile. Another, taken from a picture in a German newspaper, features a 'hoodie' with a face mask in which lips, eyes and nose are emphasised, creating a look that is both sinister and melancholy. It is worn by a Russian football 'ultra' on a right-wing demonstration to hide his identity. The shoe-shiners of La Paz who feature in Doujak's *Investigator* performance in La Paz also wear masks for this reason, in their case because of the perceived humiliation of the work. The Russian's mask is also from the Andes. The resonances here move back and forth across the world in time and space (perhaps in this case with eBay as intermediary) and are as rich and complex as the *Loomshuttles/Warpaths* project itself. The poster perfectly matches a prescription for such work made by the Argentine artist Cesar Paternoster in an essay on pre-Colombian Andean sculpture: 'exposure to the ancient arts should function as a motivation, a source of inspiration, a springboard that should be translated into a visual metaphor... distancing oneself from it, yet keeping connective tension with it' (Paternoster 2006). In the Eccentric Archive, the poster is a response to a modern full-head, balaclava-like mask in the collection – machine woven acrylic but hand sewn – which, with its villainous curled moustache, mimics the colonial and Creole master.<sup>8</sup> Such mask mimicry has a long history in both Peru and Bolivia during carnival. Rigid-type mask-making was and remains a highly specialised craft. At the same time such mimicry, with its reference

8 Robert Farris Thompson describes a Nigerian mask which though suggesting anguish or terror to a Western viewer, in fact 'pokes fun at the pompous and vain'. (1968) *Aesthetics in Traditional Africa*, p.65, cited in Price, S. (2001) *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.



IMG. 04 — 'Loomshuttles/  
Warpaths', Installation  
View. Ines Doujak, 2012,  
Inkjet print on cotton

to the European 'Other' represents only a small part of both craft and use. Masks for dances and ceremonies and entertainments of very different and alive cosmologies are more common. High up at 5,000 metres in the Andean altiplano specifically, woollen balaclavas have a pragmatic use, but are also used ceremonially by shamans to stand for a missing dead person – like a peasant victim in the Peruvian state–Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path guerrilla) war of recent times. In an instance of the politicisation of dress, balaclavas were banned during this war, in which many peasants supported the guerrilla movement. Such was the level of state violence that the Sendero Luminoso leader has now been joined in prison by Alberto Fujimori, the President at the time.

As the main element in the Eccentric Archive, the collage that was made into a poster has, like the others, its own four accompanying texts which are inscribed on it: a response to the mask itself by the artist David Riff, texts about the date (1954) and about the cloth velvet. Riff's response makes an immediate connection to the activist intervention by the all-women Pussy Riot in an Orthodox church; its relation to representational politics, with a reference of the present-day Zapatistas; and to the renewed oppression of post-USSR Russian women. This relates in turn to the 1954 text, which celebrates the victory – in living memory – of Japanese women textile workers in a strike, which gave a huge boost to Japanese trade unions and provided a jolt to employers' self-interested perception of such women as 'docile'. With the accompanying text on velvet we are in the world of production – while Cairo is celebrated as the original great production centre of the cloth, and the later development of a finance capital derived from its production in Italy – the emphasis is on consumption and especially its ostentatious use in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Europe. This is not juxtaposition for its own sake but serves to provide context across space and time.

The occupation and subsequent settler colonialism of the Andean region followed the pattern already established by the Spanish invaders of Mexico in whose European societies velvet was both making fortunes and draining the peasant-derived rents of its aristocracy. The consequences of the invasion on the Andes are described in texts both on alpaca and sheep wool, on another poster in the Eccentric Archive, and in a talk given by the artist at the *Textiles, Techne and Power in the Andes* conference (Barker 2012). The early years of the occupation saw the near annihilation of both the people, infrastructure and the alpaca, and makes astonishing the survival of both textile skills and the culturally organic nature of cloth. Years later, when the silver mines of Bolivian Potosí were eating up expendable slaves and peons alike, those who made fortunes from it were importing velvet along with other luxury textiles from around the world. These especially rich settler colonialists, while being ideologically unable to recognise the sheer quality of Andean weaving, or the sophisticated technique of its weavers, were prime movers in the accelerated and monetised globalisation of the trade in textiles. Imported textiles continued to be essential status items for them into modern times.



## → CHAPTER III

In another chapter of *Loomshuttles/Warpaths* on masks and masquerade, Doujak takes on the ethnographic 'gaze' in direct style with the creation of the *Investigator*. The extreme visibility of this figure established through the costume is a device to force the normally disembodied observing subject – the self image of European investigators over the course of the centuries – to take on physical form. No disguise at all, but a full head-and-body costume in Western skin-pink which is literally all eyes. The figure appeared in La Paz and held a workshop with shoe-shiners and rappers, which led to a musical performance in the courtyard of the Ethnographical Museum in which the rappers crossed music with traditional folk singers, as well as a counter-tenor singing – in a voice that moved back and forth from ingratiation to severity – the Catholic Church's Confessional manual for priests to use on indigenous people of the late sixteenth century. It focused on the 'sins' of their animistic beliefs and presumed sexual practices, and was resisted by the use of *quipus* which provided a memory aid of set answers to the 'sinner'. The break-dancing shoe-shiners kept on their working day masks, and this led to a telling moment at the performance when the secret police accompanying the Vice President wanted them removed. They refused and felt it as a moment of empowerment. From La Paz, the Investigator left the museum and travelled through other parts of Bolivia, conducted interviews, was interviewed herself, was instructed in how to wear clothes and how to heal with threads, met shamans, textile merchants and wrestlers, and participated in the carnival of Oruro.

The *Investigator* then travelled to Europe and in a more recent performance the 'all-seeing' eyes of the costume are juxtaposed with the Investigator's refusal to give away anything of herself to an Indian 'robot' carried on her back as she circles a moving and murmuring mountain.<sup>9</sup> The set-up is a conscious *détournement* of an engraving of an Andean seat carrier (*sillero*) from the late nineteenth century in which a white man, an explorer or anthropologist perhaps, is seated on a chair carried on the back of a generic 'Indian' (Andre 1884). In the performance the Indian robot alternates between anger, pride in his local landscape mixed with sardonic tourist talk, and mimicry of high theory, but is mostly frustrated by the complete silence of the Investigator. The movement of the mountain which simulates the K2, followed a line made by the routes of explorers, while the robot hallucinates crossing the Andean mountains to reach Europe, simultaneously complaining of boredom at the whole endeavour. His moments of pride in the Andean landscape became especially striking as news emerged of the sale of the Peruvian Toromocho mountain to the Chinese mining giant, Chinalco. The mining will involve the removal of the mountain's peak and – as in so many instances, of the people in the nearby village – so that its copper, molybdenum and silver can be extracted over the next 35 years.

9 'The Indian-Investigator-Machine visiting TBA Auoarten', *Ephemeropterae*, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna.





IMG. 05 — 'Loomshuttles / Warpaths' (Eccentric Archive). Ines Doujak, 2010–13, Print on paper

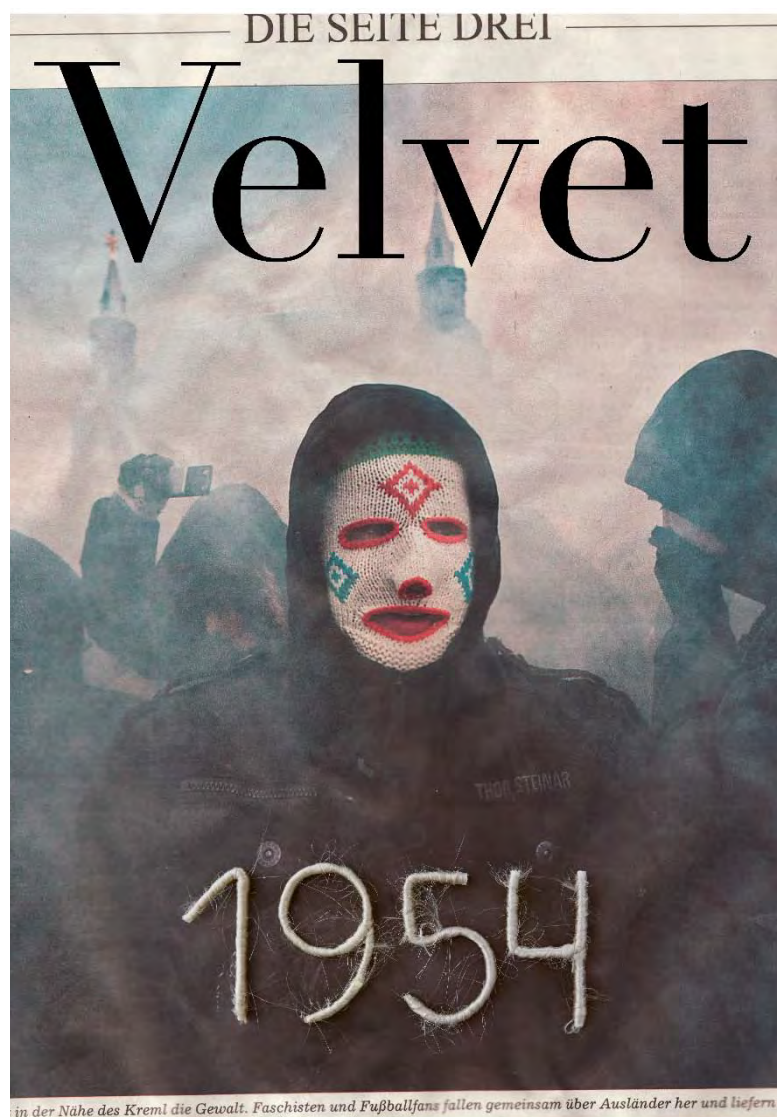
This figure then deals in head-on fashion with the power relationship that has been at the heart of essentialist ethnography, the power of speech and definition enforced by violence. In contrast, the responses in the Eccentric Archive address that relationship without explicit reference and instead highlight its consequences in the present-day world of textile production and trade. Most dramatically this is shown in a third chapter of *Loomshuttles/Warpaths*, an 'Haute Couture' line that begins with two rolls of printed cloth containing three-metre sections designed by the artist on the theme of the mass deaths of workers in textile factories, deaths outsourced with the business itself to poorer parts of the world, or to migrant worker sweatshops in the rich world.<sup>10</sup> The printed cloth has

10 As in the deaths by fire of migrant Bolivian workers and their children in a Buenos Aires sweatshop in 2006.

different complex imagery on areas of the pattern for making shirts, which reference Bolivian colonial painting. There are burning sewing machines along with an interpretation of the story of Prometheus, who here escapes with wool rather than fire. Rusty chains are prominent, like the chains that have locked the exit doors in so many textile factories where workers have died, and would also tie the mythical figure to the rock in the modern world. The rock itself is made up of modernist icons: Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation in Marseilles; Goldfinger's Trellick Tower and the aggressively windowed high-rises of Canary Wharf in London. Shirts tailored from the pattern outlined printed cloth are on display.

Haute Couture aimed to both break out of the museum confine by being available for sale and to make a critique from inside the world of fashion, while accepting that in this world beautiful clothes can be made, just as beautiful clothes are still self-made outside the world of commodity exchange. With an accompanying text poster/hand-out it was installed in Korea at the 2012 Busan Biennale *Garden of Learning* in September, at the very moment when the worst such fire ever occurred at the Baldia factory in Karachi where 286 workers died. It resonated back to the realities of cloth production in conditions of settler colonialism in the Andes, when the Tupac Amaru uprising of 1780 (one of the dates in the Eccentric Archive) had as one of its aims the freeing of indigenous 'men and women, children and old people' from the textile *obrajes* (workshops), where a Spanish traveller observed they were tied to their looms and 'were destined for a quick civil death'. To relate it in turn to the modern-day 'burn-out' of clothing workers and the realities of outsourcing, the Haute Couture work included an audio file of an interview with long-time textile work activist, and now Parliamentarian, Chun Soon'ok, sister of Chun Tae-il. He was an icon of the Korean workers' struggle who died by self-immolation in 1971 in a protest at the working conditions of the young women dubbed 'Industrial Warriors in the Export Front' by the dictatorship, who made the country's economic 'miracle' in the sweatshop factories of Seoul.

Such links are far from the one-way ethnography of the past, and come naturally from southern America where a brutal system of division of labour preceded the factory model theorised in the eighteenth century by Adam Smith. In this model the worlds of the consumer and the producer are divided both spatially and ideologically. The producer is restricted to one simple repetitive operation, like a modern-day Cambodian woman sewing the top-half of a belt loop only every day, which takes away his/her economic power. Smith however used a sleight of hand, as Susan Buck-Morss puts it, whereby 'the impoverished producer shows up on the stage again, this time as the well-clad consumer'. Many fruitful studies now exist that deal with both the production and consumption of cloth and clothing, but where exchange itself is not made into an anthropological exclusive centre of gravity, they tend to be either concerned with the semiology and politics of clothing; or with the techniques and present-day globalised 'chains' of production of today's world stage. In this it reproduces a basic ideological need of the capitalism that began with the



IMG. 06 — 'Loomshuttles / Warpaths' (Eccentric Archive). Ines Doujak, 2010–13, print on paper

invasion of the Americas: the hiding of the role of labour in the making of what is to be produced; the hyper-exploitation and exhaustion of such labour especially in the garment industry; fetishisation and self-praise of 'the market' shown in the phrase 'the consumer is king'; and the *ersatz* democracy implied by 'the consumer' as a universal category. In a truly grotesque irony, the jeans made in the death trap Karachi factory were for the German company KiK (Der Kunde is König: 'the Consumer is King'). It's a virtue of *Loomshuttles/Warpaths* that it overcomes the separation of the worlds of consumption and production. Further Haute Couture lines on nakedness, transport, trade and beauty are planned, and will continue to straddle and connect these worlds.



## → CHAPTER IV

Critiques of the ethnography of the overtly colonial period and its collections now abound. The specific case of the collections of Andean cloth which appeared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the museums of Europe is revealing, and especially since the collections produced a whole raft of theorising about the ‘primitive’, ‘purity’ and the ‘authentic’, especially in Germany.<sup>11</sup> Despite their divergences of viewpoint, what they have in common is an essentialising, sympathetic or otherwise view of indigenous people – then called ‘primitive’. Many items on which such theories were built were bought from the Lima-based importer of European textiles Wilhelm Gretzer, who had arrived in Peru in 1876 to satisfy the settler (‘Creole’) continuing status demand for imported goods referred to above. He commissioned grave robbers for his collection and provided far more artefacts than official archaeologists like Max Uhle, and from a wider area of the region. Living in a house in whose hallway stood two rows of undressed mummies, it was Gretzer’s personal taste for what was beautiful which determined what the large-scale collections in Berlin and elsewhere consisted of and the theorising they prompted. Some items he took, others were thrown away. Worse, in the case of a funeral cloth from Pachacamac dated from between 900 and 1200 AD, which showed both historical and mythical narratives, he cut it into two pieces, selling one to the Berlin ethnographic museum and the other to Hannover.<sup>12</sup>

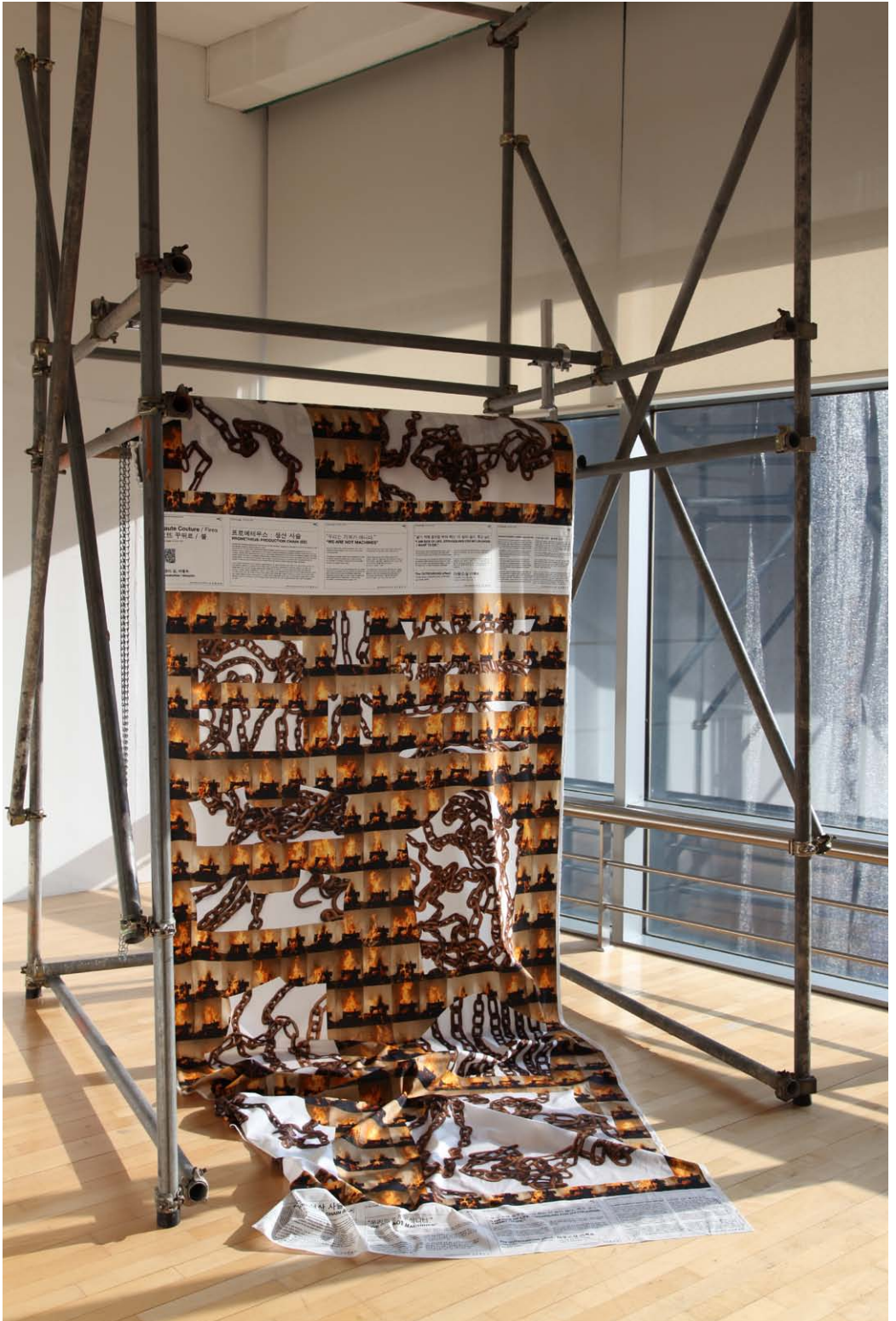
It’s not surprising that critiques exist given such a history, though the collections are still there, and, despite the politics of restitution as in the successful Coroma campaign, the critiques exist, for the most part, only at an ideological level. ‘Ethnography museums have advanced beyond classifying and presenting “others” in exotic cultural orders, and now recognise that “Others” represent serious alternatives worthy of inclusion in exhibits/exhibitions? However, instead of leading to solutions, this realisation of cultural relativity has revealed new complexities in presented ethnographies’ (Konniger *et al* 2011). For the authors however, these complexities are resolved through exclusive emphasis on ‘exchange’ and an accompanying fetishisation of the hybrid.<sup>13</sup> There is an understandable desire to assert the *agency* of non-Western people both now and in the past, their ‘calculative’ ability in the world of trade.<sup>14</sup> But this one-dimensional insistence on the one hand leaves out how many

11 See Gardner Troy, V. (2002) Chapters 1 and 2 in Anni Albers and *Ancient American Textiles*, Farnham: Ashgate, for a concise survey of these theories.

12 The cutting of cloth goes completely against the cultural-spiritual aesthetics of indigenous Andean textiles. A similar spiritual aesthetic is held for instance by the Hindus of India.

13 The problem with the anthropological bias towards exchange *per se* – ‘Exchanging goods is a crucial part of social life’ – is that it is liable to disguise the massive imbalances of economic and political power that underlie exchange. This is liable to involve a certain sleight of hand to imply similarity when there is none as in ‘Though biographical aspects of some things (such as heirlooms, postage stamps and antiques) may be less noticeable than that of some others (steel bars, salt or sugar) this component is never completely irrelevant.’ Appadurai, A. (1986) ‘Introduction’ in *The Social Life of Things*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. My emphasis.

14 Much is made of indigenous people having understood and catered for tourist markets. For a more nuanced view of this phenomenon see the work of the Argentinian/Mexican anthropologist Néstor García Canclini.



people still make their own clothes, and, in the Andes especially, invest them with their own, tradition-informed, sense of beauty; and on the other, mass production and the inequalities of power involved in this sphere. Where is the reference to the ‘hybridity’ of production by which, for example, the respiratory-illness-causing stonewashing of denim jeans by hand (outsourced to Turkey and then in the face of campaigning on to Bangladesh just as once slaves in the indigo business suffered the same deadly illnesses) co-exists in the world with corporate, computerised fabric dyeing facilities with the ability to produce 10,000 different dyes? Where are those political decisions called free trade deals that are predictably decimating Peruvian cotton production, and the livelihood of Jacquard loom hand silk weavers in India? Or the outsourcing of risk to the clothing factories of South Asia – both financial and for worker health and safety – that goes with ‘lean retailing’ or ‘supply chain management’?

The critical ethnographic museum or exhibition, then, is still dominated by what might be called the anthropological bias and its emphasis on objects and exchange; when is an artefact a gift, when a commodity and so forth? Objects, whatever their hybridity, are displayed with explanatory texts. When the Coroma cloths were returned from the USA and Canada in 2002, the state’s Indigenous Bureau wanted them housed in a museum, saying that otherwise they might be sold again by very poor villagers, their poverty being taken as a natural state of affairs. The people of the *ayllu* refused – saying it was like putting the cloths in a jail. It would have to be a museum they could live in, the weavings being the medium through which they could consult ancestral knowledge... Instead the emphasis was on a car park and a cafeteria. This account of what happened in Coroma is not intended to be fatalistic, but rather to think of how textile items can take on a new life in the world of display in other parts of the world. It invites a return to the 1990s notion of the ‘artist as an agent of change’ in such environments. There is an obvious danger of this being an instrumental concept of artistic agency, whereas the productive process of artistic research, without curatorial commission, has an inherent freedom. *Loomshuttles/Warpaths* is a model of such a process, radical in using a variety of media to examine and display the world of textiles and clothes – produced and consumed – through the prism of colonialism and neo-colonialism, while giving the viewer a freedom of response to its visual and performance elements. It does not claim the ‘objectivity’ a museum might do, but while partisan, it is not polemical. This perhaps is how it should be if the artist truly is to be an agent of change.

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*Regina José Galindo*



## Curating Performance/ Translating Poetry

Regina José Galindo: *The Body of Others*

→ CLARE CAROLIN

Three interrelated questions arose from my work with the Guatemalan artist Regina José Galindo on *The Body of Others*, the survey exhibition of her work that I curated at Modern Art Oxford in spring 2009. First, translating performance into exhibition: in other words, the question of curating a predominantly performance-based practice for a context bound by the temporal and spatial limits of a three-month long exhibition in a white cube-type environment. Second, translating meaning from one geographical and socio-political context to another: curating for a predetermined audience in Oxford whose knowledge and experiences are for the most part remote to the context and content of the artist's practice. Finally, the question of how, if the cultural sector is to adjust to a migratory situation, curators might approach the development of methods which do not simply accommodate practices and concerns originating beyond the limits of the overdeveloped world, but actually work against the grain of western Modernist exhibition paradigms in order to expose the differences and the distances that continue to enforce the imbalances of wealth and power in an era nevertheless shaped by the free movement of global capital.

These questions are informed by the idea that curating performance-based artistic practices is analogous to the task of translating poetry from one language to another. Instrumental then in this discussion is Walter Benjamin's notion of translation, which posits literary works as containing essential 'information' and inessential 'poetic, mysterious' content (Benjamin 1992). I propose here that the activity of the performer is comparable to Benjamin's conception of 'information' as it relates to poetry, while the inscription of the performance within its spatial and geographical context is analogous to its 'poetic' content. The

PREVIOUS PAGE — 'Busto'.  
Regina José Galindo, 2009,  
X Havana Biennale, Cuba

IMG. 01 — 'Lo Voy a Gritar al Viento' performance, Guatemala. Regina José Galindo, 1999

poetry of Galindo's performances, which take their geographical and social contexts as their subjects, is therefore fundamentally untranslatable. Within a conventional exhibition context these performances can be represented through still and moving image documentation, but in order to fully appreciate their agency, mystery and poetry, the viewer (like the performer) must inhabit the location to which they refer.

Between 1996 and 2009, Galindo made over 30 performances in locations ranging from Córdoba, Argentina to Tirana, Albania to Oslo, Norway and Austin, Texas, each uniquely conceived in response to its location. As Galindo's work has acquired an international audience, her position within her practice has shifted from lone performer, to orchestrator of the actions of others, to complete corporeal absence in the most recent works, which nevertheless invoke the presence of the human body (either Galindo's or that of the 'other') through its absence. Just as any attempt at translating poetry from one language to another produces necessary shifts in form and meaning, the translation of performance from one context to another will equally produce a shift. The unmovability of socio-geographical context as it relates to Galindo's work is analogous to untranslatability. This *untranslatability* at the core of Galindo's practice has driven a trajectory towards disappearance from her own work, so that she has also become a producer of material objects.

In 1996, Guatemala emerged from a 36-year long civil war that claimed over 200,000 lives and displaced more than a million people. Most of these deaths resulted from a policy of genocide towards the country's mainly rural indigenous population, the destruction of hundreds of Mayan villages, and the systematic murder by the US-supported Guatemalan regime of thousands of civilians. The war had been provoked by the events following the democratic election of President Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán, whose agrarian reforms of the early 1950s expropriated unused lands set aside by private corporations returning them to the country's landless peasants. Árbenz' reforms antagonised the US-based multinational United Fruit Company, and in 1954 he was deposed in a CIA-sponsored coup. The resulting turmoil produced a civil war that continued for more than three decades and decimated the country. Following the signing of Peace Accords between the Guatemalan government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG), many of those involved with or affected by the war turned to gang related criminal activity. Today Guatemala has one of the highest homicide rates in Latin America. Between 2001 and 2009 killings of women more than doubled, from 307 in 2001, to 708 in 2009, with around 5,000 women murdered over the past decade.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that more than half the country's population lives in poverty, and 17 per cent of those live in extreme poverty.<sup>2</sup>

Regina José Galindo was born in Guatemala City in 1974 at the height

1 Source: Guatemala Human Rights Commission report *Women's Right to Live*: <http://www.ghrc-usa.org/Programs/ForWomensRighttoLive/FAQs.html>. Last viewed 15.1.2013.

2 Source: UNICEF: [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/guatemala\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/guatemala_statistics.html). Last viewed 15.1.2013.



of the civil war. The daughter of a human rights lawyer and a housewife, she belongs to a generation of Guatemalan artists who, in the period immediately following the signing of the Peace Accords, developed performances and actions as major artistic statements. Years of conflict in Guatemala had wiped out a generation of artists and intellectuals (who had either been driven into exile or assassinated) and by the mid-1990s the country's cultural infrastructure was virtually non-existent, lacking material resources, institutional support and, for the most part, local audiences and media that understood art 'as art'.<sup>3</sup> Galindo and her contemporaries created works that operated as direct interventions in the social and urban fabric, using their own bodies and the open spaces that had been denied to citizens during the years of conflict. While many artists' works from this period invoked Guatemala's traumatic recent past, from the outset Galindo's practice was distinguished by her use of her own body as stand in for the bodies of others who are or have been subjects of Latin America's most violent current realities and past episodes. Simultaneously, her earliest performances demonstrated an unflinching will to articulate and make visible the darkest and most taboo realities affecting the daily lives of Guatemalans, particularly Guatemalan women.

Galindo describes herself as having taken an 'autodidactic route towards becoming an artist because around the time I started making art [when] I was about twenty years old [...] the only art school in Guatemala was closed' (Galindo 2009). At the time she produced one of her first public performances *Lo Voy a Gritar al Viento* (*I'll Shout it to the Wind*) [IMG. 01], she was working in an advertising agency and writing poetry, which had won her awards in Guatemala. She describes the transition from poetry to performance as 'very easy: I simply identified an image to accompany one of my poems and performed it' (Galindo 2009). Each of Galindo's works is accompanied by a short descriptive caption. The caption for *Lo Voy a Gritar al Viento* reads: 'I hang from the arch of the Post Office building in Guatemala City and read poems to the wind.' In the performance, dressed in a white robe resembling a choirboy's chasuble, Galindo hangs suspended by a harness from the arch of the post office building in the historic centre of Guatemala City reading poems that she tears from a note pad and throws to the crowd below. Galindo has mentioned that this work, in which the sound of her voice is drowned by the ambient noise of the city, alludes to the limits placed on freedom of expression in Guatemala, one of the many disastrous consequences of the country's chaotic political history and dire economic condition.<sup>4</sup>

3 See Carolin 2011. Also see curator Rosina Cazali's discussion of the local media response to the visual arts festival *Octubre Azul*: '[The press photographers] did not really understand what was happening or what kinds of images they were putting in the newspapers. They only knew that good images were being made and that this would sell newspapers. The important thing was that columnists began to talk about this phenomenon and of course when we began to say "This is art!", some replied "No it isn't". But for the first time people who usually only talked about politics were talking about art and this created an overlap.' (Cazali 2009).

4 'Simply being in Guatemala is difficult; let's not even speak about being an artist! It's a third world country and even the most basic needs of the population are not covered. They need to eat and sleep. It's a country that does not need art at all. In my opinion art is rather superfluous; it doesn't fulfil any



IMG. 02 — 'Quién Puede Borrar las Huellas?' performance, Guatemala. Regina José Galindo, 2003

Like many of Galindo's early performances, and those of her contemporaries, *Lo Voy a Gritar al Viento* took place within the rubric of an NGO-sponsored cultural festival aimed at revitalising the parts of Guatemala City that had become no-go zones during the war. Amateurs, usually friends or acquaintances, video-recorded these works, resulting in documentation with poor image quality and camerawork. *Lo Voy a Gritar al Viento* is typical in this respect, as is *Quién Puede Borrar las Huellas?* (*Who Can Erase the Traces?*) from 2003, in which Galindo walked from Guatemala's Constitutional Court to the National Palace leaving a trail of footprints in human blood [IMG. 02]. This action commemorated victims of the war, and protested against the presidential candidacy of Efraín Ríos Montt, the former leader of a *coup d'état* who during his presidency in the 1980s was responsible for massacres, rape, torture and scorched-earth policies directed predominantly against Guatemala's indigenous population.

As the context for the production and reception of her work has expanded, not only has the execution and documentation of Galindo's performances evolved technically and formally, but her position as 'performer' within her own practice has shifted. In the earlier works, including those described above, she tends to appear as lone protagonist subjected to increasingly literal and spectacular (although I use this term reservedly) violence. This violence seems to reach its climax in *Confession* (*Confession*), 2007, a piece which refers to the US military's use of torture during the interrogation of prisoners in the so-called 'war on terror'. *Confession* was performed in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, one of ten European countries – including

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basic human need. We don't need art in a country like Guatemala. [...]. Being an artist in Guatemala is like ploughing the sands. It's not just the voices of women that get lost in the air but anyone's voice. People can't express their opinions. Their voices get lost.' (Galindo 2009)



the UK – whose airbases have been used by CIA-operated ‘rendition’ flights to move suspected terrorists internationally to covert prisons. Galindo’s caption describes the piece as follows: ‘A volunteer performs with me a torture similar to waterboarding, pushing my head into a barrel filled with water, again and again.’ Providing a concise explanation of the principle subject in her work, Galindo has said, ‘I come from a violent country and that is where my violent art comes from.’ (Goldman 2006) In *Confession*, we see the subject of violence treated to highly disturbing effect. As the ‘performance’ develops, it becomes apparent that the heavily muscled nightclub bouncer cast as Galindo’s ‘torturer’ is performing his role with relish. According to Galindo, he not only ignored a pre-agreed stop signal, but went entirely off script at the end of the performance, throwing the artist against a pile of bricks in the corner of the ‘torture chamber’ and causing her to sustain real physical injuries, all of which is evident in the resulting documentation (see Home n.d.).

It is around this point in her practice that Galindo starts to be physically less present in her works as performer, and to operate more as a producer of actions, intervening in the social reality of others. The shift can be seen in pieces such as *Curso de Supervivencia para Hombres y Mujeres que Viajarán de Manera Ilegal a los Estados Unidos* (*Survival Skills Course for Men and Women Preparing to Travel Illegally to the United States*), 2008 [IMG. 03], an action realised in Guatemala City with the participation of a group that Galindo contacted via a ‘coyote’, or people smuggler. The accompanying statement reads: ‘I organise an intensive survival course for a group of ten men and women who are preparing to travel illegally to the United States. During the course, they learn skills such as orientation, map-reading, how to make fire, first aid and abseiling.’ The video documentation depicts precisely these activities.

The city of Oxford, which provided the context for Galindo’s first solo survey show, could not have been more remote from that of the performances that first brought her to international attention. Simultaneously, it was seemingly distant to many of the issues addressed in the work: torture, people smuggling, genocide, slavery and rape. Oxford has a population of around 165,000, some 20 per cent of whom were born outside the UK. While the town has a large working class – significantly due to the presence of the German-owned BMW Cowley plant – its identity, atmosphere and urban fabric is dominated by the University of Oxford, a medieval foundation and the oldest surviving such institution in the English-speaking world. As one Oxford resident quoting another put it: ‘There are two factories in this town. One makes cars. The other makes brains.’<sup>5</sup> At the height of the British Empire when colonial administrators were educated at Oxford and Cambridge, Oxford was the intellectual nerve centre of a system of control and subjugation that extended literally around the world. One need know only a little about British culture to

5 The resident in question was the artist Richard Wentworth, then head of the Ruskin School of Fine Art and Drawing, quoting a University surveyor. Wentworth and the Ruskin School were co-producers of the action *Warm-Up* discussed in this text.



appreciate that Oxbridge graduates and protocols continue to dominate political and cultural establishments. This, combined with the fact that Oxbridge continues to recruit disproportionately from among the privately educated, contributes to the town's prevailing atmosphere of self-perceived innate superiority and disengagement from reality.

Modern Art Oxford is a *kunsthalle*-type space located in a converted brewery. It was founded in 1965 by a group of academics aiming to establish a museum of contemporary art to sit alongside other University museum foundations: the Ashmolean Museum (founded in 1683, and one of the oldest public museums in the world), the Museum of the History of Science, and the Pitt Rivers Museum. The latter was founded in 1884 by General Pitt Rivers, a former career officer in the British army who began collecting ethnographic objects while stationed in various locations around the Empire. Pitt Rivers devised a system of categorisation and display influenced by the theories of Charles Darwin. According to this system, objects are laid out to illustrate the 'evolution' of specific areas of human behaviour and expertise – the development of musical instruments or belief systems for example – with non-Western objects invariably representing the 'primitive' stages of such progressions.<sup>6</sup> To this day, the Museum maintains its original

IMG. 03 — 'Curso de Supervivencia para Hombres y Mujeres que Viajarán de Manera Ilegal a los Estados Unidos (mapeo)' action, Guatemala. Regina José Galindo, 2008

6 This quote, taken from the website of the Pitt Rivers Museum, elaborates further on the history of the museum, its ideology and contents: 'The Pitt Rivers Museum, is a museum of anthropology and world archaeology. Its collections include materials made by peoples from cultures around the world and throughout history. While the focus of the Museum is on human cultures and how different peoples have solved the problems of everyday life, the collections include human remains acquired to show some

mode of display as though the entire building were itself an exhibit. Despite the Museum curators' considered and rigorous efforts to explain that the collections and displays embody nineteenth-century ideologies, the extent to which this interpretive contextualisation inflects contemporary audiences' understanding of the institution is far from clear. Anecdotally one does not have to look far to find evidence that there is little to distinguish the gaze of many contemporary visitors from that of their Victorian counterparts.<sup>7</sup>

More than any exhibition I had worked on previously, I felt that the distance between the content of Galindo's work and the context in which it was to be presented (which I have attempted to characterise above) made it highly vulnerable to audience misinterpretation. In Oxford, Galindo's work might be seen through the same exoticising lens, which seemed to remain the dominant mode through which works produced outside the overdeveloped world were viewed. My specific concerns regarding the project at Modern Art Oxford were that ignorance of the context of the works, combined with lack of familiarity with performance-based and live art practices might mean that audiences found the work at best incomprehensible, at worst embarrassing. I had good reason to believe this because embarrassment was the overwhelming response provoked by the works when I introduced them in pre-exhibition project meetings.<sup>8</sup> Colleagues would wince, especially in front of those pieces in which the artist appeared to subject herself to violence. Overwhelmingly my colleagues anticipated that, rather than being frightened or upset by such works, audiences would be outraged that anyone would voluntarily place themselves in a situation of potential harm. This was perhaps out of a sense that 'valuable subjectivities' would never endanger themselves, though simultaneously and somewhat paradoxically there was a strongly expressed concern that the works in which Galindo inflicts real visible violence on herself might encourage young women to self-harm.<sup>9</sup> While I agreed some of these concerns were legitimate, it

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aspect of culture. [...] About a fifth of these collections come from Europe. Some human remains, such as crania and hair samples, were acquired early in the last [nineteenth] century by Museum staff who researched issues of cross-cultural similarity and difference, while others, such as scalps and shrunken heads, came to the Museum from early collectors who acquired them as curios and examples of cultural practices. Of the more than 275,000 objects in the Museum's collections, just over 2,000 either are human remains (including human hair) or are cultural artefacts made, wholly or in part, of human remains (including hair).' <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/>. Last viewed 15.1.2013.

7 The following quote from Flickr accompanies an image of the interior of the Pitt Rivers Museum: '[The Pitt Rivers is the] best museum in the world famous for its shrunken heads taken from tribes that no longer exist and some that still do.' <http://www.flickr.com/photos/cschauk/3371899335/>. Last viewed 15.1.2013. Similar such quotes accompany images of shrunken heads and other exhibits on Flickr and other photosharing websites.

8 The press release for an exhibition of Galindo's work at the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest, Romania in spring 2010 characterises the work in exactly these terms: 'Borderline situations, in-between life and death, generated by injustice and injuries (both physical and moral) or sacrifices, focusing on fear and anguish and their consequences, have resulted in dramatic and radical works, profoundly uncomfortable and ethically embarrassing for a bourgeois public.' <http://www.e-flux.com/shows/view/7738>. Last viewed 15.1.2013.

9 The work that caused most concern was *Perra/Bitch*, 2005, a performance in which Galindo uses a razor blade to carve the word PERRA (Mexican slang for 'bitch' or 'whore') into her thigh, in reference to similar such disfigurements of the corpses of women raped and murdered in central America, and to sexual violence and the murders of women in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, specifically. By way of context it is probably worth mentioning that Oxford University encompasses the Centre for Suicide Research whose research projects include the Child and Adolescent Self-harm in Europe (CASE) Study which involves in-

struck me that they were also a way of deflecting attention from Galindo's engagement with the real bloodshed and subjugation of distant 'others' by projecting it onto the person of the artist herself: shifting the blame. A separate concern was that those audiences who *were* familiar with the real subjects of the work, but not with performance art and related practices, might read it as 'mere' activism, documentary, or, in the case of works such as *Curso de Supervivencia*, as casual anthropology – readings which could be compounded by the amateur camera work.<sup>10</sup> To put it another way: given that both were plucked from their respective contexts, what distinguished the ideological operations behind a presentation of work by a Guatemalan artist in a white-cube-style *kunsthalle* at the start of the twenty-first-century from a nineteenth-century display of so-called ethnographic artefacts at the Pitt Rivers Museum?

As mentioned in the introduction to this text, whether an action involving others or a solitary performance, the drama and tension of Galindo's performances are invariably drawn from the context in which they are realised. Through my conversations with the artist, it became clear that an effective presentation of her work would have to involve the structural deployment of the visitor protocols and display conventions innate to the exhibition context. Not just in the realisation of individual works – as had been the case with some of the performances I mentioned previously, which drew on particularities of context – but as a curatorial strategy which would inform and condition every aspect of the project from the exhibition publicity to the installation style. According to this strategy, I set out to bridge or translate the distance between the work and its audience through an intervention in the potential (mis)interpretations that I sensed were already at work in the audience's reading of Galindo's work in Oxford. Such a curatorial approach would be consistent with Galindo's own interventionism. Thus by synchronising our strategies, we could produce an exhibition that would subvert these potential (mis)interpretations through their affirmation. Moreover, in keeping with the ambience of Oxford, a city whose identity is completely bound up with aggressive knowledge acquisition as a means of control, but manifested as gentility and social restraint, it was key that these subversive strategies remained as subtle as possible.

In the course of my exchanges with Galindo during the planning of the exhibition, our collaborative interventions began to crystallise around a notion to which Galindo drew my attention through a statement

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vestigation of the extent and nature of deliberate self-harm in adolescents in the general population and collection of information on children and adolescents presenting to clinical services following deliberate self-harm. A recent study shows that self cutting is the most prevalent method of deliberate self-harm cases presented at psychiatric units in Oxford hospitals and that DSH overall is most prevalent among young women. See: Keith Hawton, Deborah Casey, Elizabeth Bale, Anna Shepherd, Helen Bergen and Sue Simkin, 'Deliberate Self-harm in Oxford', 2008 [cebmh.warne.ox.ac.uk/csr/images/annualreport2008.pdf](http://cebmh.warne.ox.ac.uk/csr/images/annualreport2008.pdf). Last viewed 15.1.2013.

10 'I respect activists and to be an activist in my country means to be an altruistic human being, to risk or even to give your life for others. Activists are constantly putting themselves at risk and many activists in my country have been murdered. An activist works for others, their objective is to save or help others. An artist is the complete opposite: a person with a lot of problems with their ego and a lot of demons, who is constantly fighting in order to find themselves but whose primary objective is themselves.' (Regina José Galindo in Conversation with Clare Carolin, Modern Art Oxford, January 2009)



IMG. 04 — 'Regina José Galindo: *The Body of Others*', Modern Art Oxford, 2009 (installation shot with 'Reconocimiento de un Cuerpo', 2008)

by the Mexican sociologist Rossana Reguillo Cruz. It appeared in an article about teenage street gangs in Mexico City: 'In order to think of themselves, powerful cultures need the presence of a distinct, different other...' This phrase became the basis for the curatorial scheme of the exhibition providing its subtitle: *The Body of Others*. As Galindo elaborated during a public talk on the occasion of the exhibition opening:

*This statement goes to the heart of a question I always carry with me but for which I have no answer. It's like a power game. In order for the first world to exist, I have to exist. Before you I will always appear as an exotic person. Although I am not indigenous you see me as indigenous. I come from Guatemala carrying all my miseries behind me. As a result I have always doubted the reality of my work. Has my career developed because it, the work, is worthwhile? Or has the first world created me because it needs to? The question is: am I really what I am, or have you constructed me? Are we really what we are? Are you really what you are? Or are we each other's constructions: each other's others? (Galindo 2009)*

What was the significance of this exchange in terms of the final manifestation of the project? First was a new action by Galindo which took place the afternoon before the exhibition's public opening and was produced in collaboration with the Ruskin School of Fine Art (part of the University of Oxford). The action, entitled *Warm-Up*, was intended as an ironic 'warm up' exercise for the exhibition itself. For the most part it was an exercise in queuing and petty bureaucracy. After signing a public liability disclaimer, the 200 people who had pre-booked to attend an event publicised as 'an action by the artist' were asked to form an orderly line outside the door of a small storage room in the basement of





the School. In turn they were ushered into the room in groups of ten, remaining there for ten minutes before leaving by a separate exit. The action was realised in mid-January with the exterior temperature just above freezing. The room was heated to 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) and was completely empty, but for a camera recording the actions of the people in the room and an inconspicuous text mounted on the wall which read:

*Much is said about the coldness of European people, in particular a typically British coldness is often spoken of. A privileged position. An elegant way of looking at and responding to the world. Strategies designed with the objective of maintaining the established order. A history of dominion. An obsession with preserving traditional power structures. While everything happens around it, English high society maintains its position, impassive. Through this action, the artist wants to change, literally, the body temperature of a certain group of people, the majority of whom are of English origin. Raising the temperature in the space occupied by this group will also raise the body temperature of its occupants.*

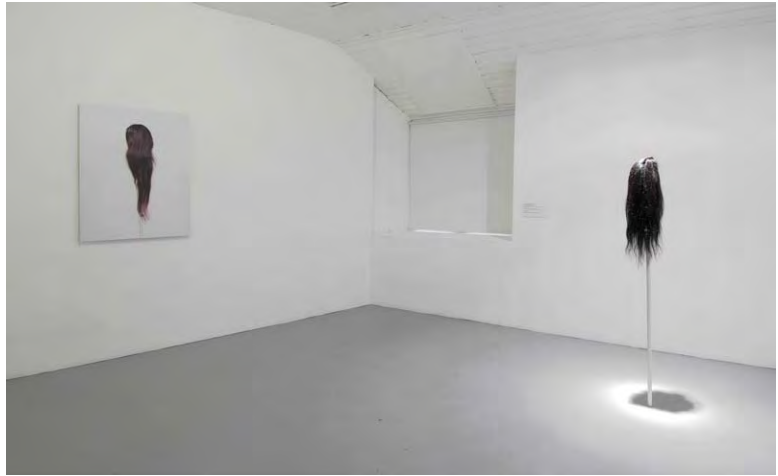
Audience responses to the action can be assessed through its filmed documentation. As each group enters the room individuals shuffle in bemusement, remove items of clothing, and slowly begin a process of interaction, first verbally, then physically. Their conversations consist of speculations about how and when the artist might enter, including the suggestion in at least one case, that the room is heated because she is likely to appear naked. Usually towards the end of the allotted ten minutes, the discretely placed text is discovered and read with responses ranging from bemusement to amusement. On exiting the space, one attendee can be

IMG. 05 — 'Regina José Galindo: The Body of Others', Modern Art Oxford, 2009 (installation shot with 'Quién Puede Borrar las Huellas?', 2003 and 'Recorte por la Línea', 2005)

IMG. 06 — 'Regina José Galindo: The Body of Others', Modern Art Oxford, 2009 (installation shot with 'Mientras ellos siguen libres', 2007; 'Confesion', 2007; 'Limpieza Social', 2006)



IMG. 07 — 'Regina José Galindo: The Body of Others', Modern Art Oxford, 2009 (installation shot with 'La Conquista', 2008)



heard expressing disappointment at not having seen any blood.

The second element was the exhibition itself. In conversation with Galindo and through a careful selection from her many documented performances, we devised a chronology that – taking the displays at the Pitt Rivers Museum as its reference point – doubled as a narrative of the evolution of the uses of violence. The starting point for this was *Lo Voy a Gritar al Viento*, with its proposition that the silencing of the human voice is the first act of violence. Its conclusion was a piece Galindo had recently performed in Córdoba, Argentina entitled *Reconocimiento de un Cuerpo* (*Identification of a Body*), 2008, and described by the artist as follows: 'I lie on a stretcher, completely anaesthetised and covered with a white sheet. The public must lift the sheet in order to identify my body' [IMG. 04]. The work referred to Latin America's many *desaparecidos*, or disappeared people, specifically the victims of state terrorism in Argentina during the 1970s and 1980s. The formality of the camera work in this piece (contrasted with the earlier videos) simultaneously emphasised the aestheticisation of

suffering as a major preoccupation in Christian art and its Modernist antecedents. This idea in turn informed the entire installation, which was controlled and paced in a way that was intended to build tension, starting with the 'lighter' works performed in public spaces and shown on a large scale in the largest and most open gallery [IMG. 05]. Then progressing in such a way as to become more syncopated and concentrated, so that as the violent content of the works escalated the works themselves became more densely packed and smaller in scale [IMG. 06]. Thus the exhibition built a sense of growing claustrophobia as well as escalating violence concluding in the 'death of the artist,' symbolised by *Reconocimiento de un Cuerpo*. Placed approximately halfway through the exhibition trajectory was a sculpture realised specifically for the exhibition entitled *La Conquista* (*The Conquest*), 2009 and described by Galindo as 'a wig, hand-made from the hair of women from the Indian sub-continent' [IMG. 07]. The wig had been meticulously woven by women in Costa Rica who specialised in making wigs and hair pieces, while the hair itself had been sourced through a Guatemala-based dealer in human hair. *La Conquista* thus invoked the ritual scalping of enemies (and then displaying the scalp as a trophy of war) practised by both Amerindians and their European colonisers, while simultaneously referring to the contemporary global trade in human hair stolen or extorted from women in countries affected by poverty and the legacies of European and American colonisation.

It is no accident that as Galindo's work has acquired an international audience her position within her practice has shifted from lone performer, to orchestrator of the actions of others, to complete corporeal absence in the most recent works such as *La Conquista* (which nevertheless continue to invoke the presence of a human body through its absence) and *Busto* (*Bust*), a classical self-portrait bust in heroic socialist-realist style shown at the tenth Havana Biennale in 2009, and described by Galindo as 'an experiment in approaching the human body from another perspective'. Here the body of others (whether Galindo's or that of the original owner of the hair used in *La Conquista*) becomes literally an object for critical scrutiny, sale and exchange: a commodifiable art object. I began this essay with the proposition that curating a performance-based practice for a conventional exhibition context is analogous to the task of translating poetry. What I hope to have demonstrated is that this analogy actually reverses the terms of Benjamin's theory of translation whereby literary works contain essential 'information' and inessential 'poetic, mysterious' content, 'something that the translator can reproduce only if he is also a poet'. In the case of a performance, the action of the performer is comparable to the information, but the space/time context of the performance is what gives the work its agency, mystery or poetry. This context is untransferable. It cannot be moved with the performer, or transported with the documentation of the performance, and therefore must be represented or addressed in other ways. This is why today's globalised art world demands that curators assume the role of 'discrete poet'. Only then will they be able to identify artistic practices sufficiently agile to transform or metamorphose (in the etymological

sense of that word) as they move from one geographical and socio-political context to another, while simultaneously devising presentational strategies to ensure that as little as possible is lost in translation.

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## 4. I'm Already Here (Migrating the Museum 1)

Museum director Clémentine Deliss argues that collections are key to her museum's need to transform itself alongside its urban European audience. This audience has long ceased to define itself via the logics of place or citizenship. It is itself in flux. Yet, the West still holds on to the myth of a core cultural identity, which, as art historian Kristin Marek shows, is made up of projections. By sharing into those projections, young asylum seekers, enabled by artist Danica Dakić, enter the hallowed halls.





## Stored Code

### Remediating Collections in a Post-Ethnographic Museum

→ CLÉMENTINE DELISS

Writing as early as 1915, Carl Einstein, the German theoretician of African art contemporaneous with Walter Benjamin and Aby Warburg, declared that museums were the foundation for *living schools*. Einstein argued against the idea that works of art from the past possessed a kind of material and sentimental immortality. He claimed this approach to objects contradicted the historical process representing a ‘terrible legacy’, which ‘falsifies the past (...) and sprinkles fiction and dead perceptions into the present’. Einstein wanted to nurture an intellectual lifeline between the museum and the research institute. The greatest strength of a collection, he wrote, lay in its mobility; in other words, in the intentional act of switching the position of exhibits back and forth from analysis and interpretation to public visibility.<sup>1</sup> The itinerancy of objects would make people look again, understand better what they saw, and take apart what they believed or assumed. Collections would reflect the extremes of intellectual exploration, and exhibitions would speak of human experience and knowledge. If not, he claimed, museums would become nothing more than ‘preserve jars’, and ‘anesthetize and rigidify into a myth of guaranteed continuity, into the drunken slumber of the mechanical’.<sup>2</sup>

1 ‘Diese Sammlung müsste jeweils mit Hilfe der Forschungssammlung ausgewechselt und stetig erneuert werden, damit die Besucher ein ausreichendes Bild der Elemente der Kultur und Völkerbezirke gewinnen können. In dieser vergleichenden Sammlung vor allem müssten Vorlesungen und Führungen veranstaltet werden; wie die gesamte Schausstellung durch Lehrer verlebendigt werden muss. Hier ist der Punkt, wo die lebendige Bindung zwischen Museum und Forschungsinstitut einzusetzen hat, soll das Museum nicht durch das Fachpopuläre nur Schau und nicht Lehre gewahren.’ Einstein, 1926 (Berliner Völkerkunde Museum), quoted in Fleckner 2006, 303.

2 Carl Einstein was born on 26 April 1885 in Neuwied/Rhein, Germany. He committed suicide on 3 or 5 July 1940. He was a friend and colleague of George Grosz, Georges Braque, Pablo Picasso and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler. Einstein combined many strands of political and aesthetic discourse into his writings, addressing both the developing aesthetic of modern art and the political situation in Europe. His key publication is: *Negerplastik*, (Leipzig: Verlag der Weissen Buecher, 1915; Munich: Kurt Wolff, 1920. For all quotations in English of Carl Einstein, see Charles Haxthausen, October 107, Winter 2004. For further information on Carl Einstein, see Fleckner 2006.

**PREVIOUS PAGE —**  
Installation view of *Moche* ceramics and paintings by Simon Popper, ‘OBJECT ATLAS – Fieldwork in the Museum’, Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt am Main. Photograph: Wolfgang Günzel, 2012

**IMG. 01** — Installation view of throwing knives from central Africa and hanging bu Otobong Nkanga, 'OBJECT ATLAS – Fieldwork in the Museum', Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt am Main. Photograph: Wolfgang Günzel, 2012

Einstein's dynamic proposition for the museum as a living school encourages further reflection on precisely what kind of educational framework might be best suited to a world-cultures museum in the twenty-first century. For Einstein, the collected object becomes a player in a transforming polymathic dialogue that builds on the conversational informality of the 'educational arrangements'<sup>3</sup> of the Enlightenment, and transfers these approaches onto the museological environment. A similar model can be located in the Scottish generalist system of the nineteenth century, in which it is the possible assemblages between disciplines and cultures that provide an enriching backdrop for comparative knowledge production. In the twentieth century, Gregory Bateson, the cyberneticist, linguist and anthropologist pursued this cross-referential, organic stance when he wrote in the 1970s, 'Such matters as the bilateral symmetry of an animal, the patterned arrangement of leaves in a plant, the escalation of an armaments race, the processes of courtship, the nature of play, the grammar of a sentence, the mystery of biological evolution, and the contemporary crises in man's relationship to his environment can only be understood in terms of such an ecology of ideas' (Bateson 1971).

Throughout the twentieth century, anthropologists have applied the contrast medium of *other* disciplines to the practice of ethnography and its theoretical counterpart: ethnology. Practices of art and literature help to shift the locus of analytical inquiry from fieldwork on other cultures to models closer to home that question the subject-object distinction. In this regard, Frankfurt in the 1970s and '80s has played an important role as a catalyst for critical analysis and publishing. This position can be traced in the ethno-poetics of writer and publisher Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs, who between 1979 and 1985 brought out scores of books on anthropology and psychoanalysis as well as limited editions of artworks by Joseph Beuys, Francis Bacon, and others in his legendary Qumran Verlag. In addition, other Frankfurt-based publishing houses such as Syndikat and Suhrkamp were central to the *Grenzüberschreitungen* that constituted the German-speaking reference to a meta or reflexive anthropology of the 1980s. Here, literature, autobiography, psychoanalysis and visual culture merge with ethnographic interpretations in the texts and films of Hubert Fichte, Fritz Morgenthaler, Hans-Peter Duerr, Mario Erdheim and Michael Oppitz, to name but a few. If there is a reference around which the Weltkulturen Museum can model itself today, then it is to be found in the continuation of this seminal paradigm of experimentation and meta-analysis.

Established in 1904 by the citizens of Frankfurt, the Weltkulturen

**IMG. 02** — View of Qumran Verlag reading room and murals by Simon Popper, 'OBJECT ATLAS – Fieldwork in the Museum', Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt am Main. Photograph: Wolfgang

3 One can trace an affinity to Carl Einstein in the later work of the Edinburgh philosopher George Elder Davie when he refers to 'educational arrangements' in his book, (1961) *The Democratic Intellect*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. In his critique of the English attempt to subordinate Scottish Enlightenment systems of learning, Davie identifies the subversive potential of generalism and its promotion of popular education and free discussion. Davie writes, 'Education became the chief forum for resistance to Southern encroachment, and provided a rallying-point for national principle, which could still bring together the dissident religious factions'. Generalism – the whole over the parts, the general over the particular – provided the citizen with an inclusive perception of the world and, by extension, an anthropological understanding of 'the relations of the subject to social life'.





IMG. 03 — Installation view of fish trap and work by Thomas Bayrle, 'OBJECT ATLAS – Fieldwork in the Museum', Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt am Main. Photograph: Wolfgang Günzel, 2012

Museum houses 67,000 objects, 100,000 photographic images and films, and a library with over 50,000 books and magazines. Nearly 100 years after Carl Einstein's progressive charter for museums, the challenge of the Weltkulturen Museum is to remediate the objects and images in its collections by engaging once again with tentative and innovative forms of inquiry. The term 'remediate', introduced by American anthropologist Paul Rabinow, offers a useful metaphor for a conceptual tool kit with which one may begin to rethink the object of study in a *post-ethnographic* context (Rabinow 2008). He writes:

*Metalepsis: takes up the past or an aspect of the past, or rather the enduring presence of something past, and makes it function within a different narratological milieu – thereby subordinating it to a different function and thus transforming it and making it present.* (Rabinow 2010)

In the first instance, to remediate implies to remedy something, for example, the ambivalent resonance of the colonial past. Here one needs to develop something like a post-ethnographic museum, for one can no longer be content to instrumentalise earlier examples of material culture for the purpose of depicting the ethnos, tribe or an existing range of grand anthropological themes. Our earlier assumed epistemological authority does not extend comfortably within the post-colonial situation. We can respect and critically integrate earlier narratives and hypotheses written by anthropologists and experts from the field, just as we need to take on the existing testimonials that originate from the producers and users of these artefacts. But we also need to expand the context of this knowledge by taking these extraordinary objects once again as the starting point and stimulus for contemporary innovation, aesthetic practice, linguist translation and even future product design.

Secondly, to remediate also means to bring about a change of medium, to experiment with alternative ways of describing, interpreting and displaying the objects in the collection. Here we recognise the value of re-introducing the laboratory into the museum, both as a physical location for research and as a virtual extension of communication.

Today, Frankfurt – as an icon of the post-modern European city in general – provides a temporary home to its citizens for an average of 15 years. For people whose logic of place is in flux, the former geographical distinctions evoked by departments of Oceania, Africa, Asia and South east Asia, the Orient and the Americas, which we still find today in ethnographic museums, can no longer provide a satisfactory geo-political or emotive sense of belonging. This nomenclature as it was set up over 100 years ago only makes sense if one wants to keep things as they were then, to operate as guardians of the past, of the world as it was conceptualised when the majority of these objects were collected. It remains nevertheless the discourse through which the cultural producers of these objects are mediated, interpreted and understood in Europe. So how can objects in the Weltkulturen Museum articulate new identifications, the 'presence' Saskia Sassen refers to that 'generates operational and rhetorical openings' beyond continentalist cartographies? Sassen's recent paper

IMG. 04 — Installation view of Melanesian stones and paintings by Antje Majewski, 'OBJECT ATLAS – Fieldwork in the Museum', Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt am Main. Photograph: Wolfgang Günzel 2012





on incompleteness and citizenship emphasises the transformatory, denationalising potential of the nature of citizenship today (Sassen 2009). For a transforming museum, the possibility of engaging with incompleteness is about being ‘capable of responding to the historically conditioned meaning of citizenship’ by shifting the classifications or organising principles that determine the ways an object is displayed and what approach or method is applied in mediating information about it.

These questions lead to a further problem area: museography. More than 20 years have passed since anthropologists and curators began to debate the distinctions between a so-called ethnographic display replete with contextual information on walls, and the power-pedestal spotlight presentations of tribal art exhibits, understood as art exhibitions.<sup>4</sup> Remarkably, this dissatisfying polarity resurfaces again and again, determining models of exhibition-making in the majority of world-culture museums, but with one distinction. Designers have become more expensive, and the earlier homemade *mises-en-scènes* so typical of ethnographic displays have been superseded by expensive department store sets. Indeed, I would argue that there is a latent class differentiation that subtends these presentations in contrast with neighbouring ‘high art’ museums that show objects born of greater proximity in time and space. If the latter employ a more corporate style for their cabinets and lighting, the former offer the aesthetic equivalent of working-class shopping precincts or health-food stores. Dioramas, *mises-en-scène* with manikins and colourful constructions invoke a form of psychological compensation for that which is not known, underlining the exoticism perceived in the objects and the distance to the cultures that produced them. The Victorian emporium model can be found in the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam as it can in Selfridges on London’s Oxford Street or Macy’s in New York. In addition, the prolongation into the twenty-first century of the nineteenth-century consumption of ethnographic objects relies on certain forms of atmospheric, artificial lighting and by extension, the photographic representation of these artefacts in auction or exhibition catalogues, positioned against an auratic moiré of grey shadows to best highlight their concave and convex forms. The ideological apparatus that subtends these conventions of display and photographic imaging extends deep into the presuppositions that surround the reception of ethnographic objects and needs to be critically reconsidered.

In some cases artists have successfully attempted to dislodge this persistent museographic genre. One example of this form of intervention is Jorge Pardo’s reinstallation of the pre-Columbian objects at LACMA in 2010. Another example is the exhibition *GEO-graphics* curated by architect David Adjaye at the Bozar in Brussels (2010). *GEO-graphics* placed groups of figurative tribal sculptures from Africa, which were borrowed from the Tervuren Museum, against a backdrop of snapshots taken in the 52 African capital cities that Adjaye has visited over the course of the

4 See, for example: Vogel, S. (1990) *Art/Artifact*, New York: Center for African Art; Deliss, C. (1990) *Lotte or the Transformation of the Object*, Vienna: Styrian Autumn, Kunsthaut Graz, Academy of Fine Arts; and Deliss, C. (1990) in Ivan Karp and Steven Levine (eds), *Rethinking Exhibitions*.

last ten years. As he says so succinctly, 'It's about the story you want to tell.' And this story with its subjective, experimental potential wins over the clumsy decor tendencies of mainstream ethnographic museum display. Indeed, it begs the question of what indeed an 'ethnographic' exhibition might actually represent in 2011? As philosopher Jacques Rancière recently suggested, we are entering a 'period of indecision, trying some new forms of connection between objects and practice, between framing the visible and making sense' (Rancière 2010). The input of artists, writers, philosophers and scholars from various disciplines is central to this process of remediation. For these artist-led constellations create neighbourhoods between objects and people by introducing a multiplicity of contemporary micro-practices and visual decoding procedures.

Artist Issa Samb of the Laboratoire Agit'Art in Dakar, Senegal, offers the following *modus operandi*:

*One way of proceeding with an ethnographic museum is to begin with an inversion: exhume these objects, place them at the forefront. This will be the first level. Then walk around the museum and the storerooms but do not begin to classify anything. Walk, look, and name the directors who preceded you, and recall their preconceptions. With this critique you can start to mark your passage. You will be able to socialise each object and discover the life within them. No object in a museum is useless. By reading them, you can learn about current affairs. If you encounter a prototype, isolate it immediately, and give it a number written below its existing one, a number below a number, so as to create a new classification. You need to criticise classifications. They contain a germ of racism. Museums of ethnography confused culture and civilisation, man and objects. All people have culture, but civilisation is an invention. (Samb 2010)<sup>5</sup>*

Issa Samb's practice recognises that collections have an anthropomorphic, even fetishist, feel to them. They are both about our failings and about our successes. They signify relations between things and ideas, between the inheritance of meaning and its erasure over time. The ethnographic museum can be seen as a household with a history that is diasporic, immigrant, bourgeois, feral, reclusive, rehabilitating, convivial, consumerist, effusive, curious, concerned, failed, domestic and obsessive. The collection

5 March 2010, Dakar, in conversation with Clémentine Deliss: 'Une manière de travailler dans musée ethnographique: commencer par une inversion. Les objets seront exhumés et mise en avant: premier niveau de lecture. Puis, se promener à l'intérieur de ce musée, ne rien commencer à classer. On marche, on regarde, et on nomme les directeurs et directrices qui ont précédé et on voit leur parti pris. Avec la critique de ce parti pris, on commence. Toute personne qui dirigerait un musée d'ethnographie devrait procéder de la sorte pour aider l'ethnographie à aller tranquillement vers son statut de science. Dans le monde actuel que toutes ces disciplines là prennent sens. Sinon ce serait toujours la même chose que les autres. Laisser trace. Marquer son passage. De cette manière seulement. Que tous ces objets dépassent leur statut esthétique pour enfin retrouver leur dimension humaine. Tu pourras socialiser tout objet que tu trouveras et lui donner sa vivance. Aucun objet dans un musée peut-être un objet inutile, mais tout objet peut éclairer la proto-histoire, la sociologie. De sa lecture on obtient une facilité pour comprendre l'actuel. Si tu rencontres un prototype il faut tout de suite l'isoler et lui donner un numéro sous le numéro initial. Numéro en dessous de numéro, et créer une nouvelle classification. Il faut critiquer la classification. Elle porte un germe de racisme. Refaire le tour de l'Afrique dans le musée et à chaque fois que tu rencontres un prototype tu l'isoles. Les prototypes changent. Les musées d'ethnographie ont confondu la culture et la civilisation, l'homme et l'objet. Tous les hommes ont une culture. La civilisation est une fabrication. Pour tout ce qui est de cette tentative, tu vas corriger.'

**IMG. 05** — Installation view with Akwaba dolls and painting by Simon Popper. 'OBJECT ATLAS – Fieldwork in the Museum', Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt am Main. Photograph: Wolfgang Günzel, 2012

is simultaneously a series of household articles and a set of hermeneutic tools of inquiry. If these objects once projected a certain aura they quickly become forgotten and acquire a layer of anachronism, fading in immediate relevance and yet still carrying deep meaning. To rethink the ethnographic collection means to engage with that necessary mix of discomfort, doubt and melancholia in order to transform these objects into a contemporary context and gently build additional interpretations onto their existing set of references.

For this process to work, fieldwork has to take place within the museum itself, in a laboratory such as the Weltkulturen Labor in Frankfurt, and no longer on journeys to distant lands. Today, expeditions take place within the museum stores, where it is about coming to terms with what has been collected and why, and finding out about the different paradigms that have signified the research of former directors and curators of the museum. However, if these earlier anthropological models lead us today into a theoretical and curatorial cul-de-sac and promote the repetition of outdated modes of display, then how can we put into practice a relationship between the collection and a set of new logics for spatial and temporal comparatives? How can we configure connections between objects and people in line with present and future trade routes? How do we cross-connect China and Africa for example, or the Middle East and Europe? What platforms do we need to construct in order to provide emotive connection to these objects from past times?

These problematic issues identify the purpose behind the Weltkulturen Museum, which bases its activities on 50 per cent inquiry and 50 per cent exhibition production. To follow this through a laboratory or workshop has been introduced into one of the Villas on Schaumainkai. It spans half the space of the Museum and includes studios and apartments for guest artists and scholars. Inquiries conducted in the Weltkulturen Labor therefore feed into every show, event, publication and seminar organised by the museum. New flexible furniture in grey aluminium, and ivory linoleum commissioned from Viennese designer Mathis Esterhazy, provides a physical structure upon which to place, hang and juxtapose selected artefacts. Guests live and work in the Labor villa for up to four weeks at a time. Their presence restores the fertile domestic cycle of living, working and dialoguing inherent to this form of city architecture. The emergent and innovative practices that are carried out in the Labor energise the museum's events and exhibitions such that visitors immediately identify Weltkulturen with twenty-first century ideas and questions. To compliment the physical site, the Weltkulturen Museum is currently working with cocomore AG, a multi-media company in Frankfurt to develop a digital extension that will act as a virtual production site for articulating innovation in formal design, ergonomic and ecological function, as well as transmitting personal biographies that envelop today's users as much as yesterday's producers.

The philosophy behind the Weltkulturen Museum holds that each individual artefact in the collection is a *prototype* and therefore a trigger





for future concepts. To reference the American artist Allan Kaprow, the objects in the collection contain ‘*stored code*’ (Kaprow, 1993). To decipher them requires a productive, engineered confusion between histories, roles and disciplines, and an unorthodox predisposition to that which Kaprow called in the 1970s ‘*signal scrambling*’. For the Weltkulturen Museum, the partial narratives that originate from earlier ethnographic research on the objects offer a seedbed for further knowledge production and cultural mediation. For objects operate as ‘*shadows*’, altering their significance, ‘*accreting material and symbolic elements*’ as they migrate from one hand to another, from an indigenous location to a storeroom, from a research lab to a public exhibition (Urry *et al* 2010).

In this way, we can view the different artefacts as vehicles of cultural translation, operating in the tension and traction between pedagogy and performativity: pedagogy with its ‘*continuist, accumulative temporality*’ and performativity that engages with the recursive language of creative adjustment (Bhabha 1994). This may help us to redefine the condition of mobility that Einstein referred to by highlighting the far-reaching even radical character of ethnographic collections *per se*. The existing conservatism of the tribal art market with its implicit top 20 of the tribal art charts, where a piece from Nok or Benin will be at the top of the scale and a set of woven rattan fish traps from the Sepik at the bottom, no longer retains its ideological status. The associated apparatus of display including genres of lighting and photographic imaging also needs to be critically reviewed when thinking of post-ethnographic presentations.<sup>6</sup>

All this leads us at the Weltkulturen Museum to a framework that Carl Einstein would have called *configured vision*, an extended practice of advanced art and inquiry that combines the potential of a major physical collection with a museum-in-the-mind.<sup>7</sup> Formulated for a hyper-medial world with a digital laboratory that complements the physical space of the museum, the activities at the Weltkulturen can begin to connect communities both inside and outside of Frankfurt, and to reflect a new geo-political disposition toward dialogue by providing younger migrant populations with that crucial sense of institutional belonging.

Today, the museum has the potential to constitute a new, emphatic space of visual inquiry, one that is differentiated from university education or cultural consumption. It can offer intellectually stimulating events, laboratory presentations and workshops that build directly on the collections. Together with guest artists and scholars, the experimental reworking of an ecological epistemology based directly on the collections provides the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt with a central thought-structure that is naturally interdependent and interactive with other art

6 As stated by American anthropologist Paul Rabinow, who gave the first research seminar at the Weltkulturen Museum in November 2010, dissent is inherent within experimental research: ‘I have always remained loyal to a vision of anthropology by remaining vigilantly disloyal to the existing state of affairs. I am anti-theory and pro-concept, and pro-experimentation.’ (Rabinow 2008)

7 In 1991, artist Judith Barry attempted to build a mnemonic museum, created by memory using an ancient recall system activated by the viewer. See Barry 1991 and Corrin 2009.

forms, disciplines and cultures.<sup>8</sup> In that sense the museum becomes a space of visual inquiry and production where new craftsmen of future societies<sup>9</sup> and new theoreticians of aesthetic practices can contemplate objects from the past and find ways of translating what they see: visually, through art works, films, and recordings, but also through writing and other forms of virtual community communication.

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8 In February 2011, guest artists and scholars include Antje Majewski, Otobong Nkanga, Thomas and Helke Bayrle, Pablo Leon dela Barra, Paul D Miller aka DJ Spooky, Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs, Dieter Roestraete and Marc Camille Chamowicz.

9 I am grateful to Richard Sennett for his reference to Ruskin's Working Men's College in Chapter 3, *The Craftsman*, New Haven: Yale, 2008.



## Eldorado – Topologien einer Projektion: Mythos, Tapete, Video

→ KRISTIN MAREK

→ ABSTRACT

*‘Eldorado’ still evokes a mythic land of gold, which fascinated and obsessed the Spanish conquistadors of South America from 1500: the dream of infinite wealth in the paradise of the New World just had to be true. ‘Eldorado’ was also the name that the French wallpaper factory owner Zuber gave to one of his most elaborate and exclusive designs, a panoramic wallpaper created in 1849, which showed four continents. More recently, El Dorado was also the title of the multi-piece work by artist Danica Dakić, exhibited at documenta 12 in Kassel in 2007, consisting of photographs and a video of about 14 minutes. In the work, teenage asylum-seekers perform different postures and movements in front of the Eldorado wallpaper and other pieces shown in the German Museum of Wallpapers at Kassel (Deutsches Tapetenmuseum). The teenagers’ motivations for seeking asylum in Germany were varied, but they shared a common idea of a new life in a new world, a modern ‘Eldorado’.*

‘Eldorado’, damit verbinden wir heute noch das sagenumwobene Goldland, das seit der Zeit um 1500 die spanischen Konquistadoren Südamerikas so sehr fesselte, dass die Suche nach ihm zur Obsession wurde; der Traum vom unendlichen Reichtum im Paradies der Neuen Welt sollte Wirklichkeit werden. ‘Eldorado’, so nannte später der französische Tapetenfabrikant Zuber eines seiner aufwendigsten und exklusivsten Stücke, eine im Jahr 1849 entstandene, 24 Bahnen umfassende Panoramatapete, auf der die vier Erdteile zu sehen sind. Und schließlich lautet *El Dorado* auch der Titel der mehrteiligen Arbeit der Künstlerin Danica Dakić, die im Jahr 2007 auf *documenta 12* in Kassel zu sehen war. Ihr Kernstück ist ein Video. Es zeigt Jugendliche, die in Deutschland Asyl suchen, vor der Eldorado-Tapete und anderen im Deutschen Tapetenmuseum in Kassel ausgestellten Stücken in einer Tanzperformance. Während der Dreharbeiten befanden sich ihre Anträge

**PREVIOUS IMAGE —**  
Detail from ‘El Dorado’,  
Giessbergstrasse. Danica  
Dakić, 2006/7, C-print. ©  
Danica Dakić and © VG-Bild-  
Kunst, Bonn



noch in Bearbeitung, ohne Abschätzbarkeit der Verfahrensausgänge. Was die Jugendlichen jeweils dazu motivierte, in Deutschland Asyl zu beantragen, sind zwar sehr unterschiedliche Schicksale und Lebensumstände, doch die gemeinsame Vorstellung von einem neuen Leben in einer neuen Welt, dem modernen Eldorado. Die einstmals von Europäern auf ferne, fremde Gegenden und Länder projizierten Vorstellungen werden nun zurückgespiegelt. Europa ist die neue 'Neue Welt', die Versprechung eines befriedeten, paradiesischen Lebens in Sicherheit und Frieden, Wohlstand und Freiheit. Doch wie geht man mit den Kindern des Paradieses um, die plötzlich an die eigene Haustür klopfen? Dakić wählt mit dem Tapetenmuseum ein geschichtsträchtiges und anspielungsreiches Setting, das die verschiedenen Projektionen und ihre Topologien raffiniert miteinander verschränkt und konfrontiert, um sie schließlich in der Videoprojektion selbst wieder zu spiegeln und Bild werden zu lassen. Dabei werden vor allem zwei historische Linien zusammengeführt, die umkodiert und unterlaufen zur neuen Idee von Eldorado werden: einmal die historische Legende und zum Anderen die Topologie, Blickstruktur und Subjektkonstitution der Panoramatapete, oder anders formuliert, die Blickregime der narrativen und der visuellen Projektion.

#### → I. DIE LEGENDE VON EL DORADO

Wörtlich übersetzt bedeutet *El Dorado* 'der Goldene' oder 'der vergoldete Mann'. Er entstammt einer indianischen Legende Südamerikas, die von einem König berichtet, zu dessen Inthronisationszeremonie es gehörte, ihn vollkommen mit Gold zu bestäuben und zugleich einen nicht unbeachtlichen Schatz an Gold in einem See zu versenken (AK 1979, 11). Die spanischen Eroberer kamen mit der Legende bald nach ihrer Landung auf der kolumbianischen Halbinsel Guajira im Jahr 1499 in Berührung. Die Werkstatt des Frankfurter Kupferstechers Theodore de Bry – calvinistischer Europäer, der Südamerika nie betreten hat – lässt genau 100 Jahre später die Vorstellung vom vergoldeten Mann materielles Bild werden. Ein Stich aus dem achten Teil der *Grands Voyages*, einer 11 Bände umfassenden, zwischen 1590 und 1620 publizierten Edition, zeigt, wie ein Helfer den König mit Harz als Klebstoff bestreicht, während ein anderer damit beschäftigt ist, ihn mit Gold zu bepudern.<sup>1</sup> Die Darstellung der Figuren unterliegt einer europäischen Ästhetik, steht doch der König in klassischem Kontrapost und entsprechen Körperbau und Physiognomien europäischen Vorbildern und Maßstäben. Die Vorstellung eines schier unendlichen Goldschatzes wurde zur fixen Idee, die sich mehr als 300 Jahre halten sollte und nicht nur unzähligen spanischen Soldaten das Leben, sondern vor allem den Muiska-Indianern Freiheit, Leben und Kultur kostete. Die Gegend, in der man den sagenumwobenen Schatz schließlich vermutete, liegt heute im Staatsgebiet von Kolumbien, in der Nähe Bogotá, einer bergigen Hochlandregion, eben dem ehemaliger Stammesgebiet der Muiska. Dort liegt auch der Guatavita-See, der

1 Zu de Brys Amerikabild siehe insb. (Greve 2004).



bald mit jenem See identifiziert wurde, dessen Grund man voller Gold vermutete und auf den sich die Suche schließlich konzentrierte. Eine der ersten Zeichnungen des Sees veröffentlichten Alexander von Humboldt und der Botaniker Aimé Bonpland in den zwischen 1810 und 1813 erschienenen *Vue des Cordillères et Monuments des Peuples Indigènes de l'Amérique*. Humboldt kommentiert dieses Bild darin wie folgt:

*Dieser See liegt im Norden der Stadt Santa Fe de Bogotá in einer absoluten Höhe von über vierzehnhundert Toisen auf dem Rücken der Berge von Zipaquirá, an einem wilden einsamen Ort. Auf der Zeichnung sieht man die Überreste einer Treppe, die der Zeremonie der Waschungen diente, sowie Einschnitte in die Berge. Kurz nach der Eroberung hatte man versucht, diese Bresche zu schlagen, um den See trockenzulegen und die Schätze zu bergen, welche der Überlieferung zufolge die Eingeborenen darin versteckt hatten, als Quesada mit seiner Kavallerie auf dem Plateau von Neu-Granada anrückte'. (von Humboldt 2004, 380)*

Die Opfergaben erscheinen hier bar ihres rituellen Kontextes allein als materieller Wert des zu versteckenden Schatzes. Doch ruft selbst eine Fotografie aus den späten 1970er Jahren eine ganze Palette der mit diesem utopischen Ort verbundenen paradiesische Topoi auf: Naturwunder, Regenbogen, unberührte Natur, kräftige, schillernde Farben, Einsamkeit, friedliche Stille usw. Den Schatz zu bergen machten sich im 16. Jahrhundert unzählige spanische Expeditionen auf. Die Werkstatt de Bry verortete 1599 in der *Historica Americae* nicht nur den goldenen Häuptling, sondern auch eine sagenumwobene Stadt namens Dorado nordöstlich des großen Sees, damals noch Giuana genannt, und beschrieb sie darin wie folgt: 'Manoa oder Dorado, dise wird geacht fur di größte Stadt in der ganzen Welt.'<sup>2</sup> Das Größte meint hier auch gleich das Reichste, wo viel Größe ist, ist sicher auch viel Gold. Die Stadt und der Goldschatz von *El Dorado* existierten aber nur in der Phantasie. Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul beschreibt in den 1960er Jahren das Wandern der phantasmatischen Imaginationen, die Tragik und Logik dieser kolonialistischen Suche in seinem (autobiographischen) Roman vom *Abschied von Eldorado*:

*Die Spanier jagten einer indianischen Erinnerung nach, und diese Erinnerung vermischte sich mit der unter den Urwaldindianern kursierenden Legende über Peru, das die Spanier bereits erobert hatten. Alle Indianer erzählten von einem reichen, zivilisierten Volk, das nur wenige Tagesmärsche entfernt lebte. Mitunter tauchten kunstvoll gearbeitete Stücke aus Gold auf, einmal entdeckte man im Dschungel einen Sonnentempel und ein andermal kehrte ein verrückt gewordener Entdecker zurück und erzählte von einer riesigen Stadt mit langen, geraden Straßen und Tempeln voller goldener Statuen.*

*Nach Mexiko, Peru und Neugranada war alles möglich. Auch nach fünfzig Jahren und unzähligen Katastrophen veranstalteten rivalisierende Konquistadoren immer noch wahre Wettrennen nach Spanien, um als*

2 Siehe die Abbildung der Karte (AK 1979, 13).



IMG. 01 — 'El Dorado',  
Giessbergstrasse. Danica  
Dakić, 2006/7, Video Still. ©  
Danica Dakić and © VG-Bild-  
Kunst, Bonn

*Erste die Erlaubnis zur Erforschung einer neuen, viel versprechenden Region einzuholen. [...] Von all diesen Fahrten ist wenig geblieben. Ein Konquistador, der nichts fand, hatte nichts zu berichten.* (Naipaul 2003, 13)

*Eldorado aber 'das zunächst nur die Suche nach Gold verkörpert hatte, wurde zu etwas Größerem, zum Wunschbild, zum Traum von Shangri-la, der heilen Welt. Diese heile Welt hatte tatsächlich existiert, und die Spanier hatten sie zerstört. Und nun, von einem Gefühl des Verlustes erfüllt, das ihre Fantasie noch beflügelte, wollten sich die Spanier das Abenteuer zurückholen. Ihre Fehlschläge bereicherten den Mythos noch. Er trug die Spanier über die Realität ihres Lebens in die Wildnis hinaus; er narrte ihre darbenden Sinne.* (Naipaul 2003, 26)

Das Gold, das man tatsächlich bei den Muisca-Indianern fand und das als Beleg für den zu erwartenden Schatzfund gewertet wurde, war tatsächlich Import von den peruanischen Inkas, wo ergiebige Goldminen lagen und das Edelmetall in größeren Mengen verarbeitet wurde. Was davon heute noch erhalten ist, sind vermutlich hauptsächlich Grabbeigaben wie Schmuck, Gefäße und Votivgaben. Ein kunstvolles Muisca-Tunjo, wahrscheinlich eine solche Votivgabe, stellt die Zeremonie des *El Dorado* dar. Es ist kaum 20cm lang, besteht aus reinem, gegossenem und fein verarbeiteten Gold und zeigt neben dem thronenden Königs mehrere Figuren auf einer Art Floß.<sup>3</sup> Von Kunstwerken solcher Art ist

<sup>3</sup> Es ist ca. 18cm lang. 'Die Hauptfigur in dieser Zeremonie sitzt als einzige (auf einem hochlehnigen Stuhl zwischen zwei Platten, die von halbrunden Emblemen gekrönt sind). Direkt vor der vorderen Platte befinden sich zwei Figuren, die Kalkfässchen und -spatel halten. Vor ihnen stehen zwei etwas größere mit Masken, die Rasseln in Händen haben' lautete die Beschreibung (AK 1979, 77).



heute wenig erhalten. Sie wurden in der Regel eingeschmolzen, weil sie den Eroberern weder als Kunst noch als wissenschaftlich interessante Objekte galten und damit der ästhetische oder ein historischer Wert gegenüber dem Materialwert des reinen Goldes keine Rolle spielte. Er durfte das auch nicht, denn die Artefakte und Bilder eines Volkes, dem man weder Menschenrechte noch eine Geschichte zuerkannte und das man versklaven wollte, konnten ja kaum den eigenen Kulturleistungen gleichgesetzt werden (AK 1979, 12). Von Albrecht Dürer hingegen, der südamerikanische Kunstwerke aus Mexiko kannte, also wahrscheinlich solche von den Inkas oder den Azteken, ist der Satz überliefert:

*Ich habe in meinem ganzen Leben nichts gesehen, was mein Herz so erfreute wie diese Dinge. Denn ich sah dabei erstaunliche künstlerische Gegenstände, und ich wunderte mich über die feine Erfindungsgabe der Menschen in diesen entfernten Ländern.* (AK 1979, 12)

IMG. 02 — 'El Dorado', Giessbergstrasse. Danica Dakić, 2006/7, Video Still. © Danica Dakić and © VG-Bild-Kunst, Bonn

## → II. PANORAMATAPETE – BLICKREGIME IM PARADIES

Entfernte, fremde Länder und exotische Landstriche waren in europäischen Imaginationen immer präsent. In einzigartiger Weise wurden sie es jedoch Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts, als – für eine relativ kurze Zeit – die so genannte Panoramatapete in Mode kam (Olligs 1970; Thümmeler 1998). Die Tapete ist innerhalb der Kunstgeschichte noch kaum beachtet und noch weniger ist es die Panoramatapete.<sup>4</sup> Wände

<sup>4</sup> Es gehört zu der Geschichte der Kunstgeschichte, dass die oft naheliegenden Geschichten nicht geschrieben werden. So wird keine Geschichte der Malerei, die selbstverständlich Wandmalereien behandelt, Tapeten erwähnen. Tapeten werden eher dem Kunsthandwerk und der Designgeschichte zugerechnet, also dem Gebiet der 'low art', dem sich eine Kunstgeschichtsschreibung, die sich am Kunstbegriff orientiert nicht zu widmen geneigt ist. Hierzu trägt auch der durch die unendliche Reproduzierbarkeit betonte Warencharakter, der dennoch sehr teuren, exklusiven damaligen Staussymbole, bei. Oftmals

mit (zunächst wohl gewebten oder gewirkten) Behängen zu bekleiden und zu dekorieren, ist wahrscheinlich so alt wie die Geschichte des Lebens in Räumen oder eben des Wohnungsbaus – verstanden in einem sehr weit gefassten Sinn – und vielleicht schon seit dem Bewohnen von Höhlen, spätestens aber seit dem Leben in mobilen Wohneinheiten, also Zelten, üblich (Olligs 1970, 11ff). Von Wandmalereien in Wohnräumen, die Landschaften zeigen, wissen wir aus der Antike und von frühesten Innenraumbemalungen sogar schon aus der Zeit des Neuen Reichs in Ägypten (Bösch-Supran 1967). Dort handelt es sich allerdings durchwegs um Bemalungen von Grabwänden, die – wie nicht anders zu vermuten – viele Garten-, Landschafts- und vor allem Paradiesmotive zeigen. Schließlich ist der Paradiesgarten aber auch eines der ältesten Motive des Teppichs und damit des Wandbehangs. Beim Blick im Innen auf ein Außen, das paradiesische Natur ist, handelt es sich also sicher um eine anthropologische Konstante, wobei damit noch nichts über die Bedeutung, den Inhalt und die Konstruktion dieses Blicks ausgesagt wäre.<sup>5</sup> Technisch-medial ist die Tapete mit der Sakralkunst des Mittelalters verbunden, den sog. Dominos, mit biblischen Szenen oder christlichen Motiven bemalten und bedruckten Papieren, die man direkt auf die Wand klebte (Teynac *et al.* 1982, 9–43). Spätestens im 17. Jahrhundert hatte sich daraus das entwickelt, was wir heute eigentlich noch unter Tapeten verstehen, damals so genannte ‘papiers de tapisserie’, Papiertapeten, deren Rapport sich unendlich zusammen setzen ließ und die bald bahnenweise gehandelt wurden (Teynac *et al.* 1982, 20–1).<sup>6</sup> Illustrationen zu einem Artikel über Tapetenherstellung und -verwendung um 1760 zeigen das sehr schön. Der Rapport unterscheidet die Tapete von Wandbehang und Wandbemalung im herkömmlichen Sinn, denn er erlaubt theoretisch die unendliche Aneinanderreihung des Musters und ist allein darum schon eine Technik des Paradieses, das als solches immer ein unendliches sein muss.

Zu diesen beiden Genealogien kommt bei der Panoramatapete, wie ihr Name schon sagt, eine dritte hinzu: die des Panoramas.<sup>7</sup> Als Erfindung des 18. Jahrhunderts gehört es zu jenen konditionierenden Bild-Techniken des Betrachtens, die im Anschluss Michel Foucault und Jonathan Crary zum Projekt der Disziplinierung des modernen Subjekts zu zählen sind.<sup>8</sup> Es ist eine augenscheinliche Koinzidenz, dass die patentierte Erfindung

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sind Tapetenentwürfe zudem lediglich einer Manufaktur, die sie in Auftrag gab und keinen Personen (schon gar keinem ‘Künstler’) zuordenbar. Wohingegen in der Literatur zur Geschichte der Tapete, die eine sehr kulturwissenschaftlich ausgerichtete ist, in einer erstaunlichen Selbstverständlichkeit medien-, technik- und motivhistorisch argumentiert wird. Zur Panoramatapete siehe: Olligs 1970; Teynac *et al.* 1982; and Thümmler 1998.

5 Im Gegensatz hier zu Crary (1996) sowie Berger (1993, 7), die sich vehement gegen das Denken in Konstanten aussprechen und darum keinen Unterschied zwischen dem konstanten Auftreten des Naturmotivs im Innenraum und seiner Bedeutung machen können. Anstatt die Geschichte der Konstanten gegen die der Brüche zu setzen, ist es produktiver beide miteinander zu koppeln.

6 Tapeteten konnten neben Papier, das die Produktion seit dem 18. Jahrhundert bestimmte, aber auch aus Materialien wie Leder, Leinen oder Wachstuch bestehen. Einen Überblick gibt: Olligs 1970 and Thümmler and Gerner 2006.

7 Hierzu etwa Solar 1979; Oettermann 1980; Kemp 1991.

8 Hierzu insb. Crary 1996. Des weiteren siehe: Buddemeier 1970; Kuchenbuch 1992.

des Panoramas durch Robert Baker mit dem Projekt des Panoptikums von Jeremy Bentham in das gleiche Jahr fallen (1787). 'Das Panoptikum war ein zylindrischer [Gefängnis-]Bau mit vier oder sechs Geschoßen, in dessen Mitte sich ein Turm befand' (Berger 1993, 115), von wo aus in alle Zellen des ringförmigen Außenbaus gesehen werden konnte, die durch je ein Fenster zur Außen- und zur Innenseite heller- oder besser durchleuchtet waren. Der bewusste und permanente Sichtbarkeitszustand des Gefangenen hat unabhängig von der tatsächlichen Überwachung, dem aktuellen Blick des Wärters, die dauerhafte Verinnerlichung dieses kontrollierenden Blicks und damit die Internalisierung und Inkorporation der Machtverhältnisse zur Folge.<sup>9</sup> 'Das Panopticon', schreibt Foucault, 'ist eine wundersame Maschine, die aus den verschiedensten Begehungen gleichförmige Machtwirkungen erzielt. Eine wirkliche Unterwerfung geht mechanisch aus einer fiktiven Beziehung hervor, so daß man auf Gewaltmittel verzichten kann [...]. Bentham wunderte sich selbst darüber, daß die panoptischen Einrichtungen so zwanglos sein können' (Foucault 1977, 260). Im Panorama hingegen nimmt der Besucher die Rolle des zentralen Beobachters mit souveränem Blick ein. Er betritt das Gebäude durch einen unterirdischen, verdunkelten Gang, der ihn auf eine niedrig überdachte Plattform, genau in der Mitte des kreisrunden Panoramabildes führt. Von dort hat er freien Rundumblick auf die ihn umgebende, erleuchtete Panoramalandschaft, in die er eingetaucht zu sein meint.<sup>10</sup>

Panoptikum und Panorama, Im-Bild-Sein durch Beobachtung und Im-Bild-Sein durch beobachtet werden – zwei Seiten ein und derselben Medaille – sind von der Form des Zylinders, Sinnbild des Immersiven, bestimmt, der als ein technisches Paradigma des 19. Jahrhunderts gelten kann und neben den Medientechniken des Visuellen vor allem auch die Maschinenteknik revolutioniert. Auch die Walze der Tapetendruckmaschine, wie sie ab Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts verwendet (und die auch im Video von Dacić gezeigt) wird, ist zylindrisch. Zwar hat der mit einer Panoramatapete ausgestattete Innenraum wohl nie die reine panoramatische, zylindrische Form angenommen, doch ist auch für ihn der Zylinder die Idealform, in der sich die Allsicht des Panoramblicks vollendet. Der ovale Gartensaal<sup>11</sup> eines Patrizier-Hauses im westfälischen Warendorf mit der Panoramatapete 'Les Incas' (Manufacture Dufur, Paris, um 1818) kommt dem allerdings schon sehr nahe.<sup>12</sup> Durch die

9 'Daraus ergibt sich die Hauptwirkung des Panopticon: die Schaffung eines bewußten und permanenten Sichtbarkeitszustandes beim Gefangenen, der das automatische Funktionieren der Macht sicherstellt. Die Wirkung der Überwachung "ist permanent, auch wenn die Durchführung sporadisch ist"; die Perfektion der Macht vermag ihre tatsächliche Ausübung überflüssig zu machen; der architektonische Apparat ist eine Maschine, die ein Machtverhältnis schaffen kann, welches vom Machtausübenden unabhängig ist; die Häftlinge sind Gefangene einer Machtsituation, die sie selber stützen. [...] Zu diesem Zweck hat Bentham ds Prinzip aufgestellt, daß die Macht sichtbar, aber uneinsehbar sein muß' (Foucault 1977, 258).

10 Zur bildmedialen Geschichte der Immersion: Grau 2001.

11 Hier nimmt sogar der Türrahmen durch das Sonnenemblem der Inkas auf die Tapete Bezug.

12 'Sehr oft war das "Tapetenzimmer", wie es meist genannt wurde, für gewöhnlich verschlossen, es öffnete sich nur bei besonderen Anlässen der Familie und ihren Gästen. Die Bildtapete bedeckte alle Wände eines Raumes, meist kam noch ein handgedruckter Sockel hinzu. Die Möblierung beschränkte sich dadurch auf die notwendigen Sitzgelegenheiten und Tische. Man konnte zusammenrücken oder





IMG. 03 — 'Robel'. Danica Dakić, 2008, C-print © Danica Dakić and © VG-Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Ausstattung eines zwar in der Regel rechteckigen Raumes mit einer Panoramatapete entsteht strukturell immer eine panoptische Situation, in der die zylindrische Konstellation des Sehens mitschwingt. Die panoramatische Bildtapete scheint darum nicht zufällig gleichzeitig mit dem Panorama und dem Panoptikum im frühen 19. Jahrhundert Konjunktur zu haben; nebenbei bemerkt, handelt es sich bei allen drein nicht allein um Bild-, sondern vor allem auch um architektonische Formen, um umbauten (Illusions-)Raum.<sup>13</sup> Für die heutigen Bewohner/innen des White-Cube-Appartements erscheint ein Panoramazimmer als geradezu anti-architektonische Geste. Weniger, um die Wände als Wände zu markieren, wie es die ornamentalen Wanddekoration täte, konterkariert sie die Funktion der Wand als abschirmendes, trennendes und den Außenblick verweigerndes Element. Gemeinsames Thema der Panoramatapete sind bühnenartige Landschaften mit tief liegendem, sich weit öffnendem Horizont, der den Blick frei gibt auf einen potentiell unendlich angelegten bildlichen Illusionsraum.<sup>14</sup> Bis auf die

Sitzgruppen bilden und derart erfüllte der Raum am ehesten seine Aufgabe als Treffpunkt der Geselligkeit' beschreibt Heinrich Olligs die Verwendung der Panoramatapete (Olligs 1970, Bd. II., 222). 'Die Panoramatapeten sollten oberhalb von einer tischhohen Sockelzone, dem Lambris, geklebt werden, so daß die Horizontlinie einer Landschaft in Augenhöhe eines sitzenden Betrachters verlief. Die Möblierung des Raumes – oft ein Treffpunkt der Geselligkeit – beschränkte sich dann meist auf Sitzgelegenheiten und Tische, damit die Tapete gut sichtbare blieb.' (Thümmler 1998, 113)

13 Zwar knüpfen die Panoramatapeten, wie Sabine Thümmler feststellt, an die Garten- und Landschaftszimmer des 18. Jahrhunderts an und können wie diese als 'Ausdruck der zu jener Zeit verstärkten Hinwendung zur Landschaft im Sinne der Rousseauschen Forderung 'Zurück zur Natur' interpretiert werden (Thümmler 1998, 103). Und auch wenn der Begriff 'papier peint panoramique' erst im 20. Jahrhundert geprägt wurde (Thümmler 1998, 108), so ist die Bildtapete doch Ausdruck der Erscheinungen und Techniken des Visuellen um 1800, von dessen Phänomen und Erkenntnistheoretischen Folgen sie nicht isoliert betrachtet werden kann.

14 Dabei hatte man die Wahl zwischen Park- und Gartenlandschaften, Landschaften aus fernen



IMG. 04 — 'El Dorado',  
Giessbergstrasse. Danica  
Dakić, 2006/7, C-print ©  
Danica Dakić and © VG-Bild-  
Kunst, Bonn

Schlachtenbilder – höchst bemerkenswerte Ausnahmen – durchwegs Ideallandschaften in der Tradition des Landschaftsgartens und der im 18. Jahrhundert beliebten Gartzimmer, geprägt vom Rousseauschen 'Zurück zur Natur', von exotischen Utopien und kolonialistischen Überlegenheitsphantasien wie von absolutistischen Allsichtigkeitkeistphantasmen: die Welt in einem Blick, die Welt im Blick des Souveräns (Thümmler 1998, 103). Damit unterscheidet sich ihre Thematik nicht wesentlich von derjenigen der Panoramen.<sup>15</sup> Was geschieht nun, wenn privater Innenraum und Panorama zusammenfallen? In dieser Konstellation von Betrachter und Bild findet sich, was sich nach Peter Sloterdijk der Erzählung und exotischer Utopie von Daniel Defoes *Robinson Crusoe* entnehmen lässt (die zeitgleich mit der Panoramatapete verbreitet war), nämlich eine 'Formel für das Verhältnis von Ich und Welt im Zeitalter europäischer Weltnahme' (Sloterdijk 2004, 309). Welt und Insel stehen demnach in dialektischem, geradezu antithetischem Verhältnis zueinander. Robinsons Insel gibt das paradigmatische Bild der 'beseelten Binnenwelt', dem Sein in einem imaginären, abgeschlossenen Weltextrakt. Was für die Insel das Meer, sind für den Innenraum die vier Wände: rahmende Elemente mit vereinzelter Wirkung, Isolatoren, die Welt bilden, indem sie Welt ausgrenzen.<sup>16</sup> Die Panoramatapete ist unter

Ländern, Römischen Ruinen, Schweizer Ansichten, Jagdtapeten, Mythologischen Szenen, Fabeln und Romanen, Hafenbildern, Stadtansichten, Salon Dekoren aber auch Schlachtenbildern (Olligs 1970, Bd. II: Fortsetzung Tapeten-Geschichte, 226).

15 'Den Löwenanteil der Themen aber stellen die Geographie und die Topographie: Naturwunder, liebliche oder erhabene Landschaften, berühmte Städte in aller Welt, das sah man am häufigsten und offenbar auch am liebsten' (Kemp 1991, 82).

16 Hierzu siehe insbesondere Peter Sloterdijk: Kapitel I. Insulierungen. Für eine Theorie der Kapseln, Inseln und Treibhäuser, in Sloterdijk 2004, 309–17.

dieser Perspektive eine Technik der Inselerzeugung, eine Unterbrechungstechnik, die das private Recht auf Isolierung vollzieht, das *Wohnen* als Rückzug von der Wirklichkeit. Mit der Panoramatapete wandelt sich die bildliche Überwachungs- und Allsichtigkeitstechnik von Panoptikum und Panorama zur Abschirmungstechnik des Privaten. Dem absoluten Abschirmungsanspruch entspricht die berüchtigte Tapetentüre, die eine unsichtbare, geheime sein muss und im Gegensatz zur Tür als architektonischem Element kein transitives Moment des Innenraums sein darf.<sup>17</sup> Die mit Panoramen überzogenen Wände schirmen aber nicht nur ab, sondern geben den Blick auf neue Welten frei. Welche Welt dies sein soll, ist ganz der Wahl der Innenweltbewohner überlassen. Der Markt um 1800 hatte einiges zu bieten: vom revolutionären Geschehen, über idyllische Berglandschaften bis eben hin zu den paradiesischen Landstrichen Eldorados. Immer aber handelt es sich um Projektionen von Außenwelten, was der Abschirmungstheorie in gewissem Sinn zu wider läuft; es ist eine Abschirmung mit Öffnung auf eine andere Umgebung: Abschirmung durch Panoramatapete heißt Erfahrung eines selbst gewählten Außen im Innen.<sup>18</sup> Das Panoramatapetenzimmer holt eine ferne Welt ins Private, ist Medium der Tele-Vision, mediengeschichtlich eine frühe Form des Fern-Sehens im eigenen Wohnzimmer.<sup>19</sup> Mit ihrer immersiven Wirkung, dem körperlichen Eintauchen in eine Bildwelt, gehört die Panoramatapete zur Gattung der Installationskunst. Sie verdrängt, ganz im Gegensatz zum gemusterten, ornamentalen Tapetenrapport, das Bildmedium des gerahmten Tafelbildes. Wenn Wand und Bild zusammenfallen, wenn Wand Bild wird, ist für andere Bilder kein Platz mehr. Schon auf der Ebene des Rapports, der ein potentiell unendliches Bild herstellt, markiert sich der kategoriale Gegensatz zum gerahmten Tafelbild und seinem definierten Bildraum. Das Format 'sichert die Kunst vor dem Zerfließen ins Endlose', 'ist die Abgrenzung des Schönen gegen den ganzen übrigen Raum', es ist 'nicht das Kunstwerk, aber eine Lebensbedingung desselben', sagt Jakob Burckhardt noch im Jahr 1886 (Burckhardt 1987, 234–5). Wenig später wird diese 'inselhafte Stellung, deren das Kunstwerk gegenüber der Außenwelt' (Simmel 1995, 102) bedürfe, von Georg Simmel wie folgt präzisiert: 'Was der Rahmen dem

17 Die ägyptischen Gräbern übliche Scheintüre ist genau das Gegenteil: sie suggeriert einen anschließenden Raum und eine Durchgangsmöglichkeit, die gar nicht existiert.

18 Das Panorama, schreibt Wolfgang Kemp, 'setzt auf die Mittel der Illusion, aber es möchte nichts Überweltliches Glauben machen, sondern einzig und allein die Welt als faktische Wirklichkeit wiederholen' (Kemp 1991, 82). Dort heißt es weiter: 'Mit dieser Tendenz steht es in einem lehrreichen Gegensatz zu den letzten großen Rundumgemälden der Kunstgeschichte. Als die ersten Panoramamalere am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts in London ihre Arbeit aufnahmen, wurden in großen Teilen des katholischen Europa leistungsfähige Malermanschaften arbeitslos, die vorher Decken von Kirchen und Schlössern ausgemalt hatten. Ihr Auftrag und ihre Kunst war es gewesen, mit Mitteln der Illusionsmalerei das Dach aufzureißen und den Blick in einen tiefen und von vielerlei göttlichen Wesen bevölkerten Himmel zu lenken. Um den Übergang von realer Architektur und Skulptur über gemalte Architektur und Skulptur und Figur in die Wolken und Lüfte ihrer himmlischen Gefilde gleitend und täuschend zu gestalten, bedienten sie sich kaum anderer Mittel, als sie den späteren Panoramisten zur Verfügung standen. Aber welcher Unterschied im Ziel und Resultat! Und welche Umorientierung von Werk und Betrachter, vom Himmel zur horizontal sich entfaltenden Welt! (Kemp 1991, 82).

19 Im Unterschied zum Fernsehen ist das Programm kein ständig, sondern ein potentiell wechselndes (man kann umtapezieren).

Kunstwerk leistet,' – hier ist mit Kunstwerk immer noch das gerahmte Tafelbild gemeint – 'ist, daß er diese Doppelfunktion der Grenze symbolisiert und verstärkt. Er schließt alle Umgebung und also auch den Betrachter vom Kunstwerk aus und hilft dadurch, es in die Distanz zu stellen, in der allein es ästhetisch genießbar wird' (Simmel 1995, 101).<sup>20</sup> Welcher Art ein Kunstbegriff beschaffen ist, der jedwede immersiven Bilder ausschließt, steht auf einem anderen Blatt. Die Bewohner des Panoramazimmers entscheiden sich gegen Distanznahme und für Illusion durch Immersion in die unendlichen Weiten seiner imaginären Landschaften. Wenn Simmel in dem Text zudem dem Material Stoff gegenüber dem Holz die Eigenschaft der Distanzherstellung abspricht, führt er damit eine für den hiesigen uninteressante Materialhierarchie ein: 'Der Endzweck des Rahmens beweist die Unzulässigkeit der hie und da auftauchenden Stoffrahmen: ein Stück Stoff wird als Stück eines viel weiter gehenden Stoffes empfunden, es hat keinen inneren Grund, daß das Muster gerade an dieser Stelle abgeschnitten wird, es weist von sich aus auf eine unbegrenzte Fortsetzung hin – der Stoffrahmen entbehrt deshalb des durch die Form gerechtfertigten Abschlusses und kann also nicht etwas anders abschließen' (Simmel 1995, 104). Die papierernen Panoramatapeten vereinen unter dieser Perspektive Holz und Stoff zu einem eigentümlichen Hybrid. Papier wird aus Holz gewonnen und nimmt durch diese Verarbeitung doch eher die Erscheinung und Haptik von Stoff an, nach Simmel schon auf rein materieller Ebene einem zur Abgrenzung unfähigen Medium des Unendlichen. Die Eldorado-Tapete wurde von der noch heute bestehenden elsässischen Manufaktur Zuber im Jahr 1848 relativ spät, etwa dem Höhe- und im Grunde schon Scheitelpunkt der Panoramatapete, auf den Markt gebracht (und wird noch immer produziert).<sup>21</sup> Das menschenleere Landschaftsbild zeigt keine südamerikanische Landschaft, weder das Hochland Bogotás mit dem Guatavita-See noch die Zeremonie des goldenen Königs, sondern gibt den Blick frei auf eine die vier Erdteile umschließende Landschaft, jeweils symbolisiert und markiert durch spezifische Architekturen. In Zeiten von Revolutionen und panoptischen Überwachungstechniken taucht man im Privaten in ein Eldorado ein, dass nun für den allgemeinen Topos der fernen, aber wunderbar friedlichen, paradiesischen Welt steht, wohlgeordnet in vier Erdteile, deren menschenleere Darstellung zu Eroberung und kindlich-phantastischer Inbesitznahme geradezu einlädt:

*Es ist von Klang und Düften Ein wunderbarer Ort, Umrankt von stillen Klüften,*

*Wir alle spielten dort*

dichtet im Jahr 1841 sehnsuchtsvoll Joseph von Eichendorff. In Zubers Vorstellung von Eldorado wirkt aber auch die politische Tradition des englischen Gartens nach, der 'im Spannungsfeld zwischen Arkadia und

20 Zur Geschichte des Rahmens grundlegend: Zaloscer 1974, 189–224.

21 Für die Eldorado-Tapete kennt man ausnahmsweise die für den Entwurf verantwortlichen Künstler: siehe Teynac et al. 1982, 117.





IMG. 05 — 'El Dorado',  
Giessbergstrasse. Danica  
Dakić, 2006/7, Video still  
© Danica Dakić and © VG-  
Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Utopia, zwischen der Sehnsucht nach dem verlorenen Paradies und dem Wunschbild einer wahrhaft humanen und liberalen Gesellschaft' steht (von Buttler 1989, 17). Seine frei wachsenden Pflanzen und Bäume galten (schon seit dem 17. Jahrhundert) als Sinnbild des modernen, freien Menschen und als politischer Gegenentwurf zu den zurecht gestutzten Höflingen, denen die beschnittenen Pflanzen der französischen Gärten entsprachen (von Buttler 1989, 12–13). In der häuslichen Reise um die Welt vermischen sich diese paradiesische, durchaus auch politische Utopie mit kolonialer Eroberungs- und Unterwerfungsphantasie europäischer Stadtbewohner.<sup>22</sup>

### → III. EL DORADO, GIESSBERGSTRASSE, 2006–7 VON DANICA DAKIĆ

In dem 13,5-minütigen Video *El Dorado, Giessbergstrasse, 2006–2007* von Danica Dakić sind es nun gerade keine Europäer, sondern Flüchtlingskinder und Jugendliche aus aller Welt, die sich in den üppigen, dekorativen Bildwelten und Interieurs von Panoramatapeten bewegen. Die Mitwirkenden sind oder waren Bewohner des Kassler Hepatha-Heims für unbegleitete minderjährige Flüchtlinge. Am Anfang des Projekts standen Fragen der Künstlerin an die Kinder nach ihren persönlichen Imagologien, die sie als innere Bilder aus ihren fernen Heimatorten mit nach Deutschland gebracht haben, nach ihren Vorstellungen, Wünschen, Träumen und auch danach, was sie können oder was sie gerne können möchten. Daraus entwickelten sich in monatelanger Zusammenarbeit eigene, kleine Choreographien,

22 'Die Panoramen sind etwas groß geratene Symbole einer beherrschbaren Welt. Erschließung und Eroberung fremder Orte und Länder reizen zur faktischen oder symbolischen Wiederholung: durch Tourismus oder, wenn man so sagen darf, durch das 'Fern-Sehen', wie es im Panorama am sinnlichsten etabliert war. Und auf den Spuren der ersten Reisenden, der Eroberer und Touristen folgten die Panoramamaler' (Kemp 1991, 83).





Bewegungen, Tanz, Haltungen und Gesten, die schließlich in von den Kindern selbst gewählten Orten des Tapetenmuseums aufgenommen wurden. Samuel, der Erzähler, wollte von seiner Geschichte berichten. Robel, der durch die Ausstellungsarchitekturen laufende Junge, ist tatsächlich ein Langstreckenläufer, und Tigiste, das schlafende Mädchen, wählte sich diese Pose im schützenden Halbrund eines Ausstellungstücks.

Die *documenta 12*, die Dakić schon früh eingeladen hatte eine Arbeit zu realisieren, stand unter verschiedenen Leitmotiven, unter anderem auch dem des 'bloßen Lebens', einem hinlänglich strapazierten Begriff, welcher der Geschichtsphilosophie Giorgio Agambens entnommen ist (*Documenta Magazine* 2007). Bei Agamben ist die paradigmatische Verkörperung des bloßen Lebens der so genannte 'homo sacer', eine Figur des römischen Rechts, die durch ihren absoluten Ausschluss aus der Rechtsgemeinschaft gekennzeichnet ist und deren moderne Derivate Agamben in den Flüchtlingen erkennt (Agamben 2002). Da die Abgrenzung des Innen notwendig zur Konstitution eines Außen führt, sind Innen und Außen immer aufeinander bezogen. Dieser so genannte 'eingrenzende Ausschluss' ist für Agamben zentral, liegt in ihm doch das eigentlich Paradigma rechtsstaatlicher Praxis. Staatliche Macht konturiert sich eben gerade an ihren Rändern und wird in Figuren wie dem Flüchtling manifest. Auffanglager und innerstaatliche Schutzzone stehen sich demnach diametral und unvereinbar gegenüber und bedingen doch einander. Dabei liegt die Suggestionskraft der breit rezipierten Denkfigur Nils Werber zufolge gerade in ihrer Illustrierbarkeit begründet, denn der 'homo sacer' ist eine äußerst anschauliche Denkfigur, die sich 'immer und überall' findet:

*Er sitzt gefesselt in der deportation class der Lufthansa oder mit geschorenem Haupt in einem exterritorialen Armeegefängnis auf Kuba,*

IMG. 06 — 'El Dorado', Giessbergstrasse. Danica Dakić, 2006/7, Video still © Danica Dakić and © VG-Bild-Kunst, Bonn

*er bevölkert die Dritte Welt und vegetiert in den Außenbezirken der Großstädte dahin. Die Faszination des Begriffs mag daher rühren, daß jedermann das nackte Leben zu erblicken vermag, wo und wann er nur will. Agamben hat damit erreicht, was abstrakten und kargen Begriffswelten verwehrt geblieben ist: Illustrierbarkeit. (Werber 2002, 622)*

Anstatt sich allerdings von diesen theoretischen Regimen verführen zu lassen, konfrontiert Dakić die hegemoniale, historisch betrachtet europäische Blick- und Bildwelt der Panoramatapeten mit den Kindern, denen sie Raum und Bewegungsfreiheit, Stimme und Gehör gibt. Im Sprechen und in der Bewegung zeigt und behauptet der Körper Präsenz, ist im Hier und Jetzt erfahrbar, ist da und eben nicht allein Ort der Einschreibung, sondern einschreibend, schreibt sich ein in Raum und Zeit (Fischer-Lichte 2004). Auch überführt die Künstlerin die Flüchtigkeit von Sprechen und Tanz vor den Tapeten in die Dauerhaftigkeit und Wiederholbarkeit des speichernden Mediums Video, was die Präsenzeffekte der bildliche Aufführung wiederholbar macht, womit das 'Da-Sein' abrufbar und zur wiederholbaren Selbst-Behauptung wird. Das Video selber besteht aus vielen einzelnen Sequenzen, denen es dabei nicht darum geht, eine Aufführung zu dokumentieren, sondern die Bilder zu choreographieren. Man folgt etwa einem Blick in einen Raum, der mit einer Panoramatapete ausgestattet ist, mittig postiert ein Sofa auf dem Sabine Thümmel, die Direktorin des Deutschen Tapetenmuseums, die Zuseher mit den Worten begrüßt: 'Willkommen in der Welt der Tapete', willkommen also auch in der Welt der Imaginationen, der körperlichen Raum- und Bilderfahrung. Das Museum als immersive (Ausstellungs-)Welt verschränkt sich mit der Welt als Immersionsraum der Tapete. Allerdings ist die von Dakić gewählte Form der Projektion nicht panoramatisch und immersiv. Sie durchbricht diese Unendlichkeitstechniken durch das tradierte, rechteckige Bildformat des Tafelbildes ihrer Projektion. Hier taucht der Betrachter weder in eine Bildwelt ein, noch wird ihm der souveräne Über-Blick zugestanden. Statt dessen steht er dem klar abgegrenzten Bildraum gegenüber, dessen Protagonisten sich frei von voyeuristischer Blickorganisation bewegen. Distanznahme, die Trennung von Bild und Körper, bestimmt die Rezeption in zweifacher Hinsicht: das Video-Bild ist als Bild markiert und der Immersionsraum der Panoramatapeten, die zu Kulissen werden, schon auf dieser Ebene durchbrochen. Entsprechende Figuren solcher Distanznahmen finden sich auch im Video selbst, wie beispielsweise das Mädchen, das eine Tapetenwand abtastet. Im abtastenden Berühren wird die Tapete als Oberfläche, als zum Körper abgegrenzt und unterschieden, als Bildfläche markiert, als ein Gegenüber und ein Anderes. Ein solches Durchbrechen der panoramatischen Raumkonstellation vollziehen auch Figuren, die buchstäblich aus dem Bildfeld laufen, so ein aus den Tapetenkulissen heraus- und wieder hineintanzendes Paar, der die Bildfläche durchquerende Läufer oder auch der aus dem Bild heraus, gerade auf die Betrachter zu boxende Kämpfer. Ebenso wie Dakić dem Sog des Theoretischen entgangen ist,

laufen auch sie buchstäblich aus dem Bild und den Diskursen heraus; die Analyse ihrer politischen, körperlichen und schließlich individuellen Situation geht eben nicht in deren Regimen auf. Ganz im Gegenteil wird hier deutlich, dass der Blick in eine paradiesische Landschaft potentiell Recht aller ist. Die ins Positive gewandte Idee eines befriedeten Eldorado steht als Utopie auch für die Flüchtlingskinder zu Verfügung, deren Situation sich nicht in einer bloß fatalistischen Analyse der Machtverhältnisse erschöpft. Ihre Körper werden von Dakić nicht allein als Orte von Einschreibung einer absoluten Macht beschrieben, sondern ganz im Gegenteil als Träger und Produzenten von inneren und äußeren Bildern, konkret von Ideen, Phantasien, Träumen und Utopien und damit von Handlungsoptionen. Der Mensch als *homo imaginans*, als äußere und innere Bilder produzierendes und wahrnehmendes Wesen, ist nicht nur von Bildern determiniert und bestimmt, sondern bestimmt auch Bildern, die motivieren und beflügeln können.

Source: Benthien Claudia, Manuela Gerlof, and Stefanie Wenner, eds. 2009. *Paradies. Topografien der Sehnsucht*. Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau.

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## 5. Part of the Pie (Migrating the Museum 2)

How (not) to link art institutions and migrant communities? What follows are two case studies by people closely involved. Both social pedagogue Ayşe Güleç, writing on *documenta 12* and *dOCUMENTA (13)*, and artist group Gangart, writing on the exhibition *Gastarbajteri*, come to the conclusion that institutions desire to learn from their audiences but resist binding commitments, sustained exchange and adjustments to their institutional make-up. In other words, they remain impermeable to democracy.





## Learning from Kassel

→ AYŞE GÜLEÇ

In recent years, art institutions have set out to reach an audience that until now had not counted among its usual visitors. The focus of these efforts is usually children, young people and immigrant communities, who are often classified as having little education or knowledge about art. To engage them, art institutions develop their own, special in-house programmes. Meanwhile, ministries, sponsors and large and small foundations support various cultural education projects designed to acquaint groups of people regarded as uncultured and non-art-savvy (in other words, the uneducated) with the museum. Adding to these is a plethora of projects and co-operations between, for example, educational institutions such as schools, day-care centres and museums.

One seldom asks why migrant communities (or any group less likely to frequent the museum) should actually go there. Few art institutions have ventured beyond their own walls to connect art and audiences in other places. Still more rare is the question of what and how museums would have to change structurally and institutionally, if they want and have to accommodate heterogeneous groups in a migrant society. The change does not mean that these institutions become 'migrant museums', but museums in a migrant society.

Regardless of the institutions' motives and desire to reach out to new groups, one should ask what venturing out could mean, and what art institutions can and should learn (preferably about themselves) by doing this. Experiences within the context of *documenta 12* can serve as an example, as here we find one of the most influential contemporary art exhibitions in its first structural attempts to move out, find, address and cooperate with various segments of the population. Taking the 12th international art exhibition<sup>1</sup> as an example, it is possible to examine how the institution connected to the local context (Kassel, Germany)

**PREVIOUS PAGE** — a  
'documenta 12' Advisory  
Board meeting, chalk  
drawing by 'documenta 12'  
artist Jürgen Stollhans

1 Company self-description, documenta GmbH.

and which participatory-cooperative work modes were established there. These experiences are then compared with the approaches taken by *dOCUMENTA* (13) to uncover differences, continuities and discontinuities in their structural connection with local population groups – though the successor, in my view, did not take up, develop or sharpen the basic approaches used in *documenta* 12.

#### → I. LEARNING FROM KASSEL

Anyone wanting to assume German citizenship first has to pass the naturalisation test for his or her respective state. Besides general questions about the colours in the German national flag, principles of the welfare state and cornerstone freedoms of the press and right to demonstrate, the test in Hessen includes more specialised questions about science and culture. Future Germans must know, for example, the name of Casper David Friedrich's most famous painting. This is followed by question 85, which asks test-takers to name one of the most important modern and contemporary art exhibitions, held every five years in Kassel. So important is the *documenta* exhibition that knowledge of it leads to a test that determines national boundaries of belonging and defines a cultural hegemony.

To the same extent that taking note of *documenta* appears significant for future citizens, one could also ask how knowledgeable *documenta* should be about the citizens they hold the exhibition for.

The relationship between Kassel and the *documenta* exhibitions can generally be described as follows: the *documenta* exhibition is important to the city and its inhabitants. But this relationship is also marked by a sceptical distance. Much of this is owed, perhaps, to the view that *documenta* lands in Kassel every five years like a UFO and takes off again after 100 days.

All the same, Kassel residents follow every step of the preparations and every exhibition is very much appreciated. Appreciated, because every *documenta* attracts international guests over the course of the exhibition, awakening Kassel from its usual slumber. Other cited reasons for the exhibition's importance to the city include the emergence and expansion of cafés and restaurants around the exhibition venues, and the vitalising of the city's culture with international flair.

#### → II. 'DOCUMENTA 12' RELIED ON COOPERATION

At the start of preparations for *documenta* 12, artistic director Roger M Buergel and exhibition curator Ruth Noack contacted three socio-cultural centres in Kassel. At a joint meeting in the fall of 2005, they explained their desire to collaborate with local institutions to build a stronger connection between the exhibition and the city. In doing so, they said, they wanted to support existing initiatives and draw energies from the exhibition into the city. The confrontation with art in other



IMG. 01 — A 'documenta 12' Advisory Board meeting, chalk drawing by 'documenta 12' artist Jürgen Stollhans

places could reassert art's potential, as it makes the perception of art more concrete.

Two representatives from the Kulturzentrum Schachthof – Christine Knüppel and myself – expressed interest and were prepared to share our knowledge of the local realities and open our contacts to the various population centres and interest groups.

In late December 2005, Kulturzentrum Schlachthof – in coordination with its new cooperation partners – organised a meeting of some 40 Kassel residents, all of whom were active in a diverse range of areas including school, extra-curricular and higher education, child and youth education, socio-cultural work, architecture and urban planning, the trade union and women's initiatives. From this group came the *documenta 12* Advisory Board – a discussion and action group that discussed the three, guiding questions for *documenta 12*<sup>2</sup> in monthly meetings and linked these back to the situation in Kassel. The members formed work groups and developed their own actions and events responding to various socio-political topics.

These monthly advisory board meetings saw the various actors come together in a trusting, open work atmosphere: artists, Kassel residents and the curator/directors. Each brought his or her own, specialised knowledge and experience to the discussions.

### → III. LEARNING FROM THE 'OTHER'

The development phase for the *documenta 12* advisory board included regular attempts to contact various population groups. Wanda Wieczorek, the assistant to the artistic director and I spoke to initiatives, networks

<sup>2</sup> The three guiding questions, or *leitmotifs*, formed the basis for research, concept and the development of the exhibition. The questions were: Is modernity our antiquity? (modernity as historical form), What is bare life? (vulnerability of human existence), What is to be done? (the question of education).

and migrant communities and visited these people at their respective organisations and districts in the city. This form of getting contact was important for inviting other population groups (many of whom we had never met) to the advisory board, and learning from these experts.

The discussions were especially interesting for us because we were able to derive new insights from our discussion partners' points of view about the art institution. From these perspectives, we could generate knowledge: for changes to our own institutional-structural barriers and for the value of cooperations with a win-win situation for all parties involved.

### Scene 1

Profound changes in industrial production and the world of work in recent decades have led to high unemployment and poverty, which has left its visible mark on the city of Kassel. The crisis of working society and its effects was also a frequent topic at advisory board meetings, prompting us to make contact with an unemployment initiative. One afternoon, we met with a group of five people who were active in the initiative's office. After a short round of introductions, they asked if we had come on behalf of *documenta*, and if our intention was to offer them one-euro-jobs<sup>3</sup> for building and installing the exhibition. It was only after allaying these fears that we were able to have a relaxed, exciting conversation about the situation of the unemployed and the initiative's activities.

### Translation of the Situation

Is *documenta* an exploitative employer? An institution that demands maximum attention and resources from everyone, giving little or nothing in return?

### Scene 2

At the oldest mosque in Kassel, we were greeted by the Imam and five people from the first, founding generation of the local mosque association. We contacted them in an effort to get to know the congregation and invite those interested in the advisory board to join. After hearing our reason for coming – that *documenta* wanted to introduce itself and get to know them – they were astonished. It was their first experience with those responsible for *documenta*. At the end of an intensive conversation, the association representatives assured us 'We'll give you everything you want. But if you want money... we don't have any either.'

### Translation of the Situation

Do many people not know about *documenta*, making it difficult for them to understand its intentions? Do some people suspect *documenta* of only making contact when it wants something (money)?

### Scene 3

At a visit to a senior centre, we were received in a large room with a table

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3 Unemployed individuals receiving unemployment benefits from respective job centres may be obliged to perform duties for which they receive €1 an hour.



of Christmas biscuits and coffee for around 30 people. Five people came and listened politely before disappearing without further questions.

### Translation of the Situation

Does *documenta* have to be interesting to everyone?

In many of the conversations, we encountered people who had heard of *documenta*, but had never been to one of the exhibitions. Many were very surprised that the *documenta* exhibition has ties to subject matter that they could personally relate to. We invited some of these people to the *documenta 12* advisory board several times, because we thought their voices and point of view were important. They refused, citing an insufficient knowledge of the German language. Like many committees, the advisory board's organisational form was such that many less assertive, language-oriented participants were excluded.

These notes on *documenta 12* exemplify some of the opportunities and stumbling blocks that art institutions have to deal with when making contact and building cooperations with hitherto unaddressed segments of the population.

## → IV. STRUCTURAL CONSEQUENCES

Every *documenta* has a clearly defined timetable. Its five-year rhythm begins with the naming of the artistic director and ends after 100 exhibition days. The exhibition comes down. The team disperses. Only a small, organisational core of people stays on site. The network of the *documenta 12* advisory board ended with the exhibition in September 2007. What remains are many experiences and personal contacts, but no binding commitment or concerted form of continuing the work together.

The director of *dOCUMENTA (13)* was Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev. Nineteen agents (curators, writers, artists, scientists and philosophers) from around the globe participated in the development of *dOCUMENTA (13)*.<sup>4</sup> Like all the *documenta* exhibitions before it, the thirteenth *documenta* organised its contacts differently during preparations for the exhibition, and thereby largely ignored the work of the *documenta 12* advisory board and *documenta 12* art mediation.

Knowledge from individuals was only built on in part. The Maybe Education Department emerged after a three-day workshop titled 'No Education'. Members included staff, agents and various individuals from Kassel, who gave feedback on the programmes relevant to the audience. There were no more significant connections or participatory forms of cooperation.

At *dOCUMENTA (13)*, the art mediation and advisory board – building blocks relevant to the *documenta 12* context – came together in the form of Worldly Companions.

4 *dOCUMENTA (13)* also took a regional institution as a thematic reference and anchorpoint: the Breitenau Memorial in Guxhagen. It was a forced labour camp until the end of the Second World War and later a home for wayward girls. The facility served as a metaphor for the exhibition theme 'Collapse and Recovery'.

IMG. 02 — 'Finally We Speak Turkish, Too' is a postcard campaign to have Turkish subtitles at a Berlin opera house



The exhibition sought people who lived in or had a connection to Kassel to do the art mediation. An advert in the local newspaper drew 700 applicants. One-hundred-and-seventy people from this group were selected and became Worldly Companions. The majority of the Worldly Companions were native to Kassel and practised various professions (i.e. gardening/agriculture, medicine/therapy, pedagogy), or studied at the art academy in Kassel.

Chosen individuals were schooled in dialogue-based art companionship from January 2012 until the exhibition opened. The School for Worldly Companions consisted of monthly appointments during which theory texts were read and discussed, along with talks by artists, philosophers and scientists.

#### → V. CHANGING INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Contact and invitations extended to groups that have not previously been addressed can and should lead to a challenge of one's own institutional framework. In societies influenced by migration and heterogeneity, art institutions are called upon to challenge, to examine and change their own structures, in order to make them accessible to the widest variety of population centres and interest groups.

To do this, art institutions need long-term, process-oriented cooperations with individuals who can contribute different points of view. The most important factor is transmission, or a desire to learn from one another.

At the meetings of the *documenta* 12 advisory board, the working atmosphere between artists, Kassel locals and the curators/directors was one of confidence and trust. The importance of the advisory board was stressed on a symbolic level and emphasised in the media, but the exchange was rather one-sided and unsystematic. At *documenta* 12,

makers were given local knowledge and could productively use it for the exhibition by, for example, including people from Kassel or finding certain sites, spaces or situations in the city without having to do much research on their own. The advisory board members, on the other hand, had less to gain from the *documenta* exhibition. Their activities took the *leitmotif* of the exhibition as a point of departure, but they could not use the artworks for their advisory activities. The transfer of theoretical information relating to art was lacking as well.

At *dOCUMENTA (13)*, however, the Worldly Companions were never acknowledged in any of the official catalogues or publications. They were never listed by name. The justification was that they did not need *documenta's* symbolic capital. At one public session of the Maybe Education group, the artistic director mentioned that she never wanted the Worldly Companions, because her exhibition and the artworks in it could also have done without mediation.

Conditions for successful cooperations at the *documenta* exhibitions were further complicated by the temporal dimension, which made them a fleeting event. Adding to this was the fact that what was introduced and achieved in the way of local cooperations was regrettably not taken up by the new *documenta* makers, and therefore cannot be developed any further.

Other art institutions are at a clear advantage here. They can leave, or better, create room for contacting various population groups, enter into long-term cooperations and use an open, democratic and truly participatory practice to redirect their relevance as institutions in migrant society. There is tremendous potential to be found in cooperations between art institutions and non-art entities and population groups.





## Gastarbajteri – 40 Jahre Arbeitsmigration

Ausstellung mit der NGO Initiative Minderheiten im Wienmuseum (vormals Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien), 2004

### → GANGART

### → ABSTRACT

*'Gastarbajteri' was an exhibition initiated by migrants living in Austria, attempting to represent a chapter in the history of labour migration within the institutional framework of a history museum. Conceived for the fortieth anniversary of the Austrian government's solicitation of a migrant work force from Turkey and Yugoslavia, the exhibition was developed by a large team consisting, amongst others, of NGOs, political scientists, artists and curators, all of whom were external to the museum infrastructure. Though the museum (Wien Museum, then Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien) hosted and co-produced the exhibition, it remained ambivalent towards the goals of the initiative and unresponsive to several of its demands. The artist duo Gangart, who contributed the artistic concept to the show and designed its display, describe here the negotiations and pitfalls of the production.*

*Gastarbajteri – 40 Jahre Arbeitsmigration* gründet auf einer Idee von Cemalettin Efe, der selbst in den 1970er Jahren aus der Türkei nach Österreich gekommen war. Die Ausstellung bezieht sich auf das 40-jährige Bestehen der zwischenstaatlichen Verträge über die Anwerbung von Arbeitskräften (1964 mit der Türkei, 1966 mit Jugoslawien). Sie findet im explizit ausländerfeindlichen Klima der sogenannten 'schwarz-blauen' Regierung (2000–05) statt, in dem Migration als vordergründigster Mobilisierungsfaktor der Innenpolitik instrumentalisiert wird. Damit schafft sie einerseits einen Bezugsrahmen für einen beträchtlichen Teil der österreichischen Bevölkerung, dem bis dahin jegliche öffentliche Selbstrepräsentation verwehrt geblieben ist, und erlangt andererseits Aktualität für jene,

PREVIOUS PAGE —  
Anwerbestelle Narmanlı  
Han, İstiklal Caddesi 390,  
Beyoğlu, Istanbul, 1964.  
Eröffnung des Büros der  
österreich. Anwerbekommission  
in der Türkei Anwerbung  
© gangart



IMG. 01 — Grenzübergang  
Spielfeld-Straß Spielfeld /  
Steiermark, 1972. Ausbau  
des Grenzübergangs für die  
mehrspurige Abfertigung.  
Gastarbeiterroute  
© gangart

deren Gesellschaftsbild durch die repressive Haltung der Politik angegriffen wird.

In diesem spannungsreichen Kontext angesiedelt, bestand die Herausforderung darin, das Material für die Ausstellung überhaupt erst zu generieren. Denn es ist implizit in der ideellen Konzeption des in gewerkschaftlichen Debatten geschulten Aktivisten Efe, dass die Erzählung aus der Perspektive der EinwanderInnen erfolgen sollte. Weiters bestand unter allen sich um die NGO Initiative Minderheiten formierenden Beteiligten Konsens darüber, dass keinesfalls die bestehenden Bilder von Andersheit und Abgrenzung, wie sie in den mehrheitsösterreichischen Institutionen und Medien gesammelt und verwahrt sind, affirmiert werden sollten. So wurden in einem vier Jahre dauernden Recherche-Prozess Expertisen aus der Geschichts- und Sozialforschung, vor allem aber aus nicht-akademischen Feldern wie Aktivismus oder schlicht unmittelbarer Lebenserfahrung einbezogen, um in multipler AutorInnenschaft eine erste und gewiss bruchstückhafte Erzählung über die Arbeitsmigration seit den 1960er Jahren zu generieren. Diese Erzählung folgte zwei auf einander bezogenen Strängen und machte die Ausstellung aus gegenläufigen Richtungen – einer strukturellen und einer persönlich-biographischen – lesbar.

Auf einer zentralen Achse fanden sich in chronologischer Anordnung Informationen zu gesetzlichen und politischen Rahmenbedingungen, zu Ereignissen, die aus der Sicht migrantischer Communities Schlüsselereignisse in der Erarbeitung selbstbestimmten Agierens darstellen, und zur Statistik.

Um diese strukturell orientierte Darstellung wurden Stationen zu Einzelereignissen angeordnet, die jedoch immer mit Referenz auf deren Schnittpunkte mit der Timeline artikuliert waren. Jede Station war durch ein aktuelles Bild des Ortes, an dem das Ereignis stattgefunden hat, markiert. In ihrer Gesamtheit erschien die Ausstellung daher auf den ersten Blick als ein topographisches, urbanes Geflecht – gegenwärtig, ja alltäglich und daher vertraut. Die fotografischen Repräsentationen der Orte sind Andock-Punkte kontroversieller Narrationen, von denen man zuerst in lokal begrenzte Geschichten, dann in translokalen Verflechtungen zu anderen Ereignissen und schließlich zu politischen Zusammenhängen und historischen Verwurzelungen gelangt.

*Aufbauend auf einer Idee von gangart entstand schließlich das Recherchekonzept um die 'erlebten und lesbaren Orte', an denen sich die Geschichte der Arbeitsmigration in bestimmten Zeitstrecken ereignet hat. Orte, die für die ProtagonistInnen dieser Geschichte von Bedeutung waren oder sind, an denen das Leben eine Wendung genommen hat, Entscheidungen gefallen oder mitunter Dinge passiert sind, über die heute nur mehr geschwiegen werden kann (siehe etwa Fischfabrik). Und auch solche Orte, die zwar das biografische Ende, aber auch einen neuen Abschnitt im Gesamtphänomen Arbeitsmigration markieren (siehe leere Wiese zur Errichtung eines islamischen Friedhofs). Selbstverständlich sind auch die Institutionen und Individuen der Mehrheitsgesellschaft als*



**IMG. 02** — Bosanac – Waren aller Art am Mexikoplatz. Wachaustraße 21, 1020 Wien, 1973. Gründung der Gutlic OHG. Selbstständige Erwerbstätigkeit  
© gangart

**IMG. 03** — Arbeitersiedlung Walddörfel. Wassergasse, Ternitz, 1979. Teilabbruch und Neubesiedlung mit Gastarbeiterfamilien. Wohnen © gangart

**IMG. 04** Fischfabrik C. Warhanek. Troststraße 73, 1100 Wien. Um 1980. Beschäftigung ansässiger statt angeworbener Migrantinnen. Frauenarbeitsmigration  
© gangart

**IMG. 05** — Büro des Vereins der Zeitungskolporteurs. Ägyptischer Club, Volksgartenstraße 5, 1010 Wien, 1987. Gründung des Vereins der Zeitungskolporteurs. Prekäre Arbeit  
© gangart

*Handelnde in die Geschehnisse an diesen Orten involviert und kommen in den Geschichten vor.*

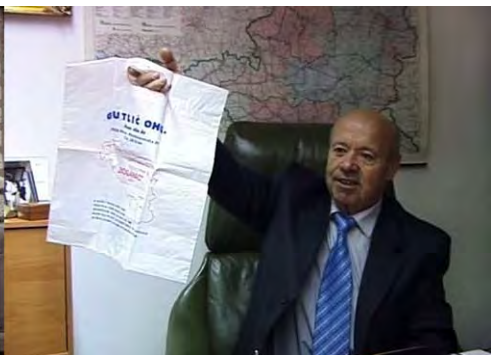
*Die Auswahl der Orte und die Rekonstruktion ihrer Geschichten anhand der Biografien einzelner Personen – unter Einbeziehung der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Umbrüche in Österreich sowie in den Herkunftsländern – wurden den einzelnen Mitgliedern des Recherche Teams überlassen. Somit sind die recherchierenden Personen auch die AutorInnen ihrer Bereiche. Dem ging eine umfassende Auseinandersetzung mit der Geschichte der Arbeitsmigration nach Österreich allgemein voran. Während der – die einzelnen Schwerpunkte übergreifenden – Recherche 'begegneten' wir den Orten, die manchmal klar erkennbar, manchmal aber versteckt in einem Halbsatz eines Interviews oder eines Zeitungsberichts auftraten. Wenn der Ort feststand, wurde die weitere Recherche von den Fragen geleitet, was genau sich in Bezug auf Arbeitsmigration an diesem Ort abgespielt hat, welche Geschichten diesen zu einem 'lesbaren Ort' gemacht haben, zu welchem Zeitpunkt oder in welcher Zeitstrecke es geschah sowie wofür der Ort vor diesem Zeitpunkt gestanden ist und wofür er heute steht. Wichtig dabei war die Ausforschung der Krisenmomente, also die Antworten auf die Fragen: Wann entsteht ein Ort? Wann kippt er? Was sind die Auswirkungen der strukturellen Maßnahmen auf das Private?*

*Wir haben versucht, uns an die jeweiligen Orte biografisch anzunähern, ohne den historischen und politischen Bezug zu verlieren. Die biografischen Erzählungen stellen keine Einzelschicksale dar, sondern stehen exemplarisch für die einzelnen Facetten der Arbeitsmigration. Folglich geht es an einem Ort weder alleine um den Ort selbst noch um die eine oder andere biografische Erzählung, die sich an diesem Ort abgespielt hat. Die Orte stehen symbolisch für Handeln und Verändern, Fallen und Aufstehen, Leben und Überleben in, mit und gegen die Strukturen – und vor allem trotz der Strukturen (August Gächter), welche die ArbeitsmigrantInnen in Österreich vorgefunden haben.*

*Entstanden sind elf Stationen, die unterschiedliche Themenbereiche aus den Jahren von 1964 bis 2004 widerspiegeln. In den Stationen werden weder Erfolgsgeschichten erzählt, noch werden Bilder der systematischen Unterdrückung gezeigt. Dafür dokumentieren sie das Streben nach der Herstellung der Normalität durch ein laufendes Verhandeln neuer Rahmenbedingungen. (Ongan 2004)*

*Gastarbajteri war die bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt zweitbest besuchte Ausstellung des Wienmuseums. Diese Institution ging aus dem Historischen Museum der Stadt Wien hervor, und die Ausstellung war die erste unter der Verantwortung des neu bestellten Direktors Wolfgang Kos. Wohl mehr aus der Not, eine Programmierung unter den Bedingungen einer relativ kurzfristigen Bestellung zu bewältigen, war die Kooperation des Museums mit der Projektträger-Organisation Initiative Minderheiten dennoch ein richtungsweisendes Experiment: ein Stadtmuseum, das sich seinen Bürgern gegenüber öffnet, sie an der Gestaltung der Inhalte mitarbeiten lässt, und sich darüber hinaus an*







IMG. 06 — Demotreffpunkt.Herbert von Karajan – Platz, 1010 Wien. 1993. Demonstrationen gegen das Aufenthaltsgesetz.Selbstorganisation und Widerstand © gangart





IMG. 07 — Adatepe.  
Marmararegion, Türkei,  
1994. Rückkehr der ersten  
PensionistInnen. Herkunft  
und Rückkehr © gangart

IMG. 8 AND 9 (OPPOSITE)  
 — Gastarbajteri - 40 Jahre  
 Arbeitsmigration / 40  
 Years of Labour Migration.  
 Wienmuseum/Historical  
 Museum of the City of  
 Vienna, 2004. Exhibition  
 view © gangart

eine Bevölkerungsgruppe wendet, die weit davon entfernt ist, zu den Kernschichten der MuseumsbesucherInnen zu zählen.

Für das Ausstellungsteam und für die hauptsächlichen AdressatInnen des Projekts, nämlich Personen mit Migrationshintergrund, war die Kooperation insofern herausfordernd, als das Wienmuseum als der offizielle Speicher materieller Kultur jenen institutionell-repräsentativen Charakter darstellte, der im Sinne migrantischer Selbstermächtigung ein Hauptziel des gesamten Projektes war. Abgesehen vom sehr überzeugenden Publikumserfolg blieb die Einschätzung seitens des Museums allerdings ambivalent. Weder wurden Materialien aus der Ausstellung in die Sammlung übernommen, noch wurde das Modell von Koproduktionen mit zivilgesellschaftlichen Einrichtungen oder eine vertiefende Bearbeitung des Themas Migration fortgeführt. Über die Ursachen dieser enttäuschend schwachen Nachhaltigkeit aus einer institutionellen Innensicht reflektiert Monika Sommer-Sieghart, Kulturwissenschaftlerin und Mitarbeiterin des Museums, in ihrem Papier, 'Rethinking Cultural Heritage – Remapping Curatorial Practice':

*Both groups were very clearly under a great deal of pressure. The Museum feared that its reputation may be jeopardised, the exhibition was after all the first in the new Director's programme. From the Director's perspective, the exhibition was a 'huge challenge'. Having himself only recently taken over the leadership of the Museum, he then gave over the definition and ownership of material to be exhibited and the means of presentation to a politically committed team, which was totally inexperienced in planning exhibitions (this was the reason why the Museum insisted on adding an experienced in-house curator to the project team). At the same time, he had to justify this decision to the public. On the other hand, the project group itself was prey to insecurity: 'The project team of "gastarbajteri" had to try to orient themselves in the face of this scene of daily struggle for the public, indeed, as part of this struggle. In my opinion as a member of the team, we were guided much more by fear of repeating clichés than by any positive programmatic aims.' In the last instance, the background of these discussions was also of course formed by the implicit question of the target audience. The Museum was preoccupied with its political sponsors and critics of the house's makeover, whereas the Minorities' Initiative was thinking primarily of its own communities – the exhibition was after all considered 'instructions for self empowerment' by its initiators and the education team who interacted with the public, running guided tours and so on.*

*Personally, I would have hoped for more long-term benefits and results from the co-operation... Yet, apart from extracts from the videos, the co-operation has unfortunately left no material trace in the collections of the Museum. (Sommer-Sieghart 2006)*

Was hier als vornehmlich kulturtechnische Differenz angesprochen wird, ist letztlich doch eine grundlegende Divergenz in den Intentionen der beiden Kooperationspartner: die *Initiative Minderheiten* verstand das Projekt – im Kontext des zu Beginn angesprochenen Mißtrauens gegenüber einer





rechtsgerichteten Regierung in breiten Gesellschaftsschichten – in seiner politischen Dimension. Direktor Kos war an der materiellen Kultur interessiert, die das Gastarbeitertum hierzulande hervorbrachte. Das behindert sich gegenseitig, denn antirassistische Politik und Exotismus passen nicht zueinander. Umgekehrt entsprach der hohe Anteil an Dokumenten, Berichten, Gesetzestexten und relativ ausgedehnte Ausstellungstexte nicht den Vorstellungen des Museums.

Für uns als KünstlerInnen und GestalterInnen der Ausstellung stellt sich die Situation noch einmal anders dar. Die Zielsetzung war ja, eine erste gesellschaftlich relevante und rezipierte Darstellung zu entwerfen und zu realisieren, die die Perspektive der ZuwanderInnen einnimmt und auch den Zugang kritischer BesucherInnen artikuliert. Dies erforderte als radikale künstlerische Entscheidung, dass wir uns darauf beschränkten einen konzeptuellen Bezugsrahmen zu definieren, nach dem die Inhalte der Ausstellung recherchiert und/oder generiert wurden. Die AutorInnenschaft der einzelnen Themenstränge lag beim Recherche team, dessen Kompetenz in einer existenziellen Verbindung zum Wissen und zu Zugängen zu Informationen über Migrationserfahrungen in dieser Zeitspanne lag, und das die produzierten Inhalte mit der Stingenz von persönlich-engagierten Erforschungen und Äußerungsformen vermitteln konnte.

Beide institutionelle Partner – also sowohl das Museum als auch die NGO – waren sich sehr bewußt über das qualitative Potenzial der Beteiligung solcher AutorInnen, deren Expertise nicht den Routinen wissenschaftlicher oder ausstellungsmacherischer Praxis folgten. Andererseits stellte diese Vorgangsweise ganz offenbar ein Risiko für den geregelten Ablauf der Umsetzung als auch in Hinblick auf eine ‘Seriosität’ des Ergebnisses dar, das letztlich wir – auch im Sinne einer ökonomischen Haftung – zu tragen hatten. Angesichts der tausenden EinwanderInnen, die anlässlich von *Gastarbajteri* zum ersten mal in ihrem Leben ein Museum betreten haben um darin eine Erzählung ihrer eigenen Geschichte vorzufinden, und der vielen ForscherInnen, Studierenden, LehrerInnen, AktivistInnen, Interessierten, die oft mehrere Tage lang die Fülle an Material studiert, bearbeitet und als Ausgangspunkt für weitere Befassungen mit dem Thema herangezogen haben, bleibt aus unserer Sicht: das Risiko hat sich gelohnt.

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## 6. A Hierarchy of Taste (Museum Modernisms)

Researcher Victoria Walsh and academic Andrew Dewdney contend that cultural diversity policies must inevitably clash with the value system of a museum that bases its curatorial practice on modernist aesthetics. Witness another type of museum, stemming from an artistic source: curator Branislav Dimitrijević explains how the Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum defamiliarises the modernist tropes of collection and canon by superimposing an ethnographic display onto their representations.





## From Cultural Diversity to the Limits of Aesthetic Modernism

### The Cultural Politics of National Collection, Display and Exhibition

→ ANDREW DEWDNEY AND VICTORIA WALSH

*This paper discusses how an examination of the impact of British cultural diversity policies on practices of audience development at Tate Britain from 2007 to 2010 led the research project 'Tate Encounters: Britishness and Visual Culture' to identify the need to understand how the wider practices of collection, exhibition and display were connected and disconnected across the organisational networks of curating, marketing and learning. In linking the normally separate spheres of influence between curation and education, object and audience, the research reopened the question of the agency of curatorial tropes, examining what can be seen as a conflict between the dominant modernist aesthetic of display and museum practices of audience development in the context of contemporary conditions of audience engagement. As the article highlights, a seemingly intractable dilemma for art museums now presents itself due to the sustained allegiance to modernist practices of display, in which the principles of aesthetic modernism are inherently at odds with the increasing concern for greater audience participation. One of the key problems identified in the paper is that while the market logic of collection requires that objects have known historical and cultural values, provided by a combination of scholarship, museum collection and display, this only secures the exchange, rather than use value of the object. By removing the object to the realm of aesthetic contemplation, the exchange value of the work as collectable is continually guaranteed and privileged over and above the object's relative and undecidable use value, which can only be secured by the further labour of the audience. The paper argues that at this contemporary juncture, the presence of transcultural, media-literate audiences threatens this institutionalised separation and challenges the form of cultural authority upon which aesthetic modernism is based. This article is based on the wider discussion of the findings of Tate Encounters presented in the publication Post Critical Museology: Theory and Practice in the Art Museum (Dewdney, Dibosa, Walsh, 2013).*

PREVIOUS PAGE — 'Tate Britain', 2012

## → I. TATE ENCOUNTERS: BRITISHNESS AND VISUAL CULTURE

Tate Encounters was an interdisciplinary and embedded research project formed through a collaboration between Tate Britain, London South Bank University and Chelsea College of Art, which took place between 2007 and 2010. The project used field methods drawn from ethnography, science and technology studies, and visual cultures, and drew on expertise in art history, curatorial and programming, media and cultural studies and the social sciences. As an empirically grounded enquiry into national cultural diversity policies and practices and how they were negotiated within a national art museum, the project specifically posed a number of questions relating to the relative absence of visitors from Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BME) to Tate Britain, in particular focusing on policy, barriers to access, modes of spectatorship, notions of Britishness within Tate Britain and how ideas of audience and viewer were held and brought into play by Tate staff in exhibition production. As an experimental, interdisciplinary and collaborative research project it created a matrix of mixed methodologies that attempted to reunite the practice of theory (the abstraction of knowledge) with theories of practice in order to answer the project's central problematic of why audiences constituted by the policy category 'BME' were absent in the art museum through a case study of Tate Britain. By focusing on the connections and disconnections in the networks of practices within the museum, the project tried to open out an analysis of the relationships between the diasporic viewer and the work of art in order to build a situated account of the encounter, rather than the conceptualised account of theorised discourse or the statistical one of policy.

During the fieldwork period the project enlisted the participation of over 600 first-year undergraduates from London South Bank University, drawn from largely migrational and non-traditional educational backgrounds, who visited both Tate Britain and Tate Modern and who responded to their encounter through questionnaires and essays. A group of 12 students subsequently took part in an in-depth, two-year study working with a visual anthropologist to explore their responses in encountering Tate Britain and were constituted by the project as 'co-researchers'. These voluntary participants had family ties and roots from Malaysia and Bangladesh in the east, through Latvia, Ukraine, Norway, Finland, Poland, into mainland Europe, Eire, Spain, Nigeria, Ghana and on to the Caribbean in the west. A further and key element to the research was an organisational study involving 38 Tate employees, which took place over the duration of the production of the Tate Britain exhibition, *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting* in 2008. Finally, the project developed a month-long public programme of interviews, panel discussions and screenings in March 2009 that took place in the Tate Britain galleries and brought together 72 contributors including Tate staff, artists, curators, educators, academics, policy-makers, marketing and new media specialists, and the project's co-researchers to discuss the research findings.

In addition to the bottom-up approach of grounded theory and critical reflexivity (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2009), Actor-network-theory (ANT) (Latour 2007) was also adopted to move beyond a binary model of positivist social science research. Supporting this position, de Certeau's reclamation of the 'everyday' (de Certeau 1984) in making visible the tacit knowledge of individual practice, rather than the institutional discourse of organisational management, also provided a lens through which the research approached the student action research project and the staff organisational study. At the methodological level the project was also consistently aware that the complexity of its approach demanded intensive levels of individual and collective investment, generating and analysing data within a process of critical reflexivity, which Latour openly embraces as the 'messiness' of 'tracing the social'. That said, the appeal and potential of ANT to open up new readings of how models of audience development and cultural diversity policies connect also rested in the recognition of the multiple roles assigned to the work of art as both an 'intermediary' and 'mediator' in the flow of value, rather than as a fixed object of aesthetic value and cultural construction that structural models of critical analysis pose. As Latour writes:

*[...]in the old paradigm you had to have a zero-sum game – everything lost by the work of art was gained by the social, everything lost by the social had to be gained by the 'inner quality' of the work of art – in the new paradigm you are allowed a win-win situation: the more attachments the better... the more 'affluence' the better. It is counter-intuitive to try and distinguish 'what comes from the viewers' and 'what comes from the object' when the obvious response is 'to go with the flow'. Object and subject might exist, but everything interesting happens upstream and downstream. Just follow the flow. Yes, follow the actors themselves or rather that which makes them act, namely the circulating entities. (Latour 2007: 237–40)*

## → II. TATE BRITAIN AND NARRATIVES OF NATION

Tate Britain occupies a special position within a discourse of Britishness on three terms. Firstly, since its renaming in 2000 as Tate Britain, its association with the nation-state is inscribed in its institutional profile, which, secondly, is confirmed by its institutional status as a national museum. Thirdly, it houses and continues to acquire 'on behalf of the nation' works of art that nominally constitute the National Collection of British Art. Although Tate Britain itself adopts a highly fluid and flexible use of the term 'British' in its authorial provenancing of works, and its exhibition programme incorporates artists outside of any obvious categories of British, identification with the representation of Britain through the displays and exhibitions programme is forged and understood through the first three terms. As a direct consequence, the Britishness of Tate Britain has commanded attention within recent debates about participation in and ownership of British culture.

In seeking to answer its original research questions about how narratives of Britishness are constructed in the displays of Tate Britain, Tate

Encounters was rapidly led by the student co-researchers towards the debates being generated by governmental promotions of policies around Britishness, national identity and citizenship in relation to the changing context of European and global migration. In the case of Tate Encounters the uncertainty about national representation was clearly framed in terms of the unresolved politics of multiculturalism, specifically policies on cultural diversity directed towards the achievement of greater social inclusion and widening participation in culture. In this respect Tate Encounters was founded within and had a remit to produce understandings of how migration and migrational cultural experience was enmeshed with the culture of Tate Britain.

### → III. TATE AND THE IDEAS OF PUBLIC VALUE AND AUDIENCE

*Tate is a public institution owned by, and existing for, the public. Tate's mission is to increase public knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of British, modern and contemporary art through the Collection and an inspiring programme in and well beyond our galleries. Everything we do – from the Collection we care for, to the exhibitions, displays and programme we present, to how we manage the organisation – is done to maximise value for the public.* (Tate Online, accessed 28.7.2010)

While Tate is committed to maximising 'value for the public', what constitutes 'value' and the 'public' within different practices of Tate Britain is often fragmented, leading to lines of tension and contradiction in the museum's own articulation and mediation of its value and its engagement with the public. Examining the museum's approach of targeting 'minority' audiences not only revealed the negative impact and effects of racialised cultural diversity policy, but significantly also revealed the much larger issue of how audiences *per se* are modelled by the museum and how 'difference' is understood in relation to concepts of 'core'.

In tracing the first encounters with Tate Britain of this group of 'non-attender' students from diasporic backgrounds, and following their own emergent accounts of what Tate Britain meant in their daily lives outside of the museum environment, a complex account emerged of how intertwined the issues of identity, subjectivity and nationalism are with new forms of transmigration and globalisation. The research found that students categorised as 'other' than white British readily rejected and resisted racialised categories and did not see themselves as representatives of personal identity or social behaviour. Further, they rejected fixed notions of identity and embraced more fluid modes of subjectivity based upon transmigration. This would seem to suggest that as an audience they demand a more complex presentation of Britishness than is current, one which would reflect and embrace the importance of subjectivities, cultural hybridity and the transcultural (Dewdney and Walsh 2013).

A further key finding, and the focus of this paper, was the extent to which the monocultural narratives of Modernism, with its claims to the aesthetic autonomy of the work of art and the emphasis on aesthetic





IMG. 01 — 'Tate Encounters Fieldwork', 2008

experience, came into conflict for the co-researchers with the perceived narratives of nationalism, which were understood not only to delimit discussion of the social and cultural history of British art, but also more explicitly the wider global history of transmigration revealed in contemporary exhibits. In addition, the sophisticated readings of works of art that were put forward by the co-researchers clearly demonstrated a familiarity with claims for the aesthetic integrity of the works on display, but highlighted their individual choices to independently interpret the works in relation to an expanded field of visual culture unrecognised by the museum's own forms of interpretation. Contrary to the defining arguments around the politics of representation, the students showed minimal interest in revisionist histories or narratives of postcolonialism, but rather consistently expressed an interest in more open and complex accounts of the value of visual culture and meaning-making within the museum.

As the organisational study revealed, however, the organisational structure of Tate mitigates against such accounts being enabled as it continues to be based upon a hierarchy of taste and viewing that travels in one direction only, defined by the modernist paradigm, from the vision of the artist, the intermediary of the dealer and private collector, through the authority of the expert curator and historian and, finally, to an assortment of museum departments whose job it is to manufacture the audience through marketing, publicity, media and education. As the research also revealed, however, there is no single definition of audience operating within Tate Britain, but rather various working models and concepts across the departments of Learning, Curatorial and Marketing, of which some are important to the core purposes of collection and acquisition, while others are important to curatorial and public legitimisation. This is most readily seen through the various terms

used by different departments, all of which carry very specific sets of conceptual assumptions, i.e. public, visitors, audience, ticket-holders, viewers, learners, consumers, etc.

In contrast to the 'public' and 'audience' of Marketing, the Education department's networks of audiences is rooted in the affirmative experience of direct encounters with the public at the level of individual subjectivities located within specific, rather than anonymous or conceptualised, networks of communities to whom the mono-cultural modes of address authored by Curatorial and enacted by Marketing seek to be realigned. In attempting to engage with a more critical and democratic sense of cultural hybridity and heterogeneous diversity in the public body of the museum audience, education projects and initiatives invariably seek to link the aesthetic agenda of the exhibition with political and social values at play in the reception of the works. At the level of practice, this is secured through the engagement and representation of alternative voices and additional, if not alternative knowledge frames, than the aesthetic. In the case of the exhibition *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting* this involved inviting public figures from different professional arenas (journalism, academia, literature and music) to produce extended text labels for individual works of art in order to splinter the museal voice of cultural authority and to engender a more critical and active viewing relationship.

As the interviews with curators revealed, however, audience is a highly elusive concept in curatorial practice, although there is a very precise set of practice-based beliefs and understandings that the fundamental curatorial objective is to produce a pleasurable visual experience in which the work of art is enhanced through equally interpretative practices of exhibition design (wall colour, lighting, spatial arrangement) for the benefit of the viewer. This emphasis on a prevalent modernist presentation of works of art, to create a predominantly aesthetic experience, distinguished and suspended from the spatio-temporal relations of the everyday, invariably feeds into and extends the tradition of viewing and 'taste' founded on connoisseurship which defines the 'core' audience of marketing strategies.

Such traditions of viewing inevitably rest and depend on the sustained cultural authority of art that is conventionally maintained by the museum through a combination of the privileging of aesthetic response together with a view of the objects of collection as having some form of inherent, fixed and potentially universal meaning, which is based upon art historical validation and curatorial expertise. As the research made evident, the aesthetic trope and viewing positions of Modernism come into tension with the pre-modern historic British collection, because the modernist logic of collection makes sense of works in terms of a historically progressive aesthetic canon, rather than in terms of social and historical contradictions of capital, labour and colonialism. Maintaining the dominant cultural authority of Modernism renders the pre-modern historical collection in terms of a non-contradictory British heritage.



IMG. 02 — 'Tate Encounters Fieldwork', 2009

#### → IV. EDUCATION AS CULTURE, CURATING AS HERITAGE

As the Tate Encounters research highlighted, the increase in government funding and emphasis on audience development was primarily translated by the museum into an increase in education projects. But as artist Raimi Gbadamosi reflected on his work with young people at Tate Britain, a problematic for the museum in relation to 'the pedagogical turn' brings to the fore the extent to which the knowledge-base of an artist's practice lies not in the museum, but rather within culture and social history, which is inextricably underpinned by diversity. Culture and social history, invariably embodied and animated in young people's creative engagement, will always precede the practice of art history that the museum clings on to as its paradigm of interpretation. It is at this juncture in the museum, where culture meets heritage, that the greatest potential tension arises within learning-based projects, as the fluid meanings of culture meet the institutional, national narratives of heritage. It is also at this point that the cultural authority of the curator is at its most exposed to questions of expertise and value legitimization in the selection of works for acquisition and display.

In his interview for Tate Encounters as curator: cross-cultural programmes in the Tate Britain Learning Department from 2007–10 (Goodwin 2010), Paul Goodwin builds on the discussion of what constitutes the knowledge-base and forms of knowledge-production in the art museum and reflects on the challenges opened up by contemporary socially engaged art for the museum; art which embraces new histories and understandings of communities, urbanism and globalisation, and by default diminishes the modernist arguments for the aesthetic autonomy of the art object. More specifically, Goodwin reflects on the anomalies presented by the nomenclature of his post which was often mis-termed internally as 'cross-cultural curator', conflating issues of personal identity and expertise

with the job in hand, and distracting from the objectives of the cross-cultural programme. These objectives focused on the need to expand the knowledge-base of the museum in relation to understanding issues of diversity and representation in artist's practice and reception and 'rethinking ideas of blackness in a global world', as consensus evolves around the limits of multiculturalism to deal with questions of a complex, super-diverse society. Through the experience of programming at Tate Britain and working with artists and audiences, both the local community and the international visitor, Goodwin posed the question, 'what version of the global is Tate dealing with?'

The inherent relation between the knowledge-base of the art museum and the discipline of Art History and its reproduction processes of value also came to the fore in an interview with art historian Leon Wainwright (Wainwright 2011). Actively interested in the history of Black British art, Wainwright identifies that while there was a network of critics, curators and gallerists engaged in promoting this work in the 1990s, there was a notable vacuum of interest within his own discipline. This led him to contribute to the establishment of Globalising Art, Architecture and Design History (GLAADH) in 2001 that would foster and promote teaching within the context of the global and encourage reflection on the relation between multicultural Britain and a globalising world. This 'radical approach to teach Art History... was intended to disabuse the discipline of its racism.... [and] ethnicisation of knowledge'. In pursuing the relation between representational politics and the segregation of knowledge, Wainwright discusses how 'we narrate art history according to geography' which, in British art history, with the loss of Empire, has produced a temporal sense of 'belatedness' that frames Black British art and other multicultural art practices as ethnic 'add-ons' to the canon, rather than being understood as symptomatic of the same kind of social and cultural shifts that produced other central canonical art forms such as American Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art.

Building on this argument, Wainwright, while acknowledging the prevalent embrace of concepts of the transnational in the contemporary experience of migration, argues that this should be critically tempered with an understanding and recognition of the historical, political, social and economic conditions of enforced migration. For, in the distancing of a history of enforced migration, deeper questions about the problematic relationship between British heritage and 'Britishness' can be obscured by the overwriting of the historical role of the nation state in migration history. In this respect, the 'transnational' can all too easily be co-opted as part of the enlightenment project of the museum, enabling a national institution such as the British Museum to reclassify itself as 'the museum of the world'.

For Donald Preziosi, however, the spatio-temporal relations and narratives of modernity and heritage are superseded by the more fundamental question of what constitutes the idea of art, and indeed what motivations informed the European invention of the category and 'phantasm' of art,

which art history has worked in conjunction with to produce 'paradigms of difference' (Preziosi 2010). As art history has perpetuated these paradigms, the need to ask the question 'who benefits?' has become more urgent, and, despite the proliferation of museum building and museum studies, the question of how to 'step off the carousel' persists, calling into question not just the practice of art history, but the role of the museum as part of the interpretive machinery that sustains difference through its 'stagecraft' of display. In engaging with these issues, alternative disciplines such as 'artisanal anthropology' offer for Preziosi a way forward by reconnecting the idea of art with the processual knowledge of the artistry that produces it. Inherent within this move is a direct challenge to the predominant aesthetic mode of the art museum's modernist reification of the art object.

As an international cultural policy advisor and former Director of Cultural Policies at UNESCO, Yudhishtir Raj Isar was invited to join the board of the Institute of International Visual Arts in London (Iniva) to bring an 'international comparative vision' on how European concepts of cultural difference and migration were evolving and how different nation-states were dealing with diversity at a policy level. As Isar discusses in his interview for Tate Encounters, many of the issues around the conditions of inclusion and exclusion, historically framed by Bourdieu's work in *Distinction*, have significantly changed since 1994 and have potentially been superseded: 'it may be that the original problems of lack of cultural capital on the part of those whose education and family background made them deprived, is being short-circuited by different sets of activities and technologies in the museum today' (Isar 2011). The role of digital communication in the democratisation of culture is undoubtedly impacting on the relation between nation-states and multiculturalism, as, in this 'new metropolitan age', 'grand narratives of nationhood are weakening' at the generational level as loyalties and communities emerge simultaneously at the local and global. But, as Raimi Gbadamosi discussed, the distinction between heritage and culture is fundamental to how the nation-state navigates the present moment of multiculturalism, and – as Isar emphasises – the transnational is easier to discuss in relation to culture, but not cultural policy, which will always be defined and seek to support the interests of the nation-state, increasingly through the discourse of heritage. Which leads to the recognition that 'cultural globalisation' is a contradiction in terms, as culture is based on diversity and globalisation on homogenisation.

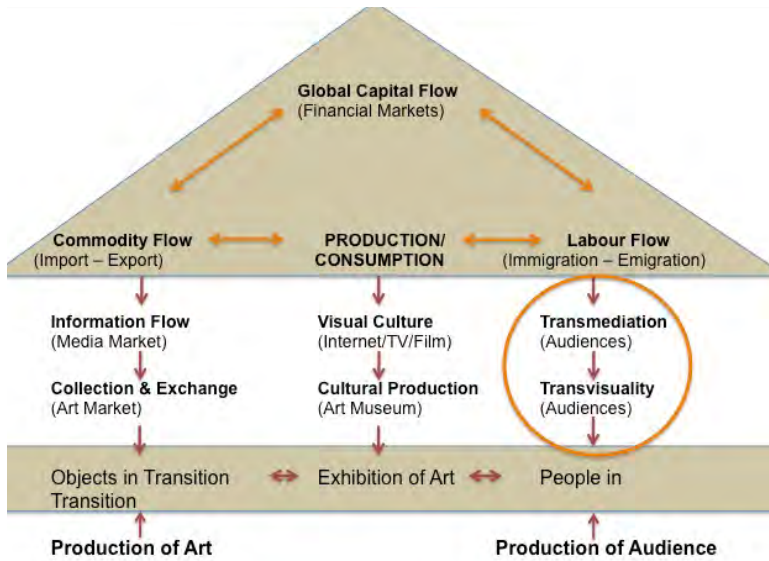
Perhaps what mostly typifies all of these contributions is a desire for a more complex, open-ended method of enquiry, analysis and telling of the historical formation and contemporary experience of the relation between the contingencies, pleasures and struggles of lived experience with the continuities of meaning-making and interpretation that cultural and academic processes of knowledge-production seal off behind what Preziosi calls 'the firewall of the Enlightenment'. Historically, the concept of knowledge in the museum has been exclusively identified and owned by those directly responsible for the acquisition and display of works of art. With the expansion of the museum's role into the public realm and the increasing manifestation of audiences as embodied individuals – from the



consumer of marketing, the learner of education, the visitor of information and experience management, the participant of social media interaction or the viewer of curatorial – the kinds of knowledge being called into play in the display and reception of the work of art is increasingly dispersed across the institution, and with it comes the fragmentation and threatened demise of curatorial authority based on the modernist trope of aesthetic experience.

This process of fragmentation within a centralising notion of cultural authority has been met at Tate by the rise of an organisational culture of risk management, which seeks to contain and direct the multiplicity of meaning engendered by the very success of embracing the embodied consumer, which it experiences as the threat of incoherence. As the research showed, at Tate Britain the strategies adopted to contain the risk to cultural authority posed by a cultural politics of diversity could not go beyond the limits set by their own foundational forms of authority. This was true at Tate, both in terms of the racialisation inherent in targeting what it saw as minority audiences on the one hand, and the marginalisation of the representation of ‘minority’ British artists on the other. Now, in the face of Tate and other international art museums moving rapidly to position themselves in global art markets, the contradiction between the curatorial embrace of the transcultural globally, and the cultural impact of migration upon audiences locally is glaring. Such contradictions remain explicable in terms which the research articulated as the separation of collection and reception, object and subject, and has led to the recognition that there is a need to convert the tacit and implicit knowledge of curatorial expertise into a more explicit form of knowledge and public knowledge-engagement that connects to other knowledge-bases across the museum.

One of the possible ways of opening up the lines of historical separation within museological and art historical knowledge is to generate new knowledge through transdisciplinary research of the connections within the conduits of association at every ‘stage’ in the production or ‘performance’ of the artist–artwork–collection–exhibition networks. There remains a very strong direction to the flow of cultural traffic in museum business, which travels, in the standard metaphor, from the core to the margins. The source of the cultural flow is normally experienced as the artefact, while the material object and the destination of the flow is understood to be the dispersal of culture in widespread appreciation. But while the immediate source of cultural value is apprehended as the consecrated material object, in a more complex grasp of the reality, the source of value is firstly that of the social relations of the production of the object, (most often historically opaque) and secondly, the subsequent processes by and through which the object is acquired and remains a subject of attention of the museum. In the everyday flow of cultural traffic in the museum, the supply side is separated from the demand side, which in its public sense is the affirmation of value. Because of the naturalised specialist divisions between acquisition, collection and display, the side of public appreciation is largely superfluous to many of the organisational processes, which in turn makes the visitor marginal to the reproduction of the values of museum. However, while



IMG. 03 — Transculture: Capital and Labour Flow. Tate Encounters Research Synthesis

these specialist and expert divisions are preserved, the public is required to attend as a guarantor of public investment in museums, but only as passive witness to the process of cultural reproduction. Visitors have to take what is presented to them on trust, as a public function, but one that operates along private and closed lines.

#### → V. MODERNISM AND TRANSMEDIATION

The research response to the question of the relationship between identity and viewing works of art moved away from notions of identity as fixed by race or ethnicity and towards ideas that viewing works of art is a relational process involving cultural and media transcoding of various kinds. Transcoding is being recognised in media and education as a central concept with which to understand how meaning is generated and in terms of the research replaces the older literary and art historical notion of interpretation (Manovich 2001). Transcoding is also a form of (visual) literacy, in which the subject is able to convert, or translate, the meanings derived in one medium to another and hence is part of the larger concept of transmediation (Thorburn and Jenkins 2004). The now default processes of transmediation which arise in a global mediatised world, taken together with what we are identifying as the subject position of the transcultural, produces what the project defines as the transvisual, and which it characterises as a new mode of seeing that seeks, or demands a form of expressive response.

The research argues from its qualitative evidence that institutional, representational forms of cultural authority are now challenged by the new conditions of transvisuality, generated by increases in the global movement of people and the globalisation of information. Traditional art historical and museological cultural authority is in danger of becoming the

diminishing interest of an increasingly small cultural minority, while the expanding practices of transcoding images is ushering in the distributed museum. While aesthetic Modernism remains tied to the provenance of the art object, the distributed forms of cultural authority that arise with the transvisual start from contingent encounters within relational meaning associations and hence develop notions of value based upon both situation and difference. Most significant is the mounting evidence that these issues are not only framed or influenced by new forms of social media in the digital landscape (Turkle 2012), but rather that the digital has become and is the medium, the default currency, through which the visual is engaged and understood, whatever the environment (Rubinstein and Sluis 2008). This is not to say, as the research found, that the work of art was not valued as a distinct entity in the encounter but that the interpretative framing was derived beyond the museum and away from its own hold on meaning-making and presentation.

#### → VI. CONCLUSION

One of the conclusions of the Tate Encounters research was that while an outward embrace of a globalised audience has been made by Tate, its current audience practices remain limited by a double-bind allegiance to the aesthetic response of educated individuals and its corresponding demographic typology on the one hand and to the logic of exchange value in collection on the other, which restricts and excludes a knowledge of the terms of the multiplicity of encounters and the cacophony of distributed meaning. What seems clear from the research is that cultural authority cannot be maintained by a simple insistence on some kind of inherent, fixed and ultimately universal meaning of the objects of collections, which is represented by the stock of historical expert knowledge and validated by custodial practices and ultimately tied to the primary function of maintaining the market exchange value of objects.

As Benjamin foresaw, 'In the same way today, by the absolute emphasis on its exhibition value the work of art becomes a creation with entirely new functions, amongst which the one we are conscious of, the artistic function, later may be recognised as incidental' (Benjamin 1999). If collection renders the creative agency of the museum visitor invisible, and absolute exhibition value, as Benjamin hinted, renders 'the artistic' incidental, one is left with a question: what fills the space of the construction of meaning, which the work of art is thought to mediate/embody in the process of active production and active reception? Traditionally this metaphorical space of meaning has been filled by the work of scholarship and criticism (the guarantors of 'correct' meaning). Such 'correct meanings' worked alongside the museum-going practices of those sections of society who 'knew how' to read the work of art as valuable. The last three decades have seen not only a growing critique and problematisation of overarching canonical positions from sections within the academy, but also a growing 'consumer' confidence on the part of the public in their participation in contemporary art as well as wider matters of culture and taste. However,



IMG. 04 — 'Tate Encounters Co-Researchers Group', 2009. Photo: Andrew Dewdney

by the light of the argument above, the success of new art museums in 'opening out' interest in art and attracting large visitor numbers, Tate Modern, being a case in point, does not, in and of itself, resolve the problem of the location(s) and transaction(s) of meaning. People might or might not be present in larger numbers, as the case may be, but the real question remains: how is the creative agency of this new audience, understood as the self-sustaining work of identity(s), made visible?

But, in light of the new strategic value of exhibitions as part of the global project of expansion, Mark Rectanus' contestation in his article 'Globalization: Incorporating the Museum' also raises the importance of looking beyond the narratives and practices of acquisition:

*Exhibitions reveal an interplay and recontextualisation of the global within the local. The contents of the exhibition and the aesthetics of their presentation relate to the symbolic exchanges of culture which globalize... These tensions in turn, relate to the broader disjunctures of global flow among ethnoscaples, technoscaples, financescaples, mediascaples and ideoscaples which characterize globalization (Appadurai 1996) and are simultaneously played out through the museum's own implication in each of these 'scapes'. (Rectanus 2011)*

That the role, interpretation and experience of the collection and exhibition can continue to still be understood within representational practices framed by either epistemological knowledge or cultural policy is undoubtedly beginning to make visible its limits within the new globalised context in which audiences both encounter and understand works of art. For with the restructuring of capitalist economies also comes the restructuring of the public sphere, as Robins states, 'As territories are transformed so too are the spaces of identity' (Robins 1999, 17). The one-way direction of economic and cultural traffic determined by colonial and postcolonial forms of labour and capital flow are now giving way to new, non-centred circuits of exchange and dismantling the geographies of centre

and periphery, core and margin. This is no less true for the museum, as it is for audiences of the museum, but as Robins has asserted, 'Globalization, dissolves the barriers of distance, makes the encounter of colonial centre and colonized periphery immediate and intense' (Robins 1999, 18), leading to the conclusion that 'It is the experience of diaspora that we may begin to understand the way beyond empire' (Robins 1999, 28).

Whilst noting the continuation of a dominant discourse of the representation of nation in cultural policy and practice, Tate Encounters revealed in its qualitative studies a relative decline of strong notions of nation, race or ethnicity in the formation of subjectivities. The weakening of nationalist and racialised discourses of identity, in the cosmopolitan metropolis at least, needs now to be understood in the context of a new complex of global socio-economic and technical change. In the specific context of Tate Encounters, globalisation was traced concretely to new patterns of economic migration based upon transnationalism and producing in global cities forms of super-diversity in which the mobile crossing of national and cultural boundaries was a key characteristic. These new transnational patterns of human movement, extended social networks and family bonds are now facilitated by a global networked communication technology of the many to many. The internet, Web 3.0, wifi and mobile devices have all been developed within the period of political, economic and social change in Britain being discussed here. While global economic forces separate people and propel them hither and thither across the globe, technological development has created continuous connectivity and it is these new conditions that are challenging traditional forms of cultural authority.

The impact of such globalising changes upon the production and consumption of culture, however, remain largely misrecognised by Britain's major cultural institutions, whose primary response has been one of identifying themselves as world brand leaders. In Tate's case they have promoted their strong brand in terms of being a museum that leads the world in setting the cultural agenda for contemporary international art and in being a major visitor attractor. The combination of visual spectacle, commercialisation and curatorial authority was a startling success for Tate Modern in 2000. But the success of London's major museum's new found entrepreneurialism in attracting large numbers of international visitors conceals the fact that very little has changed in the way museums think about their audiences. Audiences may now be thought of as customers or consumers whose experience of visiting can be enhanced or enabled through additional programmes, but audiences are not thought of as a source of cultural authority and a generator of cultural value. Questioning the cultural authority of the museum based upon the assumption that their position within the public realm demands a representational politics is intended to challenge as well as open up the specifically modernist representation and discourse in the professional practices of the art museum.



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## A Magnificent Tomb!

**Ethnographic display on *History of Art* according to H W Janson and *History of Modern Painting* according to Herbert Read**

→ BRANISLAV DIMITRIJEVIĆ

In 28 Braće Radovanovića Street, Belgrade, one may encounter something that might not be classified as an art exhibition but at least as something that provides for us an 'experience of art'. This experience will take place in very unlikely surroundings: neither some historical centre of the city in which one expects white-cube art venues, nor some area with warehouses and bohemian cafés to which artists tend to move in big post-industrial cities. This is a rather nondescript neighbourhood consisting of old and dilapidated, brick-laid small family houses from 1920s or 1930s pre-socialist and pre-urbanised Belgrade, and equally dilapidated and grey 1950s apartment buildings from a period when the new socialist administration attempted to provide more modern housing in a wrecked capital with a significantly enlarged population. In such a building, in the cat-piss smelling basement, there is an ordinary white door with a small paper label on which in typewritten letters one reads: Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum. The situation the visitor finds him/herself in is rather bleak and uninspiring. The sign at the door seems totally out of place.

The door leads to a small entrance and then into the two rooms. The walls of the left room are fully covered with carpets, or rather oriental-patterned rugs or *kilims*, and there is no window or any opening. Only a 40-watt light bulb hanging on a wire at the ceiling illuminates this approximately 2.5 by 3.5 metre room. The room is crowded, or cluttered, with stuff. Over the carpet-walls there are dozens, almost a hundred or so, small drawings and paintings, all framed in different manners. The floor is fashioned in the same style as the walls, and there is also some low furniture, a sofa, small three legged chairs, and also some rather enigmatic objects mostly of Turkish or Arabic provenance. The inventory of objects encountered there would make a very long list, so just to mention a few:

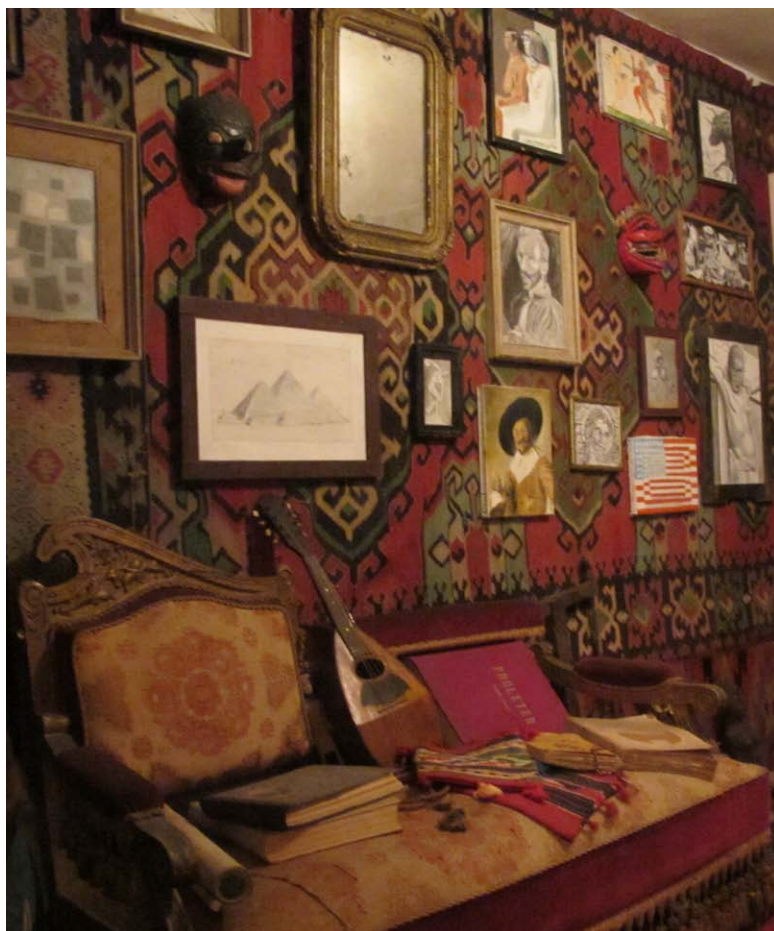
**PREVIOUS PAGE —**  
H W Janson, 'History of Art'. Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum, Belgrade, 2003

Turkish copper plates and trays, manual grinders for coffee or pepper, a mortar, mineral stones of various size, some amber and marble figurines in different styles, a couple of oriental musical string instruments, a rubber figure of Mickey Mouse, a couple of African masks, a small lead model of the Eiffel Tower, a saw, a spinning bee, some objects that conspicuously look like some valuable archaeological miscellany, then also a magnifying glass and a few books. Among the books there is one that may offer an initial clue for understanding the whole display. It is the Serbian edition of one of the most famous introductory books in the field of art history, the book by the American scholar H W Janson, *History of Art*, originally published in 1962, and translated into Serbian and republished many times since.

The book is large, thick and hardcover. On the cover there is a visual introduction into its methodology: a sketch of Picasso's *Bull's Head*, 1943 (a sculpture made of bicycle parts resembling the skull and horns of the animal), chosen as one of the emblems of modern art that also takes us back to the very origins of art, to its 'primitive' formation stages, to the first cave-drawings of hunted animals. By picking it up and leafing through it, a visitor to the Mausoleum discovers something that should have been obvious to anyone who ever got in touch with this book – and in Serbia this is practically everyone who ever got in touch with the notion of art and its history – paintings and drawings on the walls of the room are hand-painted reproductions of reproductions of the famous works of art that were reproduced in Janson's book. Some are in colour (*A Merry Drunk* by Hals, a detail from *Las Meninas* by Velázquez, or Manet's *Flautist*, etc.) and some are black and white (from a seventeenth-century head of the Virgin Mary from the Santa Francesca Romana to Picasso's *Guernica*; from a pencil sketch after a reproduced photo of three pyramids in Giza to Boccioni's sculpture *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* from 1919, etc.), depending on how they were 'originally' reproduced in the book.

Janson's book has become synonymous with a process of 'naturalisation' of art history. This history is offered as a unique story of continuity of artistic endeavours, it cherished the lofty results of artistic vision and genius and it, in a condensed form, offers one everything s/he should know about art. On the other hand this is the book mostly dismissed by art professionals because of its reductionism, methodological simplifications, dated discourse, and its overall regressive ideological impact, usually illustrated by the fact that it has only in very recent editions included the names of some women artists, formerly excluded from the narrative. In a serious and responsible educational context this book is not used anymore, but within the infrastructural and educational collapse of a country like Serbia, this book is still the only widely known introduction into art and its history. The reasons? Inertia, lack of information about new art historical methods, lack of contact with international academic publishing, financial gain for the publisher who reprints it, lack of money for academic research, lack of ambition of local art historians, general irrelevance of art and hence its effortless concentration around one





IMG. 01 — H W  
Janson, 'History of  
Art'. Kunsthistorisches  
Mausoleum, Belgrade, 2003



IMG. 02 — H W  
Janson, 'History of  
Art'. Kunsthistorisches  
Mausoleum, Belgrade, 2003

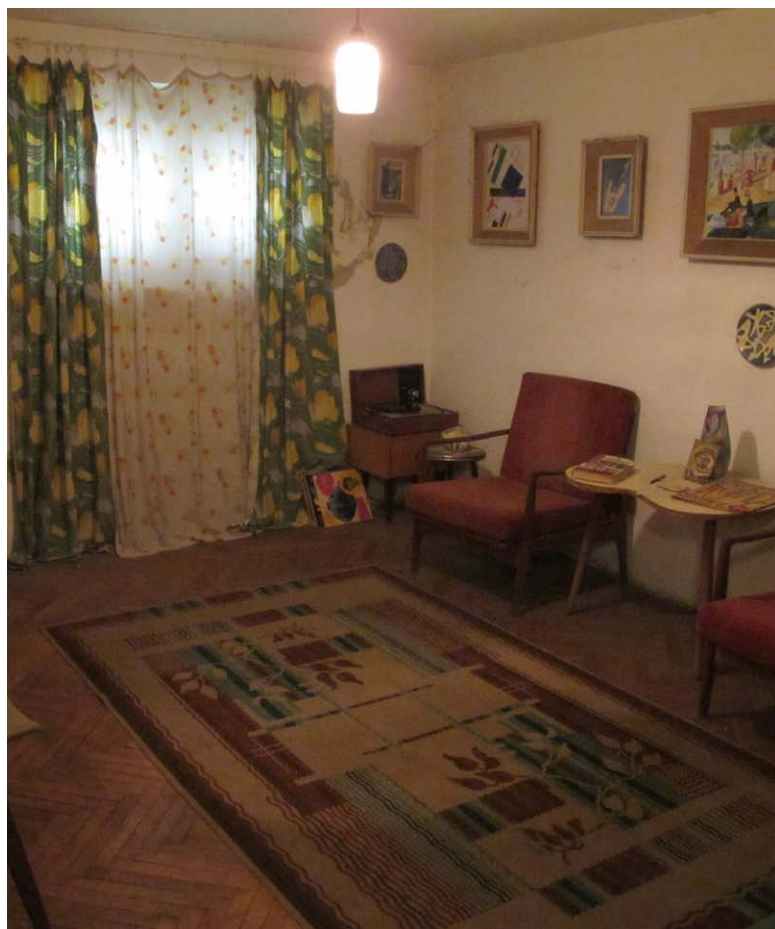


narrative, no time or ability to think differently, who knows... But, I got the feeling that the omnipresence of this book (even students who want to enrol at art academies or in the art history department at Belgrade University are expected to learn from it for their admission exams) is one of the typical symptoms of the failure of the whole society to move out from pre-conceived notions and towards any sense of progress or emancipation.

So, the mind starts wandering in the direction of some major current concerns even before we pose quintessential questions. What are we actually looking at? Is this an artistic installation? Is this a contemporary art display? Is it an installation or an exhibition of copies? Who made and assembled all this, and why? An informed viewer (and it is really difficult to assume that there is some naive subject for whom this has been made) may have heard about a certain history of mostly anonymous art projects that have in common the fact that they employ copying of famous works of art as a 'medium' and take those copies as elements of installations that are recognised as conceptual art projects. These projects include *Last Futurist Exhibition* by Kazimir Malevich in Belgrade and Ljubljana (1985), *International Exhibition of Modern Art* in Belgrade and Ljubljana (1985) and in Venice (2003), also exhibitions in Zagreb and Belgrade by a certain Adrian Kovacs in the late 1980s, etc.<sup>1</sup> Even more, Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum is a part of a certain 'Internationale' of similar yet different *environments* that can be visited these days in New York (Salon de Fleurus, 21 Spring Street) and Berlin (Museum of American Art, Frankfurter Allee 91).

*Ex-curse* (re: the copy): *The copy is usually known to exist only through its relation to the original. Any evidence of the existence of the original, regardless of it being preserved or destroyed, provides the authorisation for the copy, and, by virtue of this, the copy had quite a distinguished position in exploring the history of art: it was the Roman copies, for instance, which made it possible for us to study Greek art. Also, as a method, copying of art was a part of the educational procedure. With the emergence of Modern Art, art became associated only with 'original vision' and the production of the new; whereas the modern culture became the culture of mechanically (re)produced copies. This has allowed information on artworks to be disseminated. A possibility to view and own a reproduction altered the status of an artwork. Reproductions in books, catalogues, magazines, postcards resulted in affirming the status of an artwork as a sign emptied of its material existence. Whilst the practice of carefully inspecting the material surface of the painting became the dominating form of appreciating Modern Art, the knowledge on Art spread widely beyond this unmediated appreciation. The reproduction conditioned recognition. It had come to precede the original. Once the original was authorised by a reproduction it gained a particular status: museum visitors come to*

1 For further reading about these projects see Dimitrijević, B. and Sretenović, D. (eds) (2003) *International Exhibition of Modern Art Featuring Alfred Barr's Museum of Modern Art, New York*, Beograd: Museum of Contemporary Art, with texts by Branislav Dimitrijević, Astrit Smidt Burchardt, Boris Groys, Dejan Sretenović, Slobodan Mijusković and Stephen Bann.



IMG. 03 — Herbert Read, 'A Concise History of Modern Painting'. Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum, Belgrade, 2003



IMG. 04 — Herbert Read, 'A Concise History of Modern Painting'. Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum, Belgrade, 2003

*venerate the original after its status has been affirmed in a reproduction.*  
(Dimitrijević 2003)

But what about the Mausoleum visitors? In the Thames & Hudson *Dictionary of Art Terms*, a mausoleum is defined as a ‘magnificent tomb’, and is named after the tomb of king Mausolus and his wife in Halicarnassus, which was one of the seven wonders of the Greek and Roman world and had the expected mention in Janson’s book. In terms of the size and the sense of preciousness, there may be nothing particularly magnificent about the Belgrade tomb of art history, but its conceptual scope – and a potential for understanding logic and narratives of art history that have been taken for granted – may be both grandiose and pretentious as mental stimulation. Is there any major difference between a museum and a mausoleum? Or, as Boris Groys asks in his essay ‘On the New’: ‘When and under what conditions does art look like being alive, and not like being dead?’ What is the relation between *death* inside the walls of the Mausoleum and *life* in the ‘real’ world outside of its confinement? As Groys put it: ‘the Museum is not secondary to “real” history, nor is it merely a reflection and documentation of what “really” happened outside its walls according to the autonomous laws of historical development. The contrary is true: “reality” itself is secondary in relation to the Museum – the “real” can be defined only in comparison with the museum collection’ (Groys 2002).

Yet, when we see images and objects on display here, there is no way that – according to usual narratives of art history – we can treat them as works of art, but rather as artefacts, as remnants of some culture rather than as active agents that symbolically poke some cultural coherence or even work against a certain cultural identity. The cultural identity that is on display here may be mostly classified as oriental, therefore, for a Western viewer, synonymous with the notion of the exotic. If we take aside images from Janson’s book, the whole *environment* (to use the term that preceded the notion of ‘installation’ in art) matches with a certain expectation that one may have gained out of travel to Europe’s East, perhaps South Serbia, Macedonia or Bulgaria, maybe Turkey, or even further east. One of the clues for starting thinking in this direction may be another book casually tossed on the sofa, *Winnetou* by Karl May, a story about American Indians written by someone who never experienced the ‘real’ life of Native Americans but rather constructed a fiction that replaced the missing history with a better known and more influential narrative. A few nineteenth-century books about ethnographers’ journeys through the Balkans accompany this publication, and lead us to the conclusion that the discipline of ethnography is more likely to come to mind in this place than the discipline of art history, and that the assorted objects may be rather classified as ethnographic artefacts than as works of art. The notion of art, according to learned narratives like the one by Janson, have something in common to cultures outside Western Europe only if an artefact at stake is more than ten centuries old; i.e. when the notion of art, as well as the notion of ‘Western Europe’ did not exist. But, how can we understand the distinction between an art collection and an ethnographic

collection, or between an art museum/mausoleum and an ethnographic museum/mausoleum?

*Ex-curse* (re: artefact vs. work-of-art): *The ethnographic museum collects artefacts, i.e. man-made objects charged with cultural meaning and offering indications of a larger cultural situation. The art museum collects works of art that are viewed as 'standing for an aesthetic' – they are 'considered metaphors, transferring their specific aesthetic to the one current sufficient to make the work readable, but readable as art, regardless of what it could tell us about the culture it comes from' (Bal 1999, 206). The ethnographic museum is reserved for art that does not possess any ultimate historical meaning, that is 'out of the pale of history', and that is based on the notion of difference and deals with 'cold cultures' without a history that will define something as art. 'Cold cultures' try to preserve their cultural identity by constantly reproducing the past that becomes undistinguishable from the present. The ethnographic museum collects these repetitions, artefacts that are readable as culture. (Dimitrijević 2003)*

Displayed copies of reproductions of 'works of art' at the Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum acquire the status of artefacts, because they cannot be venerated for their aesthetic appeal but only treated as signifiers of some 'larger cultural situation'. This larger cultural situation is not only the whole Western art history (treated as an ethnographic phenomenon devoid of modes of reading that the notion of art would grant them) but also the cultural position of reception of this defined narrative, a position that stands outside of this narrative. The exhibited copies become artefacts of the same status as artefacts that surround them (oriental and other shown objects are recognisable signifiers of 'ethnography', as the illustrations chosen by Janson are signifiers of the general notion of 'art'): they are man-made objects (we do not know who made them, but we do not know who is the author of some African mask either), they are charged with cultural meaning (even overtly so, since they are repetitions of what has come to be known as masterpieces authorised by Art History), they are parts of a larger whole (as *synecdoche*), they belong to the past (i.e. they refer to the past, since when exactly they have been made is not relevant for the fiction they create), they are relatively small and therefore movable, and finally they are presented and become readable in an educational framework.

But there is another room in the Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum. It is rather more airy and some natural light comes through the window there. It is perhaps not much bigger than the first one, but it looks bigger since it is not as cluttered. Yet, it is furnished. There are some modern but worn-out armchairs, shelves with objects that indicate a different cultural situation visualised by the widely disseminated modern design of the 1960s or 70s: plump orange glass ashtrays, a ball-shaped plastic clock, an old radio, a small record player with records of popular music from the 1950s and '60s, some fashion magazines from that period, as well as some postcards including one with the smiling face of Yuri

Gagarin in his cosmonaut's helmet. Walls are painted white and some small paintings are hung on them, this time in a much orderly fashion. We recognise Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso, Kirchner... On the table there is a book that, analogously to the situation in the first room, offers an indication as to how to 'read' the whole *environment*. The book is the Serbian translation of Herbert Read's *Concise History of Modern Painting*, originally published in 1959.

What Janson's book was for general art history, Read's was for understanding and narrating Modern art. Again, at least in Serbia, this book acquired a certain monopoly or Bible-like status. It was a fundamental source, for many the one and the only source about modern painting and for those more ambitious ones certainly the basic overview always taken into consideration as the point of departure. Herbert Read was a prolific writer, hermetic poet and self-described anarchist. Although he was close to communist circles in Britain of the 1930s, in his essays he deviated from Marxism by suggesting that what Marxists described as the social function of art, was in reality the function of culture, whilst the term 'art' should be reserved for processes that are far more fundamental, and linked to the very biology of the human body. Although some critics even now praise his acknowledgment of the importance of psychoanalysis (Freudian and Jungian), since the early 1970s he has been under attack from Marxist art writers: he was dismissed as a protégé of British establishment (towards the end of his life he was even knighted Sir Herbert Read) and in the Western academic context he fell into oblivion (although his *Concise History* has been reprinted). For academic art history in Serbia, this book is still listed in the obligatory literature for courses in the history of Modern art, although now all reasons for appreciating his position historically have disappeared. He was embraced by the cultural establishment of Tito's Yugoslavia, not just for being a left-winger in a capitalist country, but also for fundamentally advocating a position that has become essential for the cultural policy in socialist Yugoslavia, the position which is defined in a title of one of Read's essay: 'The Politics of the Unpolitical'. Modern abstract works of art became the markers of freedom, and letting Modernist culture develop, although in a restricted and politically safe way, meant the full achievement of individual freedom and a sign of liberal tendencies in Tito's country.<sup>2</sup>

Modern art was praised for its physicality, for achieving a uniqueness that comes from an inspired author, a man of genius. For Read *art* is some kind of a 'natural' and biological response to the physical environment, as opposed to *culture* which is 'no more the dead art, cliché and repetition...' (Read 2002). If there is any 'genuinely artistic' impetus behind the Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum (i.e. if we follow the existing narratives and recognise it as an 'installation' or an 'environment' in a sense developed

2 For 'socialist modernism' in Yugoslavia see: Pejić, B. (2000) 'Serbia: Socialist Modernism and the Aftermath,' in Lorand Hegyi (ed) *Aspects/Positions. 50 Years of Art in Central Europe 1949–1999*, exhibition catalogue, Vienna: Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, pp. 115–123; also, Dimitrijević, B. (2002) 'Shaping the Grand Compromise: Blending Mainstream and Dissident Art in Serbia, c. 1948–1974', *Præsens*, 1, pp. 33–45.





IMG. 05 — 'Observing the Observer'. New York, 2010

since the 1960s) then it presents itself exactly as a mode of display of dead art, cliché and repetition. As it happens, in the first room where Janson's narrative has been rematerialised in copies submerged in an ethnographic-cultural display, Read's narrative on Modern art also becomes an object of ethnographic-cultural inquiry and the whole environment it has been submerged in (let us say that this environment may resemble a lower-middle-class Belgrade apartment from the 1960s) has to be treated in the similar way to the more recognisable ethno-aesthetics of the Janson room: copies of illustrations accompanying Read's narrative along with artefacts of modern culture are treated as ethnographical research material. In an act of reverse colonialism, images/signs on display are taken as curiosities encountered by an interested researcher in this cultural phenomenon. This researcher tends to make a comprehensive collection as s/he is familiar with written sources and material evidence, and the rhetoric of this display aims at disclosing material evidence of cultural habits in the period that has been called 'Modernism'. No wonder that this project is linked to the activity of the Salon de Fleurus in New York, which is an association dedicated to 'preserving the memory on Modern art'.

The only written statement issued by the Mausoleum, 'If the history is the way we have chosen to remember the past, then this Mausoleum is the place where we could remember the remembering itself', represents in fact a position of distance, a position that is outside of the narratives

it assembles, rematerialises, recontextualises and displays. So if this is art (and the question always lurks), then this is not a form of traditional-radical poking of some cultural coherence defined by a certain historical narrative, or an intervention in that narrative, but a product of a distanced gaze coming from the 'outside', from a defiant but non-aggressive position that is not defined by an author or a manifesto, but by a concrete politics of display and intellectual rigour. Yet the stories that it visualises may go back and forth in time, so let us, before we go out and face the 'reality' of Belgrade streets, finish this reflection on the Mausoleum with the quotation with which Read's *Concise History* begins, the lines from *Speculum Mentis* (1924) by R G Collingwood:

*To the historian accustomed to studying the growth of scientific or philosophical knowledge, the history of art presents a painful and disquieting spectacle, for it seems normally to proceed not forwards but backwards. In science and philosophy successive workers in the same field produce, if they work ordinarily well, an advance; and a retrograde movement always implies some breach of continuity. But in art, a school once established normally deteriorates as it goes on. It achieves perfection in its kind with a startling burst of energy, a gesture too quick for the historian's eye to follow. He can never explain such a movement or tell us how exactly it happened. But once it is achieved, there is the melancholy certainty of decline... So far as there is any observable law in collective art history it is, like the law of the individual artist's life, the law not of progress but of reaction. (Quoted in Read 1974)*

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## 7. Another Museum (Display and Desire)

The search for the real, in particular for real relations, and specifically the search for real relations between objects and people, takes on the form of utopia. Whether it be works of art (objects that are primarily non-relational), or products of the disenfranchised (objects of desperate survival), or ill-begotten treasures (objects collected in order to make the past present to the undeserving, taking away from others the possibility to figure the future), author Roger M Buerger, interpreting the displays of architect Lina Bo Bardi in the light of migration, and critic Pablo Lafuente, reading a work by artist Lukas Duwenhögger, demonstrate that things will, given the right circumstances, elicit subjectivity in spectatorship.



## The Migration of a Few Things We Call – But Don’t Need to Call – Artworks

→ ROGER M BUERGEL

→ I

In 1946, 32-year-old Italian architect Lina Bo Bardi migrated to Brazil. She was accompanying her husband, Pietro Maria Bardi, who was a self-taught intellectual, gallerist and impresario of Italy’s architectural avant garde during Mussolini’s reign. Bardi had been entrusted by Assis de Chateaubriand, a Brazilian media tycoon and politician, with creating an art institution of international standing in São Paulo. The São Paulo Art Museum (MASP) had yet to find an appropriate building to house its magnificent collection of sculptures and paintings by artists ranging from Raphael to Manet. The recent acquisitions were chosen by Bardi himself on an extended shopping spree funded by Assis Chateaubriand, who had taken out a loan from Chase Manhattan Bank in an impoverished, chaotic post-war Europe. In a certain sense, the artworks of the soon-to-be MASP collection were co-migrating with the Bardis.

Starting in 1957, as Bardi acted as the museum’s director at its provisional location, Lina designed the shell and spectacular display for the collection’s future home. The museum finally opened in 1968 after many delays. Suspended on heavy, concrete beams, her building hovered above Avenida Paulista, one of the city’s most important intersections. The building’s interior was a huge ‘light-filled box’, as Olivia de Oliveira described it, with longitudinal walls entirely made of glass (Oliveira 2003, 61). With no structures or columns to obscure the interior space, the display had much of the floating museum’s flair. Meanwhile, it also did justice to the artworks’ own, migratory status. Contrary to what contemporary museums are willing to offer when it comes to enlightening audiences about the context of artworks, Lina’s display was not based on text. It was based on the formal design grammar pioneered in the context of industrial exhibitions in the 1920s and ’30s. Lina substantially altered

PREVIOUS PAGE —  
‘Civilisation of the  
Northeast’, Installation  
view Museu de Arte Popular  
do Unhão. Lina Bo Bardi,  
1963. Courtesy Instituto  
Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi and  
Armin Guthmann



IMG. 01 — 'Civilisation of the Northeast', Installation view Museu de Arte Popular do Unhão. Lina Bo Bardi, 1963. Courtesy Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi and Armin Guthmann

this visual vocabulary with the knowledge that, unlike industrial products, artworks come with a surplus value that is better reinvested.

Lina designed a hanging system for paintings that consisted of a vertical glass pane propped on a concrete cube. The structure allowed viewers to see not only the front of a painting, but the back as well: the precious surface that holds the meaning, its gilded frame, but also the 'unofficial' part: the wooden stretchers, the unprimed canvas, the conservators' graffiti (marks identifying paintings as if they were sacks of potatoes). In short, Lina's display emphasised the rawness of every single artwork: its character as the product of a certain type of labour we call 'art'. While the paintings varied in size, the display modules were standardised; each held only one painting. Thus the single, open space at MASP was filled with hundreds of free-standing modules that forced visitors – ungoverned by conventional signage dictating their path and what to see – to navigate their own way as if through a labyrinth. The general atmosphere and the sheer excitement over the hyper-presence of all the works directly facing the viewer, was colored, perhaps, by a slight 'feeling of disorientation and instability' (Oliveira 2003). This perplexity was amplified by the transparency of the display modules themselves: like the building, the paintings appeared to be floating on air.

IMG. 02 — MASP gallery with display modules, 1957–68. Courtesy Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi and Paolo Gasparini

Bo Bardi's radical, spatial layout also allowed for maximum flexibility when it came to placing objects in the space. In the complete absence of a conventional wall-system, the sculptures and paintings could be positioned anywhere in the room. The arbitrariness of the works' placement was heightened by the museum's lack of signs. There was no framework categorising the works according to national schools, masters, chronology, style, genre or media, for example. Lina's primary intention was to communicate the general character of the artworks as autonomous entities. And yet, the autonomy it radiates has less to do with heroism than a profound loneliness. Indeed, this was an almost indiscriminate collection of European valuables, some of Jewish provenance (and valuables they were – Bardi had an excellent eye). For whatever reason, they had been torn from their moorings, picked up and sent to Brazil. Among the works, for instance, was *Pink and Blue* (or *Alice and Elisabeth Cahen d'Anvers*), an 1881 portrait of children painted by Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Elisabeth ('Blue') died *en route* to Auschwitz in 1944. Renoir's painting and other artworks, remnants of Europe's former glory, had now arrived in Brazil and found a provisional home there. In this sense, they had much in common with the Bardis themselves, or, for that matter, the hundreds of thousands of Italians and Swiss who migrated to Brazil during the nineteenth century, to say nothing of the millions of Africans who had been shipped to the Portuguese colony from the sixteenth century on.



IMG. 03 — 'Pink and Blue (or Alice and Elisabeth Cahen d'Anvers)'. Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1881. Courtesy Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP)

A lot more could be said about Bo Bardi's formal ingenuity, about her particular understanding of modernism, but it would be wrong to focus only on the back end, so to speak. Her display was conceived with a visitor in mind or, more specifically, with a human subject and its particular



relational modes, capacities and habits. It was, in other words, a holistic vision of not only art mediation in the narrow, institutional sense, but of how to live, survive and feel pleasure in the pain that permeates Bo Bardi's display. This vision did not rely on texts (information, explanation or other knowledge-based interventions), but on forms of sensual collaboration and bodily intelligence that forced the visitor to bring her associative capacities, conscious and unconscious memories, to the labyrinthine passage that was MASP. (One should note here that the key Brazilian artists of that time, Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, for example, shared and explored similar sensibilities and concerns, though Lina had articulated them a decade earlier). Looking back on these in 2013, seeing the light-filled box crammed with the conventional wall system installed when Lina's display was abandoned in the 1990s, one can see how the labyrinthine passage must have proved an insurmountable challenge, at least to those in charge. The display elegantly and effortlessly subverted the museum's claim to authority: to the authority of narrativising the collection in a canonical fashion.

Would it be too much, then, to assume that, back in the Brazil of the 1950s and '60s, the labyrinthine passage sketched out some form of truth – a passage that willfully played with, or at least resembled, the experience of migration? If so, we would have to understand the journey on two different levels: first, that of the artefacts and their disconcerting mobility, including the fact that each artwork appeared to be its own site. This in turn suggests that there is perhaps no connection at all between artworks, or more precisely that their ontological condition – the ontological condition of art – is primarily non-relational. Second, the migratory experience expanded to the human subject; the individual visitor forges her own way through a space that is governed by uncertain meaning. This 'uncertain meaning', of course, is part and parcel of aesthetic experience *tout court* – of a particular type of experience based on the infinite oscillation between material and meaning. But at MASP, it could be argued, the visitor was visibly stripped of all official resources that conventionally frame and tame this oscillation. The visitor, no doubt, had plenty to gain from the prospect; she was offered a treasure trove. But she was also essentially left with or even thrown back to her imagination, or whatever of its resources she was willing or able to bring to the singular object or experience of the whole. MASP was not a psychic comfort zone, nor did it offer an easy ride. It was work.

## → II

The institutional space of MASP, including its implicit programme of art mediation I mentioned before, was not something that happened out of the blue. It had a model. Bo Bardi's formal sensibilities were certainly rooted in 1930s Italian exhibition design. But the roots of her political sensibilities are more complicated than that. The architect had doubtlessly arrived in Brazil with a first-hand experience of fascism, or at least an acute awareness of fascism's betrayal of human dignity. This

IMG. 04 — MASP gallery  
with display modules,  
1957–68





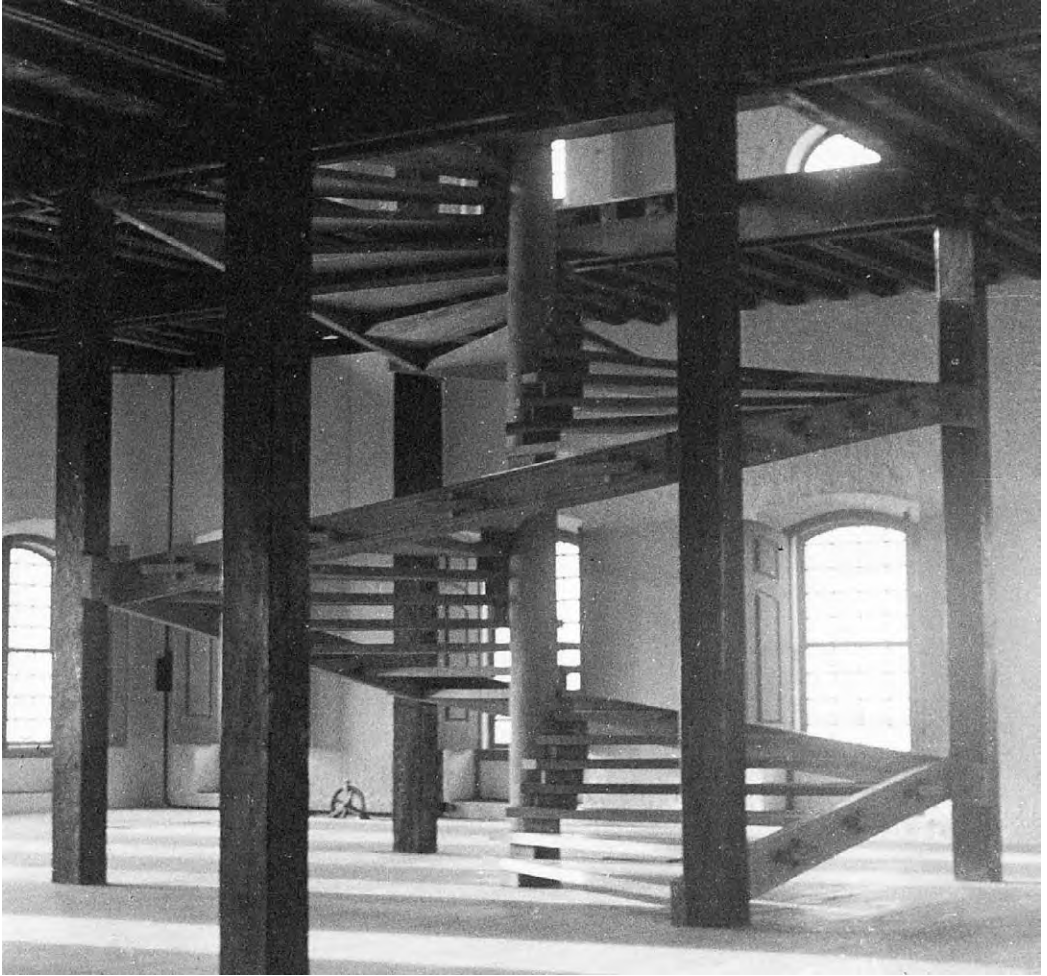
IMG. 05 — 'Solar do Unhão staircase', Lina Bo Bardi.  
Courtesy Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi

acute awareness haunted Italian intellectuals and artists and became, most prominently, the driving force of the generation of neo-realist filmmakers. There is no room here to demonstrate Lina's artistic closeness to her Italian contemporaries (Roberto Rossellini, Vittorio de Sica and Luchino Visconti, for example), with their emphasis on stories set among the poor, the working class, stories of simple survival filmed on location with highly provisional technical means and often amateur actors, especially children. Perhaps it suffices to say that she rediscovered for herself, in Brazil, a world that did not seem entirely dissimilar to the Italian one she felt had been destroyed by fascism, a world still animated by the 'popular soul', as Lina called it. This world was the Brazilian Northeast – a part of the country that is inextricably tied to centuries of colonial rule, slavery and agrarian exploitation, but also to vital forms of religious renewal, dance and music. Lina left São Paulo in 1958, when the progress at MASP was stalled. She was offered a teaching position and a commission to build a museum in Salvador, though 'building' is perhaps not entirely accurate. She had to reconstruct and adapt an existing structure, a huge complex near the sea called Solar do Unhão – an astonishingly beautiful site with a complex, even sinister history.

The story of the Solar do Unhão, and of the two museums Bo Bardi implemented there (the Bahia Modern Art Museum (MAMB) and the Folk Art Museum) is not entirely well-known. The reasons are simple. The Folk Art Museum, opened in 1963, was almost immediately shut down in 1964, the year the military took power in Brazil. Besides, Salvador was somewhat removed from the official centers of Brazilian culture and commerce in Rio and São Paulo. Nevertheless, Salvador, the ancient, Baroque-clad Portuguese capital and its vast surrounds, were a cultural epicentre in the 1950s and '60s – a wellspring of creative and intellectual energies. It was the birth place of *cinema novo*, the music of Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil but – most importantly for Bo Bardi – a stronghold of the Popular Cultural Movement (MCP), a group of people committed to preserving and sustaining the old cultural heritage. It was in Bahia that the contradiction that characterised Brazil – that of a country of unabashedly modern aspirations that was nonetheless founded on feudal structures – was at its most obvious. As Lina acknowledged later, coming to Bahia transformed her life and made her another person.

Bo Bardi's view of the aforementioned contradiction was of course that of a European immigrant. She was in a unique position to recognise the intricate dialectics between modernity and colonality, and took the opportunity to address precisely this dialectics with her Folk Art Museum. Lina provided much of the collection simply by buying the stuff herself: pots, vessels, baskets, toys and oil lamps, several thousand pieces were acquired with the help of like-minded colleagues and friends at local markets in and around Salvador – a shopping spree not entirely unlike the one her husband had been on, though her budget did not come from Chase Manhattan Bank. Indeed, the value of the Folk Art Museum's treasures were different from MASP's masterpieces; in tune with her neo-realist sensibility, Lina dubbed them 'objects of desperate survival'





and infused their display with an acute sense of the actual moment. To avoid misunderstandings, there was in fact no stark dichotomy between Bahia's everyday objects and the masterpieces of Raphael, Velázquez, Manet and Renoir. The latter, as I mentioned before, were very much 'objects of desperate survival' in their own right, and gracefully lent themselves to Lina's anti-fetishistic presentation.

The Folk Art Museum made no attempt to infuse the everyday object with an aura. It didn't even rely on the object *per se*, but presented families of forms (oil lamps of different heights, baskets of different sizes) as if to suggest a scientific typology. Immateriality played a central role in the museum's mission, a fickle, even volatile entity she called 'the original creative possibilities'. And here is the quote that sums up her programme: 'To carefully search for the cultural bases of a country (whatever they may be: poor, miserable, popular) when they are *real*, does not mean to preserve the *forms and materials*, it means to evaluate the original creative possibilities' (Carvalho Ferraz and Suziki 1995, 5).

The Folk Art Museum took on the task of initiating and sustaining a process, namely the evaluation of the ‘original creative possibilities’. It required a look not *at*, but *through* a constellation of objects. Shape, texture and materiality were to a degree arbitrary or, in other words, the Folk Art Museum wilfully conflated abstraction and objectivity (in a manner that was further developed at MASP). The bare necessities conveyed by ‘objects of desperate survival’ had their counterpart in the life experience of the audience, which was not just any audience. Similar to Oiticica’s artistic activities in the *favela* of Manguera (in Rio de Janeiro) at around the same time, Lina focused on the Brazilian lumpenproletariat: people who were at best neglected, at worst suppressed, kept largely illiterate and wholly invisible by the racist bourgeoisie governing the country.

The point of the Folk Art Museum was of course more than simply confronting the lumpenproletariat with the products of their own craft as something valuable. The museum was not supposed to become a dead end in this regard. To ‘evaluate the original creative possibilities’ meant accessing the conditions of production, but not in a merely material or objective sense. More than anything, it sought to access the spirit or energy that motivated its creation. Yet this spirit or energy was not something that could be grasped immediately: it had to be recalled in a manner that conceived of spectatorship in terms of an event. In this sense, the Folk Art Museum was based on a certain performativity. This performative aspect had many parallels with Paulo Freire’s ‘pedagogy of the oppressed’ – to the idea, to put it simply, that those who are oppressed must find their own model of emancipation, and that any didactic, condescending gesturing could only do harm. In fact, Bo Bardi’s only architectural intervention at the Solar do Unhão explicitly addressed and manifested the performative. It was a monumental wooden staircase, aptly called ‘an event’ by Aldo van Eyck and, as van Eyck further noted, people could walk up and down on the massive steps of the staircase, like ‘nobility’ (Oliveira 2003, 81). The aesthetico-political aim of the performative was to achieve precisely this transformation: from lumpenproletariat to nobility in just a few steps of solidly manufactured Brazilian wood.

One more thing needs to be mentioned in regard to the subject-object dynamics at play at the Folk Art Museum. Bestowing the ‘objects of desperate survival’ with exhibition value was, perhaps, an ennobling act in itself. But, again, this gesture would have been futile or only given way to another ethnographic fetish. It would also be construed as condescending. But what exactly did Bo Bardi’s display of these objects achieve? The display was rough, informal and precarious. The things were simply put there. They had been arranged, certainly, but above all they were presented as what they were: *real*. Bo Bardi made no attempt to ‘light them up’, so to speak. They were allowed to form an order, or at least suggest an order. But this order was playful and perfectly arbitrary. On the whole, the display was more of a proposition to look at those objects, or families of forms, than it was a safe institutional statement. But, then, what exactly does looking entail? An act of affirmation, among other things – something the beholder is willing to bring to the piece.



Still, there is no grasping the Folk Art Museum's curatorial premises without Bo Bardi's analysis of what fascism had done to the 'popular soul.' When it comes to the conscience of the people, she observed, the corrupting appeal of fascism had its material counterpart in the transition from genuine popular art and craft to folklore and kitsch. Folklore and kitsch objects were fascist. They sprang from and adhered to the aesthetics of death. They never needed a living soul to breathe life into them because, like the porcelain dog, they always already appear beloved (a quality that makes their presence intolerable, even suffocating). Genuine objects, on the other hand, require affirmation, to be looked at a certain way or with a loving gaze. Fascist objects are frozen in time and space; genuine objects move in the human psyche. Their condition, much like the human condition, is inherently fragile. This is a brief summary of Lina's ideas with regard to display, particularly the 'original creative possibilities' that lie in waiting with things displayed, or even with people displayed, if we want to give the monumental wooden staircase that transforms the poor into nobility its due.

IMG. 06 — Solar do Unhão.  
Courtesy Instituto Lina Bo e  
P.M. Bardi





IMG. 07 — MASP gallery  
with display modules,  
1957–68

→ III

The labyrinthine passage at the MASP, or the fake order of things-cum-staircase that was central to the Folk Art Museum – what do these display forms tell us about the possible future of museum-making? In both cases, I have argued, the performative was at the heart of the museum experience. Encountering the collection meant, above all, to be cast back to one's personal resources – one's own ability to form – intuitively or not – associative chains between the objects that circulate outside of oneself (in the gallery space), and those circulating inside (in one's own imagination). Granted, there is a whole theory behind the model of an object that migrates between an objective Gestalt and a subjective pool of, in particular, unconscious memories that long to affiliate with this Gestalt. There was no place, and perhaps no need to delve into this theory here.<sup>1</sup> Still, its presence is indicated in this very same publication. Lidwien van de Ven's photograph of the Freudian desktop in London centres on a constellation of things both internal and external, with Freud's pair of spectacles somehow acting as a threshold between the two. This desktop – a temporary home for so many disenchanted cult figures – met its own migratory fate in 1938, when it was transported from Vienna's ninth district to Hampstead.

Source: Buerger, Roger M. 2011. "This Exhibition is an Accusation": The Grammar of Display According to Lina Bo Bardi'. *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry* 26: 51–8.

<sup>1</sup> My speculation about the relationship between artefacts and unconscious memories is less inspired by Freud himself than by Kaja Silverman's reformulation of the Freudian and Lacanian theories of das Ding, see Silverman, K. (2000) *World Spectators*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

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## Lukas Duwenhögger, *Perusal of Ill-Begotten Treasures*, 2003

→ PABLO LAFUENTE

In *Des Saintes Reliques à l'art moderne* (2003), Krzysztof Pomian defines sacrifice as that which allows for a visible object – an object associated to a context of use, or of reproduction of given social relations – to be removed from this realm and transferred to that of the invisible, in any of its modalities – a realm that is other, unaffected by need and function, and therefore of a superior kind (Pomian 2003, 7–8). This anthropological universal is, for Pomian, also the origin of collections: a collection is a group of things that have experienced this transference or displacement. And, as such division between the visible and the invisible is an anthropological constant, every collection is always the result of sacrifice.

But while in the religious collections the sacrifice mediates between an invisible that is above and a visible that is below, in the modern museum the mediation is between the present and past on the one hand and the future on the other. The museum ‘allows the present to sacrifice itself towards the future’ – a future that for Pomian is the invisible (Pomian 2003, 13).

A collection is at the centre of *Perusal of Ill-Begotten Treasures*, a painting Lukas Duwenhögger made in 2003. A series of things are scattered around an open field, among some bare trees and several men who almost casually interact with them. A secretaire, a large blue vase, a small canvas without a frame, a chair, a pearl necklace, a white fur cape... These are all precious objects – objects of a certain use, but also objects of contemplation, signifiers of social status and, like a collection in Pomian’s museum, the result of a sacrifice. A literal sacrifice, at least for the previous owners, against whose will the things seem to be here now, subtracted (by the men, possibly) from their ‘original’ context and displayed, at least temporarily, in this field, overlooking a city (Istanbul, perhaps?) separated by a stretch of water in the background. But also a

**PREVIOUS PAGE** — Detail from ‘Perusal of Ill-Begotten Treasures’. Lukas Duwenhögger, 2003. Oil on canvas, 113 x 192cm. Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Cologne/Berlin

sacrifice that the things themselves seem to have been happy to make; if we can imagine distress in the ‘legitimate owners’,<sup>1</sup> there is no hint of discomfort in the cape, smoothly enveloping the body of one of the men, the canvas leaning on the vase, the secretaire that is now the support for the body of another man, or the string of pearls, being played with (caressed?) by yet another figure. There might be uncertainty about their final destination (this is definitely not it), but they seem at ease with their condition.

Such an uncertain future, however, can’t be their ‘invisible’. What is, then? In a text on Leonardo Cremonini, Louis Althusser sees him painting:

*the relations which bind the objects, places and times. Cremonini is a painter of abstraction. Not an abstract painter, ‘painting’ an absent, pure possibility in a new form and matter, but a painter of the real abstract, ‘painting’ ... real relations (as relations they are necessarily abstract) between ‘men’ and their ‘things’, or rather, to give the term its stronger sense, between “things” and their “men”. (Althusser 1966, 230)*

What is at stake in Cremonini, then, is not the depiction of objects, but of relations – between men and things, between things and men, but also between things and things, and between men and men. Things are the carriers of those relationships, and their abstraction, for Althusser, allows Cremonini to escape humanist depictions of subjects and instead gain a privileged access to ideology: ‘the specific function of the work of art is to make visible, by establishing a distance from it, the reality of the existing ideology (of any one of its forms)’ (Althusser 1966, 241–2). Here is, then, an invisible that Cremonini’s paintings are making visible – an invisible that we can perhaps identify in Düwenhogger’s scene.

In *Vue de l’Exposition Universelle* (1867), a painting whose composition remarkably resembles *Perusal of Ill-Begotten Pleasures*, Édouard Manet also could be said to be ‘painting’ a set of (abstract) social relations, established among the characters that populate the foreground of the painting. The bourgeoisie (a bourgeoisie that could be imagined to be the original owners of the ill-begotten objects), the state apparatus, at rest (the soldiers lounging in the grass to the right of the canvas, in a composition that echoes, or is echoed by the men to the left of *Perusal*), but also the working classes (the gardener on the foreground, left, again echoed in *Perusal* by another man). The gardener’s figure, his larger scale, his feet off the frame, his not-yet-painted (or never-to-be-painted) hose, provide both a frame and a witness to the rest of the characters: he is from a different class, not engaged in the diverse pleasures that the others are engaged in, and certainly not in the contemplation of culture (that ‘view’ of the title). In *Perusal of Ill-Begotten Pleasures*, the man to the left, also larger in scale, feet equally cropped, acts as a witness, and seems to be engaged in a slightly different activity – his relation is perhaps not with the things, but with

1 ‘Legitimate owners’ in quote marks because their legitimacy, their parentage, is questioned by their being ‘ill-begotten’ – possibly before their recent change of ownership.





the men. (Or, rather, he might be attempting to obtain ill-begotten pleasures from them. But then, so might be the others. Or he might be merely interested in the things).

The background for the social relations in Manet's painting is, as the title of the painting reads, the 'Exposition Universelle', a display of culture – one that is temporary, but with universal aspirations. The exhibition offered the city of Paris a picture of the state of the world in which the functional (labour, industry) was displayed as common heritage, together with the non-functional (art) and the exotic (the colonies), in order to then be projected to the future. But this picture of culture is, in Manet, what literally allows social relations to become visible – Pomian's invisible, the future, is here second to another invisible, the social relations that shape this picture and whose reproduction this picture works towards.

If, following Benoît de l'Estoile, we differentiate between 'museums of the Self' and 'museums of the Others' (de l'Estoile 2007, 12ff), the 'Exposition Universelle' is a museum of the self in which the museums of the others serve as internal counterpoints that reinforce that central construction and its power relations. In contrast, in *Perusal of Ill-Begotten Pleasures* the background is not occupied by a view of culture. Rather, it is occupied by a relation – if we guessed right, that of Istanbul, a city spreading through two masses of land (and two cultural narratives) that almost touch, but not quite. The display of culture is instead in the foreground, through this collection of objects that are being engaged with (not examined – the 'perusals' of the title is perhaps what the painting does, not what the men in the painting seem to do). But on this occasion the collection of objects resists defining a self or an other. We can only apply Althusser's formula for Cremonini and say that what we can see here are 'real relations' (as

IMG. 01 — 'Perusal of Ill-Begotten Treasures'.  
Lukas Duwenhögger, 2003.  
Oil on canvas, 113 x 192cm.  
Courtesy Galerie Buchholz,  
Cologne/Berlin

IMG. 02 — 'Perusal of Ill-Begotten Treasures'. Lukas Duwenhögger, 2003. Oil on canvas, 113 x 192cm. Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Cologne/Berlin

relations they are necessarily abstract) between "men" and their "things", or rather... between "things" and their "men", if we agree that the possessive is no longer univocal. Immediately, as property, these are not the men's things, or at least not 'legitimately' so. Symbolically these are neither the things' men, they do not belong to their class, perhaps neither their cultural heritage, and most certainly not their future. The things can only be said to be 'their' things – that is, they seem to belong with each other – in a similar way as the men do seem to belong with each other: temporarily, perhaps furtively, on the way to somewhere else, possibly away from the public view, against customs and norms; they don't seem to belong to the place where they are, but they have made it there; they are attempting to establish relations among each other that might be meaningful, pleasurable, beneficial... but there is a risk that none of this might happen.

And this is perhaps the image of another museum, one that does not show the self or the other; a place where nothing belongs, but where everything has a place.

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## Index of Authors and Artists

### John Barker

John Barker read English at Clare College, Cambridge. He is a novelist and short-story writer who has also published extensively on political economy, art and language for the journals *Science as Culture*, *Capital and Class*, *Mute* and *Variant*. He participated as an artist in the *Potosi Principle* exhibition.

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### Roger M Buergel

Roger M Buergel was born in 1962 in West Berlin. He received his education at the Institute of Contemporary Art (under Johannes Gachnang) and at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, and subsequently worked as private secretary to Viennese Actionist Hermann Nitsch. Since the 1990s Buergel has mounted numerous exhibitions, often in collaboration with Ruth Noack, including *documenta 12* in 2007. Throughout his career, Buergel has held various teaching posts, most recently as visiting professor of Art History at the Art Academy Karlsruhe (2007–9). He serves as the founding director of the Johann Jacobs Museum in Zurich (due to open in 2013), an exhibition space and research institution dedicated to the cultural residue of global trade routes.

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### Clare Carolin

Clare Carolin is a curator, writer and deputy head of the Curating Contemporary Art programme at the Royal College of Art, London. From 1999–2006 she was Exhibitions Curator at the Hayward Gallery, where she curated and organised numerous exhibitions including *Ann Sofi Siden: Warte Mal! Prostitution after the Velvet Revolution* (2002), *Eyes, Lies and Illusions: The Art of Deception* (2005), *Fantasy Architecture* (1500–2036) and *A Secret Service: Art, Compulsion, Concealment* (2006). Recent exhibition projects include *Regina José Galindo: The Body of Others*, Modern Art Oxford (2009) and *The Seven Day Weekend/Le Weekend de Sept Jours*, Galerie de l'Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, Paris (2010). Recent publications include 'After the Digital We Rematerialise: Distance and Violence in the Work of Regina José Galindo', *Third Text*, March 2011. She is currently developing a research and exhibition project examining the relationship between the representation of violent civil disorder by the media and the avant gardes of Europe and the Americas from the 1960s to the present day.

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### Danica Dakić

Danica Dakić's practice extends from video and film to photography and installation. Born in 1962 in Sarajevo, she studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, Sarajevo, the University of Arts,

Belgrade, and the Academy of Fine Arts, Düsseldorf.

Her work has been widely exhibited internationally. She has participated in many group exhibitions including *documenta 12*, 2007, *Istanbul Biennial 2003*, and *Istanbul Biennial 2009*, *Biennale of Sydney 2010*, *Liverpool Biennial 2010*, and *Kyiv Biennale/ARSENALE 2012*.

Her recent solo exhibitions include presentations at the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, 2013 (upcoming), Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2011), Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb (2010), Generali Foundation, Vienna (2010), and Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2009).

Her work is held in public collections such as the Centre Pompidou, Paris, the Generali Foundation, Vienna, the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, the Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel, the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, and the National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarajevo.

Dakić is a professor at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar. She lives in Düsseldorf, Weimar and Sarajevo.

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#### **Clémentine Deliss**

Clémentine Deliss was born in London to French–Austrian parents. She studied contemporary art practice in Vienna and holds a PhD in social anthropology from the University of London (SOAS). From 1992 to 1995 she was the artistic director of *africa95*, an artist-led festival of new work in all media from Africa and the diaspora. In 1996, she transformed her curatorial interests into print, and edited and published 11 issues of the international writers' and artists' organ *Metronome*.

Deliss has acted as a consultant for the European Union and various cultural organisations, has held guest professorships at the Städelschule in Frankfurt and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Oslo, and has conducted specific research projects through the support of art academies in Vienna, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Bordeaux, Bergen, Copenhagen, Malmö, Stockholm and London. Between 2002 and 2010 she

directed the international research lab Future Academy, which investigated the global future of independent research and production within the art academy.

Deliss' theoretical interests include research into bridging mechanisms between artists working in different parts of the world, forms of experimental education, and curatorial modalities that go beyond the exhibition. She is on the advisory committee of Theatrum Mundi/Global Street, the long-term research project initiated by Richard Sennett and Saskia Sassen. Since April 2010, Deliss has been director of the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

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#### **Andrew Dewdney**

Andrew Dewdney was the principal investigator and director of the AHRC, 'Tate Encounters: Britishness and Visual Cultures' research project and a co-author of *Post Critical Museology: Theory and Practice in the Art Museum* (Routledge 2013). He has written extensively in the area of the politics of visual and media cultures. He is currently revising a second edition of *The New Media Handbook* (Routledge 2013). Dewdney is a research professor at The Centre for Media and Culture Research, in the Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences at London South Bank University.

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#### **Branislav Dimitrijević**

Dr Branislav Dimitrijević is a lecturer, writer and curator. He teaches at the School for Art and Design (VSLPub) in Belgrade. He collaborates on curatorial, educational and publishing projects with the Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, where he is a leader of the academic course 'Art and Culture in Socialist Yugoslavia'. His main fields of academic and curatorial research are visual art, film and popular culture of socialist Yugoslavia, and contemporary visual art in the Balkans.

With Branislava Andjelković and Branimir Stojanović he co-founded and coordinated 'School for History and Theory of Images', an

independent and interdisciplinary educational project in Belgrade (1999–2003).

He edited a series of publications and exhibition catalogues including *Good Life – Physical Narratives and Spatial Imaginations* (Cultural Centre, Belgrade), *On Normality: Art in Serbia 1989–2001* (MOCAB, 2005), and *International Exhibition of Modern Art* (MOCA, Belgrade, 2003).

His curatorial projects include: *Situated Self: Confused, Compassionate, Conflictual*, Helsinki City Museum, MOCAB (2005); *Breaking Step – Displacement, Compassion and Humour in Recent Art from Britain*, MOCAB (2007); *FAQ Serbia*, ACF, New York (2010); and *No Network*, 'Time Machine' Biennial, D0 ARK Underground, Konjic, Bosnia (2011). He was curator of the Yugoslav/Serbian pavilion at the Venice Biennales in 2003 and 2009.

Dimitrijević holds an MA degree in History and Theory of Art from the University of Kent (UK) and has received his PhD in Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies from the University of Arts in Belgrade.

#### Ines Doujak

Ines Doujak researches, writes and produces images as an artist in the areas of visual culture and material aesthetics with a queer-feminist, anti-racist, anti-colonial focus. In 2012 she exhibited among others at the Museum of Modern Art, Vienna (*Art and Fashion*); Busan Biennale (*Garden of Learning*), Korea; and Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart (*Acts of Voicing*). Her work has been shown at exhibitions including *The Potosi Principle* at the Reina Sofia, Madrid (2010); *documenta 12* (Victory Gardens), Kassel (2007); *Be what you want, but stay where you are*, Witte de With, Rotterdam (2005), and *Father Ass* at the Secession, Vienna (2004). She is the project leader of Loomshuttles/Warpaths and, together with Oliver Ressler, is currently researching 'Artists as Curators', funded by the Austrian Science Funds.

#### Geneviève Frisson

Geneviève Frisson is descended from an old aristocratic family in France, which mingled with the Bohemian world during the turmoil of the nineteenth century. She has been taking photographs ever since she was born, and has been photographing without the aid of a camera or other technical equipment for more than ten years. She sometimes makes exceptions to this rule. She lives in Paris and is the director of the Institute of Visual Epistemology at the Collège de l'Europe.

#### Regina José Galindo

Regina José Galindo was born in 1974 in Guatemala City, where she still lives. Her work has been the subject of many solo shows, including TEA, Tenerife (Spain); Artium, Vitoria Gasteiz (Spain); Vulnerable at the Molaa Museum of Latin American Art (Long Beach, CA); Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo (México City); Fundación Joaquim Nabuco (Recife, Brasil); National Museum of Contemporary Art (Bucharest, Romania). Exit Art (New York); Museum of Modern Art (Oxford, UK); Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem (Arnhem, Netherlands); ArtPace (San Antonio Texas, USA); La Caja Blanca (Palma de Mallorca); Fondazione Volume (Rome); Prometeo Gallery di Ida Pisani (Lucca and Milan, Italy); Le Plateau and Galerie Du Jour (Paris, France); and Contexto Arte Contemporaneo (Guatemala City). She has also participated in many biennales and group shows around the world.

Recent prizes won by Galindo include the Principe Claus Award and the Grand Prize Award at the 29th Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts and the 2005 Golden Lion Award for young artists in the 51 Venice Biennial. Recent international residences include ArtPace San Antonio Texas 2008 and Le Plateau, Paris 2005. She also received a grant from the programme exhibition *10 Defining Experiments*, by Cifo in 2006.



### Gangart

Gangart – founded in 1986 – is an art practice concerned with spaces and their edificial as well as ideological connotations, and interventions into their fixated regimes. The works are articulated as installations, performative and medial interventions, and mostly include components of temporality and use.

Practices of transdisciplinary cooperation and the occupation with economic and political realities as factors of artistic production are constitutive aspects in Gangart's activities.

### Ayşe Güleç

Ayşe Güleç studied social education/social work at the University of Kassel and has been working at the Kulturzentrum Schlachthof e.V. since 1998. The focus of her work is migrants and (inter-)cultural communication. She is involved in the development of self-organised initiatives in the area of gender and migration. Güleç developed the *documenta 12* advisory board and consequently became its spokeswoman. She became a member of the Maybe Education Group at *dOCUMENTA (13)*, where, among other things, she worked as a tutor at the School for Worldly Companions and co-conceived the Studio d(13) for Kids and Teens.

### Clemens Krümmel

Clemens Krümmel was born in 1964. He lives and works in Berlin and Zurich as an art historian, freelance curator and author. Krümmel studied art history and philosophy at Bonn University and holds an MA in Italian Renaissance painting (1991). He was Assistant Curator at Karl Ernst Osthaus-Museum, Hagen (Germany) from 1987–94; a freelance curator of the seven-part exhibition series *Snowflake Office* at Galerie Ursula Walbröl, Düsseldorf (Germany), and Greene Naftali Gallery, New York (1999). Krümmel was co-publisher and editor of the Berlin-based quarterly magazine for contemporary art and art theory *Texte zur Kunst* from 2000 to 2006.

He co-curated the exhibition *Diving Trips – Drawing as Reportage* (with Alexander Roob) at Kunstverein Hannover and Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (Germany, 2004/5). Krümmel co-founded (with Alexander Roob) Melton Prior Institute for Reportage Drawing, Düsseldorf, in 2006. He is also co-editor of the book series 'Polypen', b\_books Verlag, Berlin (with Sabeth Buchmann, Helmut Draxler and Susanne Leeb). Krümmel is currently assistant professor in the Department for Architecture and Art at ETH Zurich, and visiting lecturer at Kunsthochschule Weissensee, Berlin.

### Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum

Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum is a commemorative institution dedicated to preserving memories on the history of art. In one of its chambers is placed *The Concise History of Modern Painting* by Herbert Read, while in another is *History of Art* by H W Janson. It is located at 28 Brace Radocvanovica Street in Belgrade and has been opened to the public periodically since 2003.

A selection of the H W Janson's collection *History of Art* was part of the exhibition *In Search of Balkania*, curated by Roger Conover, Eda Cufer and Peter Weibel in the Neue Galerie, Graz (2002).

In addition to the permanent exhibit, part of the mausoleum's fund is a collection of drawings and paintings titled 'Observing the Observer' accompanied with the tale 'Echo'. This collection was presented at the exhibition *FAQ Serbia* curated by Branislav Dimitrijević and Andreas Stadler in the Austrian Cultural Forum, New York, and the following year at the *October Salon*, Belgrade.

### Pablo Lafuente

Pablo Lafuente is an editor at *Afterall*, associate curator at the Office for Contemporary Art Norway, Oslo, and co-pathway leader of MRes Art: Exhibition Studies at Central Saint Martins, London. His writing has appeared in, among others, *Afterall*, *Art Monthly*, *Parkett*,



*Radical Philosophy* and *The Wire*. He is the editor of *Whatever Happened to Sex in Scandinavia?* (with Marta Kuzma; OCA and Koenig Books, 2011) and *Gerard Byrne: Images or Shadows* (IMMA, 2011).

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#### Kristin Marek

Dr Kristin Marek has been Margarethe-von-Wrangell Research Fellow in the Department of Art History and Philosophy of Media at Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design since 2011. From 2007–11 she was Assistant Professor at Ruhr Universität Bochum, Department of Art History, and at Kunsthochschule Kassel; from 2005–06 she was a Post-Doctoral Researcher at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar. Marek has a PhD in Art History from Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design, and studied art history, philosophy and law in Heidelberg, Munich and Karlsruhe, receiving fellowships from the Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaft, Vienna, Akademie Schloß Solitude, Stuttgart and the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich.

Her teaching and research focuses on contemporary art, the art of the later Middle Ages and Early Modern art. Among her areas of special interest are body-image issues, the aesthetics of the corpse, the history of wallpaper and, more broadly, picture theory. She has published numerous books and texts in these fields: *KanonKunstgeschichte: Einführungen in Werke, Methoden und Epochen*, 4 vols, Munich, 2013 (forthcoming); *Die Körper des Königs: Effiges, Bildpolitik und Heiligkeit*, Munich, 2009; *Die Neue Sichtbarkeit des Todes* (ed, with Thomas Macho), Munich, 2007; *Bild und Körper im Mittelalter* (ed, with Raphaële Preisinger, Marius Rimele und Katrin Kärcher) Munich, 2006, 2nd edition, Munich 2008; 'The Visibility of the Dead between Virtuality and Materiality. Visual Culture and the Culture of Visibility in the Works of Christoph Schlingensief, Teresa Margolles and Gregor Schneider', in *The Challenge of the Object/ Die Herausforderung des Objekts*, Congress Proceedings, T. 1–3. (ed G. Ulrich Großmann

and Petra Krutisch). Nuremberg, 2013 (forthcoming); 'Der Sterbende wird uns zeigen, wie er stirbt'. Ästhetik als partizipatorisches Konzept in Gregor Schneiders Toter Raum', in Friederike Wappler (ed): *Relational Art. Partizipatorische Kunst als Künstlerische und Gesellschaftlich-soziale Praxis*, Zurich, 2012, pp. 239–65; 'Eldorado – Topologies of a Projection: Myth, Wallpaper, Video', in Kiwi Menrath and Alexander Schwinghammer (eds), *That's What a Chameleon Looks Like. Contesting Immersive Cultures*, Cologne, 2009; 'Wa(h)re Objektivität. Bildpolitik im Fernsehen – Bildwissen durch Kunst', in Jutta Held and Ursula Frohne (eds), *Politische Kunst – Politik der Kunst* (= Kunst und Politik, Jahrbuch der Guernica-Gesellschaft, vol. 9), Göttingen, 2008, pp. 127–37; 'Mediale Infrastrukturen. Die Fotografie als Form des Historischen', in Matthias Bruhn and Kai-Uwe Hemken (eds), *Die Modernisierung des Sehens. Bildende Künste und Bildliche Techniken*, Bielefeld, 2008, pp. 255–69.

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#### Ruth Noack

Ruth Noack is Head of Curating Contemporary Art at the Royal College of Art in London. Trained as a visual artist and art historian, she has acted as art critic, university lecturer and exhibition maker since the 1990s.

Noack was curator of *documenta 12* (Kassel, 2007). Other exhibitions that she has curated with Roger M. Buergel include *Scenes of a Theory* (Depot, Vienna, 1995), *Things We Don't Understand* (Generali Foundation, Vienna, 2000), *Organisational Forms* (Kunstraum Universität Lüneburg; Škuc, Ljubljana; Hochschule für Graphik, Leipzig; 2002–3) and *The Government* (Witte de With, Rotterdam; MAC, Miami; Secession, Vienna; 2005). She provided *Garden of Learning* (Busan Biennale, 2012) with its exhibition layout, and is presently working on a show called *Sleeping with a Vengeance – Dreaming of a Life*.

Noack's reviews and monographic essays have appeared in numerous journals and catalogues. Her book on Sanja Ivekovic was published by Afterall in February of 2013.

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### Peter Osborne

Peter Osborne is professor of Modern European Philosophy and director of the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy (CRMEP), Kingston University London, and a long-standing member of the editorial collective of the British journal *Radical Philosophy*. His books include *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (1995; 2011), *Philosophy in Cultural Theory* (2000), *Conceptual Art* (2002), *Marx* (2005) and *El Arte Más Allá de la Estética: Ensayos Filosóficos Sobre el Arte Contemporáneo* (CENDEAC, Murcia, 2010). His catalogue essays include contributions to *Manifesta 5*, Tate Modern, 2006 Biennale of Sydney, Walker Art Center Minneapolis, Office of Contemporary Art Norway, National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design Oslo, CGAC in Santiago de Compostela, and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León.

Recent publications include *The State of Things*, co-edited with Marta Kuzma and Pablo Lafuentes (London/Oslo: Walter Koenig/OCA, 2012) and *Spheres of Action: Art and Politics*, co-edited with Éric Alliez (London: Tate Publishing, 2013).

His new book, *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art* is published by Verso in April 2013. He is currently directing the Arts and Humanities Research Council project 'Transdisciplinarity and the Humanities' (2011–3).

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### Dierk Schmidt

Dierk Schmidt is an artist and author based in Berlin. His paintings pursue questions of everyday politics and their historical origins by creating series of images that explore a critical revision of painting. His recent work *The Division of the Earth – Tableaux on the Legal Synopses of the Berlin Africa Conference* focuses on the relation of (colonial) international law, abstraction and a recent case of restitution. Recent solo exhibitions include: *IMAGE LEAKS – On the Image Politics of Resources*,

Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt/Main, Germany (2011); *SIEV-X. Zu einem Fall verschärfter Flüchtlingspolitik oder Géricault und die Konstruktion von Geschichte*, Städel-Museum, Frankfurt/Main, Germany (2009); and *The Division of Earth*, Kunstraum der Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, Germany (2008). Recent group exhibitions include: *Animisums*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany (2012); *Randzonen der Bilder*, Kunsthaus Dresden, Germany (2009); *1. Triennial of Luanda*, Angola (2007); and *Elysian Spheres of Action*, Secession, Vienna, Austria (2005).

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### Lidwien van de Ven

Lidwien van de Ven was born in Hulst, the Netherlands. She lives and works in Berlin, Germany. She has won several awards for her photographic work and installations. She participated in *Garden of Learning*, Busan Biennale, South Korea (2012), *documenta 12*, Kassel (2007) and *Zones of Contact*, Sydney Biennale (2006). Van de Ven has had solo exhibitions at Gallery Paul Andriessse, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2012); *Freedom, Netwerk*, Aalst, Belgium; and Bloomberg Space, London, UK, (both 2011); Le Grand Café, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Saint-Nazaire, France (2005); Le Magasin, Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble, France (2003); *Salon Paris Photo*, Paris, France (2002); MuHKA, Antwerp, Belgium and Museum het Domein, Sittard, Netherlands (both 2001).

Recent group exhibitions include: *Status*, Fotomuseum Zürich, Switzerland; *How Much Fascism?* at BAK Utrecht, Netherlands and Kunsthal Extra City Antwerp, Belgium; *Politiek Kunstbezit*, Jonas Staal at Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands; *The City That Doesn't Exist*, Ludwig Forum Aachen, Germany (all 2012); *Melanchotopia*, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, Netherlands; *Project Europa: Imagining the Impossible*, Wallach Gallery, Columbia University, New York, US (all 2011).

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**Victoria Walsh**

Victoria Walsh is senior tutor in the Curating Contemporary Art programme at the Royal College of Art. Prior to this she was head of Adult Programmes at Tate Britain from 2005–11, during which time she led on the Tate Encounters research project in the role of co-investigator, having previously worked in seven departments across Tate since 1994. As an independent curator and consultant in the fields of Visual Arts and Architecture, she has worked extensively across both the public and private sectors, and continues to hold active research roles at Tate.

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## MeLa\* - European Museums in an age of migrations

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examines the historical and contemporary relationships between museums, places and identities in Europe and the effects of migrations on museum practices.

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transforms the question of memory into an unfolding cultural and historical problematic, in order to promote new critical and practical perspectives.

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Marco Sacco, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Italy

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Perla Innocenti, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom

Jamie Allen, Jacob Back, Copenhagen Institute of Interaction Design, Denmark

Christopher Whitehead, Rhiannon Mason, Newcastle University, United Kingdom

Iain Chambers, l'Orientale, University of Naples, Italy



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## AGENCY, AMBIVALENCE, ANALYSIS

### APPROACHING THE MUSEUM WITH MIGRATION IN MIND

The 15 essays collated in this research publication contribute towards building an argument about the role of museums in a migratory society, taking into account artistic practices, collections, exhibition- and audience-making. It is argued that artistic practices can give us valuable leads as to how museums should forge their policies, that the empirical studies of audiences show that contemporary approaches to audience building result neither in integration nor equal treatment of migrants, and that it is worth looking at questions of migration through the lens of museum display and collection.

*With contributions by: John Barker, Roger M Buerger, Clare Carolin, Clémentine Deliss, Andrew Dewdney, Branislav Dimitrijević, Geneviève Frisson, Gangart, Ays e Güleş, Clemens Krümmel, Pablo Lafuente, Kristen Marek, Carmen Mörsch, Peter Osborne, and Victoria Walsh.*

#### EDITOR

Ruth Noack is head of Curating Contemporary Art at the Royal College of Art in London. Trained as a visual artist and art historian, she has acted as art critic, university lecturer and exhibition maker since the 1990s.

COVER IMAGE — Geneviève Frisson

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MeLa—European Museums in an age of migrations



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