

New Worlds: Frontiers, Inclusion, Utopias



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New Worlds: Frontiers, Inclusion, Utopias — Introduction

Claudia Mattos Avolese
Roberto Conduru

In recent decades, art history has moved towards new theoretical settings impelled by a critical attitude towards its traditional concepts and premises and by the desire to become more global and more inclusive, embracing other art traditions in addition to the so-called “Western” ones. As Thomas DaCosta Kauffmann points out in his book *Towards a Geography of Art*, this process implied redesigning the “map” of art history and revising its geography in many ways¹. In August 2015, when the colloquium that gave rise to this book was held in Rio de Janeiro as a joint initiative of the International Committee of Art Historians (CIHA) and the Brazilian Committee of Art History (CBHA), we hoped to contribute to the theoretical and methodological discussions of the field by focusing on the geopolitical displacements involved in the process of “expanding” the field of art history. Developing on the spatial metaphors subsumed in such a discourse, we proposed to understand the *New Worlds* of art history in terms of positions and relations within the various political maps in the field. Questions such as who has power and voice in art history today, who does the mapping, and how do images, ideas, people and things circulate across borders were to be foregrounded. Since then, the recent history of mass immigration and shutting of borders has turned many of the questions posed by the colloquium into pressing political issues, making the discussion held in this book even more urgent. If two years ago there was still a sense of optimism and a certain lightness in the perspective of building a truly global platform for art history with place and space for everyone, we now have to recognize the utopian dimension of this image and work harder to understand and deal with the complexity of our reality. Peter Krieger’s essay in this volume rightly acknowledges the problem by confronting the discourses on “global art history,” or on an art history “without boundaries,” with the reality experienced by art historians in their everyday practice, in which they in fact need to cross linguistic, cultural, and territorial boundaries.

Maybe one of the results of the new political context in which we practice art history today is a growing distrust of any attempt to define the field in blunt global or universal terms. Joseph Imorde’s essay offering a historical analysis of the “history of global art history” certainly furthers a better understanding of

1 Thomas DaCosta Kauffmann, *Towards a Geography of Art*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004

where we stand and what we want from our theories today. We believe that art historians have slowly realized that if they want to be integrated into a larger international community, methods and theories can only be multiple and diverse. We have come to realize that any attempt to develop one homogeneous art history has to be seen as imperialistic. Following this trend, the essays presented in this volume all propose reflections on how to practice an expanded art history, but in very different ways.

The opening essay by Ruth Phillips introduces a central challenge of art history today: how can we articulate an historical discourse that is informed by an indigenous understanding of land and culture? This question also resonates in Daniela Kern's article on the obliteration of indigenous art and discourse in Brazilian art historiography and reappears in Katve-Kaisa Kontturi's article, which focuses on the nexus to be established between art, collective identity, and activism. As the three authors show, these issues touch on the necessity of redirecting the way we frame our research and our discourses on art.

Other modes of critique of traditional methodological approaches can be found in this volume as well. One of them is Raphaèle Preisinger's comparative study of medieval Black Madonnas and Colonial Black Christs, which suggests an alternative reading for traditional discourses that rely on the idea of "influence." The racial tensions imbedded in the superposition of constructed space and living space that guides Jorun Poettering's analysis of the uses of fountains in the city of Rio de Janeiro is another important example of an innovative approach to the theme. Several other essays seek new art historical narratives that avoid the traditional geographical opposition of "center and periphery" to focus on other geographical concepts such as circulation, or the transcultural exchange of art and ideas. Pedro Luengo's interpretation of Southeast Asian architecture and Alfredo J. Morales's analysis of Tonalá Ceramics take on this approach, as well as Isabel Plante's essay on the connections between Paris and Buenos Aires in the '60s and '70s. Ana M. Franco's article on the relations between New York and Bogotá in the '50s and '60s, Daniel Montero's examination of diplomatic relations between the US and Mexico, and Michael Gnehm's analyses of Gottfried Semper's contribution to a competition for a Lyric theater in Rio de Janeiro in the 19th century also follow this tendency. New geographies and new

directions of transcultural interaction can also be accessed in Frederic Asher's analysis of "curiosity" as a central concept for approaching the exchanges between India and the Western world at the beginning of the modern era. Michael Asbury's essay, for his part, contributes to the theoretical debate on place and space by examining the instability of terms within the international field of conceptual art.

Steve Nelson's fine investigation of Ousmane Sambène's film *Black Girl* adds to the theme of new geographies by reflecting on the power of constructed personal geographies, which are nevertheless directly connected to political post-colonial histories. Coming back to the probing of the field of art history itself, Romuald Tchibozo gives us a historical narrative of the complex process of integrating the African continent into the discipline. A sharp critique of the traditional mapping of cultural and artistic developments in the case of the Americas is delivered by Valeria Piccoli, Peter John Brownlee, and Giorgiana Uhlyarik, the curators of the itinerant exhibition *Painting the Americas*, which proposes to explore the still under-researched connections within the continent.

After traveling through different times and spaces, often passing through South America, the reader can establish some central points but they are alternative and temporary, because in the end this volume does not circumscribe a static and totalizing image. On the contrary, the book concludes by demanding new unfoldings, other reflections, more action, a continuous mapping. The book closes with Claire Farago's essay "Who's History? Why? When? Who Benefits and Who Doesn't," which offers a broad overview of the main theoretical and methodological issues that are relevant to the field of art history today. Using the example of Ivory Oliphants, a category of object that resists traditional classifications, the author examines alternative approaches that can contribute to the development of a less Eurocentric and more inclusive art history. Her remarks echo many of the problems discussed by the other authors in this book. This clearly shows that we share many concerns and makes us feel that Claire Farago's call for intensified international collaboration at the end of her text, viewed as a strategy for the development of a more critical and inclusive art history, should stretch beyond the publication of this book.

Between Rocks and Hard Places: Indigenous Lands, Settler Art Histories, and the “Battle for the Woodlands”

Ruth B. Phillips
Carleton University

In the summer of 2015, just before the expected arrival in Toronto of international visitors and participants for the Pan American Games, I arrived at the city’s downtown airport on my way to see *Picturing the Americas: Landscape Painting in the Americas*, which had just opened at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO). As I walked from the gate, I was greeted by a large mural-sized sign welcoming me to the city. An Aboriginal man in pow wow dress was shown riding up one of the airport escalators next to the message: “We’re Here. You are Welcome in Toronto. The Mississaugas of the New Credit Host First Nation Welcome You to Toronto 2015.” This offering of a first welcome by the traditional owners of the land acknowledges on a symbolic level the primary relationship of an Indigenous nation to a particular place identified with it by virtue of its members’ descent from its totemic being or *dodem* (pl. *dodemag*). Although this protocol has been honored for some years in western Canada, it is a recent phenomenon in southern Ontario. Indeed, the advent of such signage might puzzle residents of Toronto who are aware that in 1787 and 1805, the ancestors of the Mississaugas of the New Credit transferred to British colonial officials the fourteen by twenty-eight mile piece of land that is roughly contiguous with their modern-day city. In the Indigenous world, however, people remain irrevocably tied to places through the *dodem* system. As Lakota historian Vine Deloria has written, “American Indians hold their lands—place—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind.”¹ Even though the Mississaugas’ *dodem*, the eagle or thunderbird, can no longer be seen flying over Toronto, it still soars in graphic form on their welcome signage and the logo that represents their First Nation.

The 250,880 square acres of the Toronto purchase are now home to the 6,000,000 inhabitants of the Greater Toronto Area, the most densely populated region of Canada; the 1,900 members of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation are today in possession of a reserve one-fortieth the size, located about a hundred kilometers away near Niagara Falls. The Mississaugas are an Anishinaabe nation, closely related to other speakers of Anishinabemowin—the Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi, Algonquin, and Cree—who spread across the great geological

1 Quoted in Christopher T. Green, “Anishinaabe Artists of the Great Lakes? Problematizing the Exhibition of Place in Native American Art,” 2015 *ARTMargins* 4:2 (June 2015): 80–96.

formation known as the Canadian Shield. Covering more than half of Canada, the Shield is the largest expanse of pre-Cambrian rock in the world; it extends west from modern-day Quebec to Saskatchewan, encompassing the five Great Lakes lying at the heart of the North American continent. During the last ice age, the retreating glaciers created a topography of forests, rivers, and lakes bordered by thousands of kilometers of rocky shoreline and wind-sculpted trees—a landscape made iconic of Canada during the early twentieth century by the paintings of the artists known as the Group of Seven.

In the Aboriginal world that has existed in this place for millennia, human beings share these lands with the powerful *manitous*, or “other-than-human beings,” who can assume animal, human, and other forms. They roil the waters and electrify the skies, bringing wealth, fertility, and healing powers as well as danger, destruction, and death.² Humans can thrive only by establishing and maintaining relationships of reciprocity with the *manitous* and acquiring from them knowledge of empowering medicines. For at least two thousand years, the Anishinaabeg have done this by seeking contact with these beings through dreams and visions, and by making offerings at and marking with images places in the land where the presence of the other-than-human powers is most evident. Whirlpools are places where powerful underwater beings whip their long tails, mists indicate hidden spirit presences, high cliffs are sites where the all-powerful thunderbirds nest, and deep crevices in the rock face provide channels of communication with the fearsome underwater panther, the Mishipeshoo, and the little anthropomorphic *maymaygwayshi* who live inside the rock.³ All are potential givers of medicines.

The figurative and abstract images painted on these sites are termed pictographs in the scholarly literature. They also occur as the mnemonic signs incised on birch bark panels and scrolls to record songs and the order of rituals of the shamanistic Midewiwin society, most of which are now regarded as sacred, culturally sensitive, and not suitable for public display. They are

2 Archaeological evidence for human habitation in the Great Lakes dates back approximately 11,000 years. <http://www.trca.on.ca/dotAsset/37523.pdf>

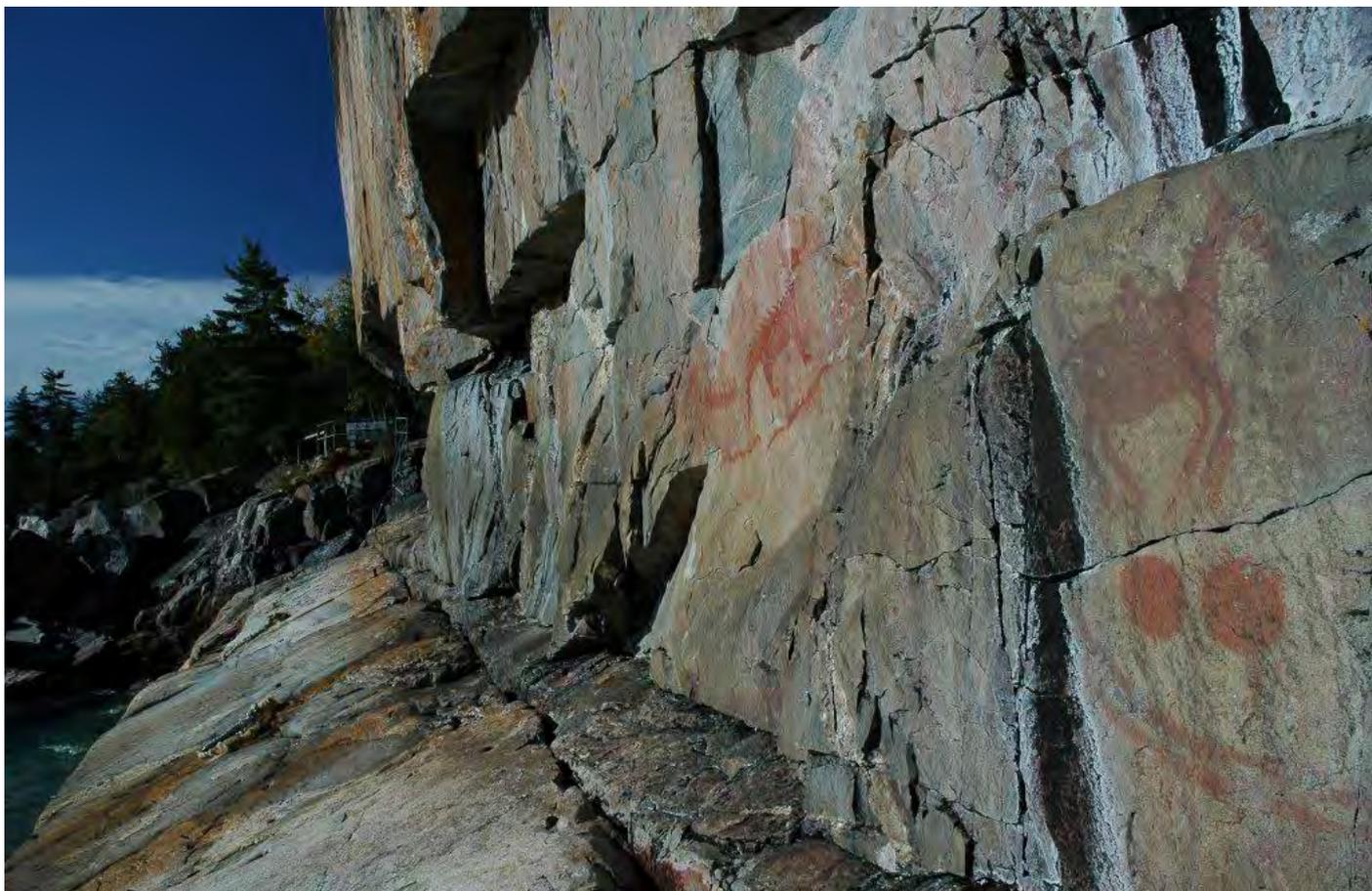
3 See “Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Project: The Land that Gives Life, Nomination for Inscription on the World Heritage List,” http://www.pimachiowinaki.org/sites/default/files/docs/Pim_Aki_Dossier_2015_tk301_LR%20Jun%20209.pdf accessed 9 March 2017

also closely related to images painted or, in earlier times, tattooed on the body and painted, woven, embroidered, and carved on medicine bags, drums, rattles, and war clubs. These small portable articles have been collected and preserved by Europeans since the early years of contact and form the canonical corpus out of which histories of Indigenous arts in the Great Lakes are constructed. In contrast, rock paintings and petroglyphs have remained the concern of archaeologists and barely figure in narratives of the history of art in North America, whether settler or Indigenous. Yet this body of imagery, inscribed directly on the land, is the form of visual culture that speaks to us most compellingly about Indigenous conceptualizations of place and space. Its omission is therefore evidence of the processes by which Indigenous concepts and representations of land have been overwritten by those introduced by European settlers during the course of four centuries of colonial rule.

It was not until the mid-twentieth century that Selwyn Dewdney, a professionally trained artist and amateur ethnographer, made the first systematic effort to map, record, and interpret the rock art of the Canadian Shield. Commissioned by Toronto’s Royal Ontario Museum, he spent many summers canoeing the shorelines of lakes and rivers and interviewing local people, both Native and non-Native, in order to locate and, where possible, interpret the painted images. He drew, photographed, and made full-sized tracings of the anthropomorphic, animal, and abstract images he found at 290 sites in the province of Ontario.⁴ Dewdney’s work has been carried forward by archaeologists Thor Conway and Grace Rajnovich, who have advanced the project of interpretation through further intensive work with Aboriginal elders. Because the practice of rock painting ceased around the turn of the twentieth century, these elders are the last generation who were both trained in oral history and had direct contact with shaman-artists who painted on rock surfaces. The decisions they made to share knowledge with researchers are especially precious.

The vast inventory of images preserved on the sheer rock surfaces of the Canadian Shield constitutes, I would argue, the essential ground line for an inclusive art history in central Canada,

4 One hundred sixty-two sites are listed in Selwyn Dewdney and Kenneth E. Kidd, *Indian Rock Paintings of the Great Lakes* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967, rev. ed.). New sites continue to be discovered.



1. The Agawa rock art site, Lake Superior, Canada, showing the paintings by Myeengun (left) and Shingwauk (right).

Photo: Friends of Lake Superior Park

both literally and metaphorically, and the relative silence that surrounds it therefore invites interrogation. This silence suggests three different kinds of problems. The first is the uneasy fit of rock paintings with the Western construct of “art.” Archaeologists prefer the term “pictograph” because they study these images primarily as a form of picture writing. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scholars like Garrick Mallory undertook broad comparative studies of world pictographic systems as representing an early phase of human literacy, and it is difficult today to divorce the term from the cultural evolutionist framework of that anthropological literature—now, of course, thoroughly discredited.⁵

For the art historian, however, a difficulty in categorizing this vast body of imagery as “art” arises from rock paintings’ highly variable aesthetic quality. While some, such as the great Agawa image of Mishipeshoo, display a formal power that fully realizes the conceptual power of the subject, a great many others are crudely rendered (Fig. 1). Because they are painted on vertical cliff faces descending directly into the water, many must

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5 Garrick Mallory, *Picture Writing of the American Indians* (Don Mills, ON: Dover, 1972), 2 vols. [reprint from *Tenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1893]

have been made quickly and in a summary fashion by someone standing in a canoe or balancing on a ladder on a narrow rock ledge many meters above water level. Over the centuries, weathering has further compromised our ability to recapture the aesthetic power individual examples may once have had. Yet at the same time, the aesthetic quality of the rendering would not have altered a rock painting’s ritual and communicative functioning, just as a poorly designed and printed book can be read as easily as one designed with skill and style. And where images and texts are clearly distinguished in European languages, in Anishinaabemowin, the morpheme “mazi” or “mazena” is the root of the words for both “image” and “book.”⁶ Classifying all these images as “art” either finesses these issues or—if aesthetic appreciation of their radical simplifications is intended—interposes a modernist and primitivist lens on our viewing of them.

The problem of “art” is paralleled by a problem of “history.” Rock paintings are notoriously difficult to date because the animal fats and fish glue binders that were mixed with powdered red ochre to make the paint have been washed away over the years. Without such organic substances, radiocarbon dating cannot be used. Other kinds of tests have produced results indicating a greater antiquity for these paintings than was first assumed, but have yielded no hard dates. Using other archaeological evidence found at rock painting sites, Rajnovich has made a convincing case that rock painting goes back two thousand years, to the beginning of the Woodland period, when peoples ancestral to the Anishinaabeg inhabited the same regions. Despite such finds, it may be that the failure of art historians to integrate rock art into their chronological narratives is due to the disciplinary divide between archaeological and art historical methods and disciplinary conventions.

A final problem has to do not with discursive, but, rather, physical erasures. As Dewdney’s years of exploring rock art sites showed, most of the known sites are in thinly populated northern regions and only reachable by canoe or motorboat. Rock art specialists speculate that many sites that must have existed in the southern parts of the Canadian Shield have been physically obliterated or submerged under water in the course of two cen-

turies of urban-industrial development; rivers and lakes have been dammed to facilitate logging and mining, while streams have been paved over to build railways, roads, and cities. These transformations of the land have most affected the southern areas of the Canadian Shield, and because these are also the most densely populated regions of Canada, the impact of the erasure of Indigenous markings on settler historical consciousness is magnified. The biggest losses, however, are those of memory and knowledge that have resulted from forced Indigenous displacements from ancestral land, which have ruptured the bonds between people and topography, and from the cultural violence of assimilationist policies designed to obliterate Aboriginal languages which has walled off the Indigenous discourses and ritual practices integral to the meaning of the visual imagery.

Despite this history of erasure, however, important projects of recovery have been underway during the past fifty years, carried out not only by archaeologists, but also by Anishinaabe artists. In George Kubler’s terms, artists have reopened the abandoned mine shafts of the conceptual and iconographic traditions expressed in rock art and brought up rich ores of image and form.⁷ In the contemporary moment, rock is being explored as a site of inscription and identification by Anishinaabe artist Bonnie Devine. Where the preceding generation of Anishinaabe artists, led by Norval Morrisseau, affirmed Indigenous traditions of mysticism, shamanism, and spirituality in a modern idiom, Devine’s work engages with a contemporary politics of land and the environment. And where Morrisseau’s concerns made it relatively easy for his early patrons and promoters to frame his work within the comfortable tenets of modernist primitivism, Devine’s work speaks both to contemporary contestations over land ownership and to a world now facing the ultimate disaster of environmental implosion.

In the remainder of this paper, I want to look at the issues of Indigenous and settler concepts of art and place in terms of an interlocking set of contemporary issues arising from Indigenous decolonization and land claims on the one hand, and the parallel process of a decolonized world art history on the other. I will argue that, in Canada and elsewhere, these issues are currently converging in a shared consciousness of the growing environ-

7 George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

mental crisis. I will also urge that an art history that deals more authentically with place and space by attending to histories in the land can serve as a unifying force. I will attempt this admittedly ambitious task by examining in more detail the chronological spectrum of Anishinaabe visual art: the rock painting tradition that reaches back many centuries before the arrival of Europeans; the traumatic negotiations of new systems of land, spirituality, and visibility imposed by settlers during the nineteenth century; and contemporary art as represented by Bonnie Devine’s recent projects. This exploration also has a personal dimension, for Anishinaabe visual culture and arts belong to the place that I, too, call home, and therefore necessitates a reflection on the narrow space between the bedrock of the Western art historical tradition and the hard place of accepting different Indigenous epistemologies with which many art historians in settler societies are now grappling.

Canadian Shield Rock Art

Rock paintings communicated not only through the power of images but also through the power of place. The sheer cliff faces on which rock paintings are found command attention in part because they contrast with the ubiquitous rounded contours of the rocky outcrops left behind by the retreat of the glaciers. Those who have studied rock paintings closely speak eloquently of the relationship between the paintings and their sites on the margins of land and water. In their book on the Agawa site, Thor and Julie Conway write:

Forget the pictographs for a moment and let your senses take over. Lake Superior has moods, feelings, and subtle influences on those who can stand still and let emotional forces take over. The pictograph site location can energize or calm us. The setting certainly leads us away from the 20th century into a more natural world. In some ways, a poet can get closer to the site than a scientist.⁸

They further explain that “great vertical cliffs were believed to be ‘cut rock’—powerful places where the earth’s energies

8 Thor Conway and Julie Conway, *Spirits on Stone: The Agawa Pictographs* (San Luis Obispo, CA: Heritage Discoveries, 1990) 11.

were exposed.”⁹ Along the same lines, Rajnovich observes that rock-painting sites are “places where sky, earth, water, underground, and underwater meet.... They allowed the manitous and medicine people to pass into each other’s worlds.”¹⁰

We also need to attend to Anishinaabe understandings of the materialities of rock art, for both stone and red ochre carry connotations of power. For millennia, Indigenous people across North America have regarded red ochre as a sacred material emblematic of blood and the life force, and have valued its protective and healing powers. They have painted their bodies and their clothing with red ochre and placed it in burials to protect the dead.¹¹ On some rock faces, washes of red ochre occur rather than paintings. Anishinaabe researcher Grace Seymour has explained that “the ‘wash’ denotes the special spirituality of the site.”¹² In English and other Western languages, however, stone carries connotations of impenetrability, inanimacy, and obduracy—qualities diametrically opposed to animacy and personhood. Talking to an unresponsive person is like “speaking to a stone.” To be lacking in empathy is to have a “heart of stone”; to try something impossible is like trying to squeeze “water from a rock.” In the traditional Anishinaabe world, in contrast, stone can be permeable and resonant of power. A. Irving Hallowell, one of the most perceptive students of Anishinaabe worldview, conducted fieldwork in Northern Ontario during the 1930s. In his classic essay on Ojibwe ontology, he reported an exchange he had with an elder who had pointed out a stone animated by thunderbird power: “I once asked an old man: Are *all* the stones we see about us here alive? He reflected a long while and then replied, ‘No! But *some* are.’”¹³ As Hallowell commented, “The Ojibwa do not perceive stones, in general, as animate, any more than we do. The crucial test is experience. Is there any personal testimony available?”¹⁴

9 Ibid.

10 Grace Rajnovich, *Reading Rock Art: Interpreting the Indian Rock Paintings of the Canadian Shield* (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History, 1994), 159.

11 Rajnovich, *Reading the Rocks*, 13

12 Quoted in Rajnovich, *Reading the Rocks*, 66.

13 A. Irving Hallowell, “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View” in *Contributions to Anthropology: Selected Papers of A. Irving Hallowell*, ed. Raymond Fogelson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 361.

14 Hallowell, “Ojibwe Ontology,” 363.

Such experience—knowledge of the presence of power and spirit in particular places—is acquired through observations of the special features of land and then detailed in dreams. Shamans—people with exceptional powers to dream in this way—are able to establish particularly effective communication with the other-than-human beings and gain from them knowledge of medicines. As Rajnovich explains:

“Medicine” had a great depth of meaning in traditional Indian usage. It meant something like “mystery” and “power” and included not only the activities of curing with tonics from plants and minerals, but also the receipt of powers from the manitous for healing, hunting, and battle. The most important step in the practice of medicine was communication between the practitioners and the *manitous*.¹⁵

Paintings on rocks, then, are representations of the experiences to which Hallowell refers, and they testify to the presence of other-than-human beings in those particular places.

A story told to a researcher in northern Manitoba in 1973 illustrates the relationship between shamanistic dreaming, the acquisition and use of power, and the making of rock paintings that must lie behind the many undocumented sites:

Years previously a woman was very sick. Her family asked an old man named Mistoos Muskego to cure her, upon which he tried many cures but they would not heal her. Finally the old man said the only hope was to go and ask “the men who lived in the rock” for more powerful medicines. He canoed to a cliff face and used his power to enter the rock, the home of the medicine *manitous*. They talked for a long time and the old healer was then given a medicine which eventually cured the woman. He said that everyone must remember the men in the rock, and the aid they offered to the people, so he took the people of his band back to the rock face and

drew a stick figure with line running from the head, giving a rabbit-eared appearance.¹⁶

The image, Rajnovich argues, must have resembled the rabbit-eared men found at other sites.

The individual nature of the experiences that led to the making of paintings on rock explains the highly varied repertoire of the rock art lexicon. We can sample this repertoire by looking in more detail at the famous paintings at Agawa Bay on the northern shore of Lake Superior. The nineteen panels of images that have been identified at Agawa include some of the most visually compelling and best-documented paintings in the Canadian Shield. Travelers in the Great Lakes from the mid-seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries mention seeing or hearing about rock paintings, but the most detailed account was given in the 1840s to Henry Schoolcraft, the Indian agent at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, by the prominent Anishinaabe chief Shingwauk (Shingwaukonce), whose community was located near Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, 130 kilometers east of Agawa Bay. Schoolcraft was a keen amateur ethnographer and included Shingwauk’s account in his pioneering compilation of ethnographic and archaeological information about Great Lakes peoples.¹⁷ It describes both the images that had been painted on the rock by an Anishinaabe shaman and warrior named Myeengun (The Wolf) and the more recent paintings Shingwauk himself had made. He identified Myeengun as a man “of much skill and secret power,” a shaman who “acquired influence, and crossed Lake Superior in canoes...this exploit was considered as a direct evidence of the influence of his gods, and it gave him so much credit that he determined to perpetuate the memory of it by a Muz-sin-a-bik-on. He made two inscriptions, one on the south and the other on the north shore of the lake. Both were on the precipitous faces of rocks.”¹⁸

Schoolcraft never saw the original rock paintings Shingwauk had drawn, and they remained unknown to outsiders until Selwyn Dewdney located the Agawa site in 1958. Through his

16 Ibid., 42.

17 Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, with illustrations by Capt Seth Eastman (published by authority of Congress, 6 vols., 1851–57).

18 Quoted in Conway and Conway, *Spirits in Stone*, 58.

discussions with Shingwauk's grandson, Fred Pine, and other elders, Conway was able to date and establish the historical references and purpose of Myeengun's paintings. The artist was almost certainly the chief recorded as "Mahingan" who signed the 1701 treaty known as the Great Peace of Montreal with the beaver *dodem* of the Amikwa Anishinaabeg who lived at the northeastern end of Lake Huron. Myeengun used his shamanic powers to predict the coming of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) warriors who were waging an aggressive war for dominance of the fur trade in the central Great Lakes during the mid-seventeenth century. Calling on the powers of the great underwater beings, Myeengun caused the invaders to drown in their canoes. As Fred Pine told Conway, "Oh, that Michipeshu, the big lynx with the horns. He's up north here. None of the underwater creatures were dangerous for the medicine men.... But Michipeshu and the giant serpents were here to protect their tribe."¹⁹

The defeat of the Haudenosaunee would have occurred between 1650 and 1662, enabling the Conways to conclude that "Myeengun was an Amikwa leader from northeastern Lake Huron, who was displaced to the Lake Superior area during the Iroquois wars of the seventeenth century. At that time, he battled the Iroquois on eastern Lake Superior and made a commemorative pictograph panel during a ritual after the event."²⁰ Myeengun painted not only the other-than-human protector of his war party, but also the party itself, which appears as a group of four vertically stacked canoes led by their *dodemag*. The crane represents Shingwauk's community at Sault Ste Marie; the eagle or thunderbird, the Mississaugas then living on the north shore of Lake Huron; and the beaver Myeengun's own people on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay. In Fred Pine's account, Myeengun was able to rally these distant nations through magical powers of long-distance messaging. Myeengun's rock paintings thus comprise a kind of history painting that commemorates a great victory in war accomplished through a shaman's ability to enlist the aid of the powerful underwater beings at the place where they reside.

The paintings Shingwauk made at Agawa illustrate a third cultural-ritual context that could stimulate the making of a rock painting. The panel consists of a horse and rider and a small

19 Conway and Conway, *Spirits in Stone*, 60.

20 *ibid.*, 61.

insect above a row of four circles and two broad arcs. These motifs record not an historical event, but the great powers possessed by Shingwauk himself. Fred Pine told Conway that the horse and rider are dream images from a vision quest, and the archaeologist has been able to relate the row of circles and the cross to Shingwauk’s high rank and powers within the Midewiwin society. The insect, a louse, represents Shingwauk’s magical shape-changing abilities. As Pine recounted, “He could transform himself into any animal. One way he travelled and hid from his enemies was by becoming a louse. When he changed into a louse, nobody could recognize him.”²¹

Few rock painting panels can be dated so accurately or attributed to particular artists. This is not surprising, for in their own time they were not intended to be read in such specific and literal ways by casual viewers. Because the details of encounters with other-than-human beings had to be kept private in order to retain their power, rock art images are profoundly narrative while at the same time withholding the details of the stories to which they refer. They proclaim the painter’s access to power while retaining the mystery of that power, and they affirm a degree of human control and achievement in a universe controlled by beings whose powers are far greater. Fred Pine summarized the interactive nature of rock painting, which links humans to places and places to powers, when he told Thor Conway: “When I see one of these marks, I know what it is right away. But there’s more meaning to it. It’s like shorthand. You have to dream about it. It’s an effort on your soul by the spirits.”²² In the past, members of Anishinaabe communities would have understood many of the general references of this shorthand. Many no longer do, and such understandings are even rarer in settler society. The restoration of the field of common reference is a classic Panofskian project, and a contribution that art historians can make which will be valued if managed with respect for areas of Indigenous knowledge today regarded as private, proprietary or sacred.

²¹ Ibid., 32.

²² Ibid., 43

Mississauga Topographies and Transformations

The different styles in which rock art thunderbirds, eagle *do-demag*, and contemporary First Nations graphic symbols have been drawn are the visual indicators of centuries of rupture and cultural trauma—and also of the extraordinary efforts of will which have kept the fundamental concepts alive. I have long found haunting a passage in Donald Smith’s biography of a prominent Mississauga man of that period, the Reverend Peter Jones, because it suggests how people experienced dislocation from the lands that conferred on them their fundamental identities. Jones was born in 1802 to the daughter of Wabenose, one of the Mississauga chiefs who would sign the Toronto purchase, and Welsh surveyor Augustus Jones, who was engaged in the quintessentially colonial project of dividing land into saleable property. Peter Jones’s Anishinaabe name, Kakewaquonaby, or Sacred Feathers, directly referenced the Mississauga eagle *do-dem*, and he was given both a traditional Anishinaabe upbringing and an English education. He reached adolescence, the time when young Anishinaabe men first sought the protection of a *manitou*, during the War of 1812. The Mississauga lands at Burlington Bay were at the heart of the conflict, and the Burlington Heights—the cliff-rimmed isthmus that lies between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie—became the site of a military encampment and a major battle. The Mississauga believed that the caves and hollows of Burlington Heights were, as Jones later wrote, “the homes of many manitous.”²³ They would have been favored places for the pursuit of the vision quest and the creation of rock paintings. “During these troubled times,” Smith writes, “Sacred Feathers went on his first vision quests”:

The arrival of white settlers, then this incredible war, had rendered the Mississaugas’ universe unrecognizable. Although the spirit world was real to him, Sacred Feathers never experienced a vision. The Indians believed that after the arrival of the white settlers, many of the spirits had left. The water creature living on the Credit river had taken his leave in a tremendous flood, retreating into Lake Ontario when the white people began taking salmon from the river. Sim-

ilarly, the supernatural beings in the caves at the Head of the Lake, who made noises like the volley of gunfire, had left for the interior when the alien presence approached.²⁴

Throughout southern Ontario, and, in due course, in other areas, similar failures of belief and practice occurred when the relationships to space and place to which they were integral failed. Within a few years, Kakewaquonaby converted to Methodism and devoted his life both to converting his fellow Mississaugas to Christianity and to securing their remaining land rights.

Two well-known portraits of Jones evidence the conceptual shift entailed by the new concepts of land imposed by the settler world to which Indigenous peoples had to adjust during the first half of the nineteenth century. In both, land is represented as landscape, a transformation that was paralleled by the legal-political transfers accomplished by the land surrenders being signed in rapid succession across southern Ontario during those years. In the earlier portrait, a miniature painted in England in 1832, Jones is shown in front of two contrasting landscape vignettes: the old world of the wigwam, nomadic hunting, and the untamed forest on the right, and the new world of the frame house, land ownership, and cleared fields on the left. In a photographic portrait made in Edinburgh a decade later, Jones poses in front of a painted forest backdrop supplied by the photographer’s studio. In both cases, the British portraitists stereotype, sentimentalize, and exoticize their subject to varying degrees. In both, the land becomes a background, a backdrop, a painted screen spatially separated from the human presence. Thus objectified, the land becomes controllable, subject to dominant human agency.

The psychic toll taken by the rapidity of change during the first half of the nineteenth century can only be imagined, but portraits such as these provide clues. We know from letters Jones wrote during his later Edinburgh sojourn that he hated having to act the savage Indian by wearing what he called the “odious Indian costume” his audiences expected to see.²⁵ Yet at the same

24 Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kakewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 35.

25 Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 204.

time, he wears his identity on his body in proud and deliberate ways—in his inclusion of the woven sash and chief’s medal in the miniature, and in the images embroidered in prominent positions on his fringed hide coat: eagles and serpents are locked in their cosmic battle on the lapels, while the cuffs display the classic meander lines that form the tail of the underwater panther. Despite the sincerity of Jones’s Methodist beliefs, the beings who had fled the cliffs and caves of the Mississauga homelands remain present in such visual reifications.

Bonnie Devine’s “Battle for the Woodlands”

The Canadian Shield is rich in minerals, resources that continue to be a mainstay of the Canadian economy. Rather than finding medicine power in the rock through mystical transformations, settlers found ores and extracted them through physical and chemical transformations that are often irreversible. Bonnie Devine is a member of the Serpent River First Nation on the north shore of Georgian Bay, Lake Huron, and shares its crane *dodem*. Over the past century and a half, Serpent River has felt the impact of natural resource industries and the changes they bring, from commercial fishing to the railroad, logging, roadways, and mining. The discovery of uranium at nearby Elliot Lake in the 1950s threatened the community’s survival in unprecedented ways. Health problems began when a sulfuric acid plant was built on the reserve to supply the mine and became worse when the plant closed a decade later; the setting of an explosion intended to dismantle it spread toxic waste throughout the reserve. The explosion made the land radioactive while the waste from the mine’s tailings ponds poisoned the river and made the fish inedible.

Devine retains vivid childhood memories of the mounds of glowing yellow sulfur that stood on the reserve. They struck her as beautiful and, she says with a dead-serious irony, “I think this is why I became an artist.”²⁶ Her extensive research into uranium mining for her master’s thesis led to a sustained drawing project and to her 2004 exhibition *Stories from the Shield*, in which she exhibited a fragile seventeen-foot-long canoe made out of the handwritten pages of her thesis research alongside seventy-eight of her drawings bound into three books, or codices, entitled *Radiation*, *Radiance*, and *Transformation*. The drawings ex-

press the terrible beauty of the landscape of her childhood and invite comparison with Edward Burtinsky's photograph of a tailings pond at the Elliott Lake uranium mine. Both wield the attractive power of beauty as an activist strategy and a weapon. Anishinaabe artist and curator Robert Houle drew other comparisons in his catalogue essay for Devine's show, seeing strong parallels to the pictographic traditions of rock painting and the Midewiwin scrolls. He points to the narrative quality and mnemonic intent of her images. "As threatening as those found in the sacred scrolls, in the pictographs and petroglyphs of the Canadian Shield," he wrote, "the Devine scroll sheets are drawn in a cryptic calligraphy illustrating the forewarned disaster dream sequence as a sudden burst of light in the evening sky at Rooster Rock."²⁷

Four years later, in her exhibition *Writing Home: The Art of Bonnie Devine*, the artist addressed the rocky terrain of Serpent River with a new literalness, grappling with its materiality and meaning with extraordinary force and focus.²⁸ The project also called forth innovative techniques for recording the presence and potential of the rock. "It came to me some time ago that the rock up here has something to tell," she wrote, "and so I have come to listen and watch and somehow, if I can devise a way, record what it will say. I have been thinking about wetting down sheets of cotton paper and stretching them over the rock face until they are dry and stiff enough to be peeled away... to record what the river writes. *Letters From Home* is the name I've been thinking of calling these papers."²⁹ She illustrated her process with digital slides and displayed glass castings of the rock whose transparency and luminescence suggested the spiritual essences her ancestors had found within. The centerpieces of the exhibition were four diptychs that juxtaposed photographs of rock with a series of written and stitched letters. While the photographs evoked a sense of the living rock, rich in color and texture and potent with emergent *manitou*-like forms, the letters combined lines of written script with enig-

27 Robert Houle, "Dibaajimowin/Storytelling," in *Stories from the Shield: Bonnie Devine*, by Bonnie Devine, Tom Hill, Robert Houle, and Diane Pugen (Brantford, ON: The Woodland Cultural Centre, 2004), n.p.

28 The exhibition *Bonnie Devine: Writing Home* was curated by Faye Heavyshield for Gallery Connexion Fredericton NB and shown there from February 2 to March 21, 2008, and at Urban Shaman in Winnipeg from February 12 to March 27, 2010.

29 "Bonnie Devine: Àn Artist Statement," in exhibition pamphlet for *Writing Home: The Art of Bonnie Devine*, n.p. Available from <http://www.cacnart.com/#!/bonnie-devine/ccbe> (accessed 22 August 2015.)

matic, parallel wavy lines of red thread stitched through the paper.³⁰ These elements came together to suggest the fluidity of text, image, and materiality in the construction of home. As curator Faye Heavyshield wrote in the exhibition brochure, “*Writing Home* merges absence and presence...words become threads and the rock transformed into the lens of glass remains the rock.”³¹ In some of her letters, Devine incorporated painted images that are recognizably derived from the pictographic vocabulary of *dodemag* and rock paintings—a crane-like bird, a long-tailed being, a man wearing a top hat, a divided circle.

These beings return, greatly enlarged, in “The Battle for the Woodlands,” the installation curator Andrew Hunter commissioned Devine to create in 2014 for the Art Gallery of Ontario’s Canadian wing. Devine chose an alcove that had been designed for a previous exhibition of nineteenth-century art entitled *Constructing Canada* and retained its mural-sized enlargement of a nineteenth-century map of Ontario. In overpainting it with Bison, Otter, Turtle, Mishipishu, and the great trickster Nanabush to figure the five Great Lakes, she reclaims the land as an Anishinaabe place from its European cartographic rendering. Yet these images do not seem firmly fixed in the space of the map; they appear, rather, to fall, hang, and slide off it, and to be constrained by the beaded bands that run across its surface, representing treaty belts that mark off ceded territories. On the wall to the “east” of the map, Devine depicts ships bringing soldiers and settlers. To the “west,” battles rage between Indian warriors and European soldiers. Painted in a naive style on pages torn from historical novels, they recall both nineteenth-century Plains ledger-book paintings and the illustrations in children’s books. In the first phase of the installation, Devine paired her wall paintings with a sculptural floor piece entitled “Treaty Robe for Tecumseh.” Wrapped in his Union Jack robe, the great Shawnee leader who rallied the First Nations to hold the line against further white encroachment during the War of 1812, dragged behind him the heavy train of treaty belts that had already been exchanged.

In 2015, Devine completed the second iteration of her installation (Fig. 2). She added a new group of spirit animals representing the Anishinaabe who moved west under pressure from eastern settlers, and she replaced “Treaty Robe for Tecumseh” with

30 Ibid.

31 Faye Heavyshield, in *Writing Home: The Art of Bonnie Devine*.



2. Bonnie Devine, *The Battle for the Woodlands, Anishinaabitude, and Objects to Clothe the Warriors*, Art Gallery of Ontario, 2015.
Photo: Ruth Phillips

two further additions. The new floor piece, entitled “Anishinaabitude,” consists of three figures woven with traditional basketry techniques out of commercial fibers and twigs collected from her own Serpent River First Nation, the Walpole Island First Nation (said to be the burial place of Tecumseh), and the Don River, which flows through traditional Mississauga lands in the heart of Toronto. These figures introduce a living presence into the gallery while also suggesting a quality of timelessness. The second addition, “Objects to Clothe the Warriors” are garments made in honor of three great Indigenous leaders of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Tecumseh, the Odawa chief Pontiac, and the Oglala/Lakota warrior Crazy Horse. As Devine has explained, “They have been positioned to be easily at hand should these warriors return to continue their resistance, their spirits newly clothed to join the ongoing battle for the Woodlands.”³²

New Worlds:
Frontiers,
Inclusion,
Utopias

Devine’s development of “The Battle for the Woodlands” traces a movement from histories that highlight the active resistance

32 Quoted from Devine’s original text. Edited to read: “They are hung to be easily accessible should these warriors return to join in the ongoing battle for the Woodlands”

to land loss of past generations to a future she makes present only as a potentiality. The battle for the Woodlands is not in the past, she tells us, but “ongoing”; the great leaders may yet return. Her points of departure, which have informed the work throughout, are the dual images of Indigenous and Western concepts of land glued to and painted on the wall. Her wall paintings, she says, are a “symbolic gesture of acknowledgement...I wanted to talk about the land...as a being with whom we are in a reciprocal relationship...and also...to allude to the pictorial tradition, the pictographs on the cliff.”³³ She also articulates the essential difference that keeps separate the underlying and over-painted images: “We’ve made marks not on canvas but on the rocks themselves, as marks of presences, not of ownership.”³⁴ In insisting that there is an alternative to “ownership” and the uncontrolled and destructive exploitation of land, Devine’s work—like Peter Jones’s coat—instantiates the quality Anishinaabe literary scholar Gerald Vizenor has called “survivance,” a quality of resistance and active presence which Indigenous peoples have maintained for four centuries against the heaviest of odds.³⁵

Settler-Colonial Art History

When art historians come together today, anywhere in the Americas, to discuss “concepts of space and place and the political meanings associated with such ideas,” we inevitably engage with the new iteration of our discipline that is beginning to respond to Indigenous “survivance.” New Zealand art historian Damian Skinner has termed this approach “settler-colonial art history,” and defined it in ethical and epistemological terms “as an explanation and primary dynamic shaping art, but also as a possible method for breaking down the unholy alliance of art history and the nation state.”³⁶ Settler art history, he argues, is a subset of postcolonial studies that is distinctive in a number of important ways. Unlike external colonies which expelled their former colonizers and are now self-governing—such as

33 Personal communication, interview with the artist, 23 October 2014, Toronto.

34 Ibid.

35 Gerald Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses: Native American Indian Scenes of Absence and Presence* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 15.

36 Damian Skinner, “Settler-Colonial Art History: A Proposition in Two Parts,” *Journal of Canadian Art History* 35, no. 1 (2014): 132.

India, Indonesia, or Senegal—settler societies must confront the failure of centuries-old policies designed to absorb, assimilate, or destroy their internally colonized Indigenous minorities. In Canada, New Zealand, and elsewhere, there is a growing consciousness that the places settlers call home were taken from their original inhabitants by theft, deception, and violence. Visitors to the *Nation to Nation* exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian, for example, are told a history of progressive betrayal of land surrender treaties negotiated in good faith during the early years of contact and, in later years, under duress.³⁷ As they leave the exhibition, they are reminded that all non-Indigenous Americans are “treaty people”—whether they arrived on an airplane a year ago or are descended from ancestors who spent weeks and months crossing oceans in ships. In the same vein, visitors to *Picturing the Americas* at the Art Gallery of Ontario encountered, on exiting the exhibition, an enlarged reproduction of the Toronto purchase of 1805 and video interviews in which Indigenous historians and artists discuss identity, land, and relationships to place.

Theorists of indigeneity have demonstrated the dialectical relationship between the constructs of indigene and settler—one, obviously, cannot exist without the other. But both Indigenous and settler identities are also the products of deep processes of cultural exchange and intermixture consisting of appropriations, adoptions, resistances, and mimics, all informed by radical imbalances of power. In the course of their different but intertwined anti-colonial struggles, settler artists have often sought to indigenize themselves through appropriations of Aboriginal art forms, while Indigenous artists have accepted the universalist promises of artistic modernism and deployed Western art practices as powerful weapons of decolonization and reclamation. “Making settler colonialism visible,” writes Skinner, “necessitates an awareness of the conflicting tendencies that fracture the settler collective: the desire for indigenization and national autonomy sits uneasily with the desire to replicate a European, civilized lifestyle.”³⁸

37 The exhibition runs from September 2014 to Fall 2018. See Suzan Shown Harjo ed., *Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2014)

38 Skinner, “Settler-Colonial Art History,” 140.

The reverse action of “to colonize” is “to decolonize,” a term often heard these days in Indigenous North American political and art worlds. Bonnie Devine’s artist’s statements express the tension entailed in decolonization which arises from the need to use Western disciplines, epistemologies, and techniques of historical and art-historical research in order to recover Indigenous philosophies, epistemologies, and traditions of visualization. “As a First Nations woman,” she has written, “I am interested in the oppositions inherent in the terms history and memory, science and mythology, art and artifact, and these oppositions and their cultural antecedents form the basis of much of my work.”³⁹ She also makes clear that erasing the erasures of the colonial past is at the heart of her decolonizing project: “My work attempts to trace the absence of the Anishnaabek in these territories using the colonial mapping and claiming techniques that have strategically served to erase their history and the Indigenous methods of mark-making and mapping that reassert it.”⁴⁰ Her strategies use the familiar in order to defamiliarize—re-forming the written pages of her thesis research into a canoe, re-rendering written letters as lines of stitches. Such acts are both cancellations and retrievals; they explore processes of visualization that turn words into images and images into words.

The eminent Anishinaabe writer Louise Erdrich has also meditated on the bicultural conundrum in a small and lovely memoir entitled *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country: Traveling in the Lands of my Ancestors*. She recounts a summer canoe trip among the 14,000 islands of the Lake of the Woods. “Some of them are painted islands,” she writes, “the rocks bearing signs ranging from a few hundred to more than a thousand years old. So these islands, which I’m longing to read, are books in themselves.” Erdrich sees offerings left on rock ledges beneath the paintings and thinks about the beliefs in spirit presences that inspired them in relation to her own Western cultural and academic formation. She writes:

There was a time when I wondered: do I really believe all of this? I’m half-German. Rational! Does this make any sense? After a while, such ques-

39 Bonnie Devine, “Artist Statement” for *Writing Home*.

40 Ibid.

tions stopped mattering. Believing or not believing, it was all the same. I found myself compelled to behave toward the world as if it contained sentient spiritual beings. The question of whether or not they *actually* existed became irrelevant. After I’d stopped thinking about it for a while, the ritual of offering tobacco became comforting and then necessary. Whenever I offered tobacco, I was for that moment fully here, fully thinking, willing to address the mystery.⁴¹

Erdrich’s response to the dilemma of the rock and the hard place—the challenge of reconciling Western and Indigenous epistemologies—is, then, a kind of suspension of disbelief achieved by opening herself to the possibility of a radically other worldview. She also thinks through the difference between her ability to grasp this worldview and that of her partner, a fluent speaker of Anishinaabemowin brought up on the lake in the traditions of Anishinaabe civilization: “He knows the lake in a way that only Indigenous people can truly know anywhere. His people were the lake; the lake was them. At one time, everyone who lived near the lake was essentially made of the lake. As the people lived off fish, animals, the lake’s water, and water plants for medicine, they were literally cell by cell composed of the lake and the lake’s islands.” She seeks knowledge of Anishinaabemowin in order to gain access to this worldview:

The word for stone, *asin*, is animate. After all, the preexistence of the world according to Ojibwe religion consisted of a conversation between stones. People speak to and thank the stones in the sweat lodge, where the *asiniig* are superheated and used for healing. They are addressed as grandmothers and grandfathers. Once I began to think of stones as animate, I started to wonder whether I was picking up a stone or it was putting itself into my hand. Stones are no longer the same as they were to me in English.⁴²

41 Louise Erdrich, *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country: Traveling in the Land of My Ancestors* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2003), 16.

42 Erdrich, *Books and Islands*, 86.

Erdrich’s journey is a reclaiming of Indigenous worldview, but one she consciously keeps in tension with a Western worldview acquired both through enforced acculturation and by right of blood.

The settler’s claims, however, are differently grounded, for the silences of colonial history mystify the question of the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the settler’s tenure. Is a similar dual consciousness possible or desirable for the settler? The settler art historian, as Carla Taunton and Leah Decter argue, must begin by decolonizing herself, by realizing that we are all “beneficiaries of colonialism who continue to be part of settling, and thereby occupying, Indigenous territories.”⁴³ The second task is to become conscious of the ways in which art historical discourses have supported colonial dispossession and violence in critically important ways—how, through colonialism, Western visualizations of space and place have replaced those of Indigenous people through acts of silencing, decontextualization, and marginalization. As Skinner writes, “It was not enough to assert legal processes that transferred ownership from Indigenous peoples to settler populations, or to create and manage social processes of dispossession. The land itself also had to be reimagined and remade, and in this process, the ideologies of race and the organization of space became intertwined, based on the remarkable commonality that both are conceived of as natural, given, and elemental.”⁴⁴

The recognition of such processes is a notable achievement of poststructuralist and postcolonial art historical work, as exemplified in Canada by the extensive critique of the iconic status of the landscapes of the Group of Seven.⁴⁵ We have come to understand how the Western genre of landscape served as a primary site for this reimagining and remaking of land by rendering it objectifiable, and therefore divisible, commodifiable, and possessable. Deconstruction, however, cannot be an end in itself. It is, rather, a stage in the development of a new construct that better fits current needs. I pointed to the problematic nature of the characterization of rock painting as “art” at

43 Carla Taunton and Leah Decter, “Addressing the Settler Problem,” *Fuse Magazine*, November 1, 2013, accessed August 10, 2015. http://fusemagazine.org/2013/11/36-4_decter-taunton.

44 Skinner, “Settler-Colonial Art History,” 136.

45 See, for example, John O’Brian and Peter White eds., *Beyond Wilderness: The Group of Seven, Canadian Identity and Contemporary Art* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007).

the beginning of this paper, and similar problems have emerged in relation to Western constructs of “history” and “land,” as well as to standard Western genres of the portrait, the still life, and the history painting. If we cannot expect Indigenous thought-worlds to be conformable to and containable within Western understandings of these genres and terms—if we cannot produce inclusivity merely by extending the mantle of the Western genres over things that seem to resemble them from other parts of the world—what kind of common conceptual vocabulary can serve the needs of a world art history?⁴⁶

The further challenge that confronts us involves not merely the reconstruction of art histories that have been unwritten or marginalized, but, rather, the taking on of their epistemological and ontological differences, their radically different understandings of space, place, and the ways human beings are positioned in relation to them. This task cannot be accomplished by well-intentioned settler art historians on their own. If the Indigenous and the settler-colonial summon each other dialectically, then a settler-colonial art history requires the complement of an Indigenous art history. A rising generation of Indigenous art historians trained in Western conventions but committed to survivance and the reclamation of Indigenous worldviews has begun to enter the academy. And although their work is necessarily complicated by the dual traditions to which they are heir, a distinct Indigenous art historical discourse is nascent. Fluid and difficult to characterize at present, it is taking shape as part of a larger political and cultural project of decolonization.

In twenty-first-century Canada, settlers and Indigenous peoples are not only divided, but also united—profoundly, indivisibly, fatally, hopefully—by their shared sense of space and place. The threat of global environmental disaster is proving to be a meeting ground, engendering new kinds of political alliances. An art history informed by Indigenous understandings of land and the powers integral to place can support this urgent project and, at the same time, move toward its own decolonization.

46 On landscape as a genre, see my essay “Indigenous Lands/Settler Landscapes: Art Histories Out of Joint,” in *Picturing the Americas. Landscape Painting from Tierra Del Fuego to the Arctic*, ed. Peter John Brownlee, Valéria Piccoli, and Georgiana Uhlyarik (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press and co-publishers, 2015), 92–98; and on portraiture, “From Harmony to Antiphony: The Indigenous Presence in a (Future) Portrait Gallery of Canada,” in Ruth B. Phillips, *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenousization of Canadian Museums* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2011), 231–251.

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Between Rocks
and Hard Places:
Indigenous Lands,
Settler Art Histories,
and the “Battle for
the Woodlands”

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Ruth Phillips

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Transdisciplinary, Transcultural, and Transhistorical Challenges of World Art Historiography

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I. Borders, frontiers, limits, and migration

The contemporary political context of this publication's topic, "New Worlds: Frontiers, Inclusion, Utopias," is the increasing worldwide migration. A 2013 United Nations report estimated that about 232 million refugees—3.2 percent of the world population—are migrating from their politically insecure and economically weak home countries to apparently safer places.¹ National borders, and their related cultural frontiers, mark the migrants' horizon of expectation for better living conditions. But crossing these borders is difficult. Borders are zones of conflict, frictions, and even rejection. Crossing borders is often forbidden or conditioned by restrictions and obligations.

Those who live comfortably behind the borders often regard migrants as intruders and only accept them if they assimilate completely to the host country's social and cultural standards. Thus, migrants have to adapt their abilities and customs to the setting of the homogeneous "gated community" that receives them. This means that the cultural standards behind the frontiers are common to more people, and become centralized models of collective behavior.

This outline of current migration processes reveals similarities to international academic migration in the humanities in particular, which is the focus of my contribution in art history. Since its origins in the mid-nineteenth century, this discipline has been European-centered. Yet since the second half of the twentieth century, some major U.S. universities have questioned this Euro-centric orientation and have claimed worldwide academic leadership. The mapping of art historiographies divides our discipline into center and periphery. The U.S. and some European countries are at the center, and the periphery is the rest of the world. The discursive and political power of the intellectual centers makes them attractive for academic migrants from the peripheral countries. Grants, internships, and job offers at U.S. universities and museums, for instance, promise better living and working conditions for many academics from the so-called Global South, formerly called the "Third World." But like political and economic refugees, these academic migrants have to

1 *UN Report on Migration*, 2013, accessed August 17, 2015. <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/wallchart/index.shtml>.

adapt by reducing their diversity of thinking—at least to some extent—and, in many cases, minimizing the use of their native languages. Some do not pass the borders, and stay with frustrated expectations in their home countries. Those who succeed in crossing the frontiers and integrating themselves in the new context may not wish to return to their home countries.

Like the global political situation, academic migration is characterized by a paradox. On the one hand, many walls and frontiers have been torn down since the fall of the Soviet bloc. In many European countries, save for the United Kingdom, people can travel without passport control.² Thus, the utopia of unlimited mobility has partially become reality. But according to the provocative research of urban sociologist Mike Davis, never have there been so many walls and frontiers built worldwide as after 1989. Although the famous Berlin wall was reduced to a fragmented historical artifact, the Mexican–U.S. border is an outstanding example of this tendency to build walls and create gated communities at all levels, from urban to national.

However, no artificial frontier resists the flow of migrants, as the huge and fortified Mexican–U.S. border demonstrates. Globalization finds a way, not only in the exportation of commercial goods, but also in the uncontrolled flows of migrants. And this generates new, hybrid forms of social and cultural confluence. For art historiography—and this is my central hypothesis—that confluence is an advantage, because it changes perspectives, generating new insights beyond any one-dimensional nationalist determinations in the asymmetrical give and take within academic exchanges.³

But the conditions of the migratory academic exchange should be revised, because they are still determined by neo-colonial—not “post-colonial”—relations between center and periphery.

The desired “inclusion,” to quote the subtitle of this publication (and colloquium), is a complex and contradictory process with many conceptual traps. Migration and hybrid development of cultural knowledge cannot be limited by borders. Digital devic-

2 The so-called Schengen rule, which as of fall 2015, has been suspended in order to control the mobility of Islamic terrorists.

3 On the advantages and disadvantages of cultural and academic transfers, see Alexander Kostka, “Transfer,” *Kritische Berichte* 3 (2007): 15–18.

es strengthen the free global exchange of ideas and widen the horizons through which we understand art and visual cultures. But, as Monica Juneja has pointed out, the globalization of art history is not a mere affirmative operation in the digital age. It does not celebrate the naive cult of rapid information exchange, which seemingly deterritorializes academic production.⁴ On the contrary, global electronic flux easily leads to the “reaffirmation of other kinds of difference” and promotes reterritorialization.⁵ Moreover, the production and reception of art historical knowledge can strengthen neo-colonial disparities; in the words of Juneja: “Today we encounter a new divide between those who enjoy access to authoritative knowledge about art and share the values of autonomy and transgression ascribed to it, and those who do not.”⁶

An important counterpart to any centralization and monopolization of art historiography in the U.S. and northern Europe is established by the International Committee of Art History (CIHA), which supports the collective, pluralist, and non-colonial redesign of the academic world map in art historiography. During the last decade, CIHA has integrated colleagues from China, South Africa, India, and Brazil, countries that have developed art historical research only rarely perceived through the filters of hegemonic discourse. A significant intermediate step in the process of globally redefining art history was taken at the 2008 CIHA congress in Melbourne dealing with the topic of “crossing cultures.”⁷ Scholars from around the world who presented papers there collectively constructed a new network of art historical knowledge, which in some respects revives one developed at the origin of our discipline in the mid-nineteenth century, when Franz Kugler presented his comprehensive world

4 Monica Juneja, “Kunstgeschichte und Kulturelle Differenz. Eine Einleitung,” *Kritische Berichte* 2 (2012): 6–12, especially 11. Juneja here criticizes Arjun Appadurai’s (“Dis-juncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy” in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, 27–47 [Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996]) notion of “deterritorialization” via worldwide electronic interchange.

5 Monica Juneja, “Global Art History and the ‘Burden of Representation,’” in *Global Studies: Mapping Contemporary Art and Culture*, ed. Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg (Stuttgart: Hatje Cantz, 2011), 274–297, especially 275.

6 Juneja, “Global Art History,” 276.

7 Jaynie Anderson, ed., *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence. The Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress in the History of Art (CIHA; The University of Melbourne, 13–18 January 2008)* (Victoria: The Miegunyah Press, 2009).

art history.⁸ That conceptual heritage was later ignored as art history developed as an academic discipline.

Returning to these roots, expanding the scope of the objects—a topic dealt with at the 2012 CIHA congress in Nürnberg⁹—as well as fostering plural and diverse analytical methods has been the central thread of the 2015 CBHA colloquium on “New Worlds: Frontiers, Inclusion, Utopias.” This academic initiative to revise the contemporary geography of knowledge in our discipline, reviewing in particular the relations between North and South America, helps to decentralize and reorganize art historical discourses.

Before I outline some of the options and challenges of contemporary global art history, I must briefly describe some of the obstacles that must be addressed and resolved.

There is a coincidence of the transnational migration of knowledge production in art history and the migration of images. In a short article titled “Migrating Images: Totemism, Fetishism, Idolatry,”¹⁰ William J.T. Mitchell explained how migrating images across the cultures and epochs must overcome obstacles guarded by a “border police” which sometimes rejects or even destroys them along the diverse paths by which images circulate to new geographical and conceptual destinations; during this process, they may be colonized. Implicitly based on Aby Warburg’s idea of the images’ “hiking trails” (*Wanderwege der Bilder*), Mitchell shows how circulating images and idols redefine cultural territories, and how these gated communities develop mechanisms of imperial control which converts unwelcome objects.

This structural condition also characterizes mainstream art historiography, which, in Juneja’s opinion, is “complicit with practices of inclusion and exclusion,” determined by a globalized “conceptual imperialism.”¹¹

8 Franz Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*. (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1842).

9 *The Challenge of the Object. Die Herausforderung des Objekts. 33rd Congress of the International Committee of the History of Art. 33. Internationaler Kunsthistoriker-Kongress. Nürnberg, 15-20. Juli 2012 Congress Proceedings. (4 vols.)*, eds. Ulrich G. Grossmann and Petra Krutisch (Nuremberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, 2014).

10 William J.T. Mitchell, “Migrating Images: Totemism, Fetishism, Idolatry,” in *Migrating Images. Producing ... Reading ... Transporting ... Translating*, eds. Petra Stegman and Peter C. Seel (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2004), 14–24.

11 Juneja, “Global Art History,” 278–279. Juneja even speaks of an “epistemological violence” in these processes.

Fortunately, this is not the predominant condition of academic migration from the Global South to the discursive centers. But the free circulation of interpretative ideas in our discipline can be restricted to homogenized standards of thinking. In many cases, the selection of objects and themes of art historical research, teaching, and distribution through books and exhibitions are not obvious acts of censorship. But the decision about what is important to review, publish, and expose is based on implicit neo-colonial mechanisms. To give an example: in some cases, Latin American art still suffers an ideological devaluation as tropical, irrational kitsch. Or it is labeled, integrated, and reduced to a “multicultural commodity fetishism,”¹² where the “other,” non-European or non-U.S. art production is seen as an ethnically authentic expression, but not recognized as a cultural product on the same level as that occurring in the so-called First World.¹³

Another obstacle to an open-minded global art history is the selection of key objects of art history in the global academic centers. To give one example from my field of research, architectural, urban, and landscape history in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: for a long time, the work of the outstanding Brazilian landscape architect and artist Roberto Burle Marx was ignored by the U.S.-American and European landscape planning historiography.

This is only one of many examples that show the continuity of traditional and anachronistic centralism in art historical thinking. This alone gives us reason enough to support CIHA's and CBHA's initiatives to decentralize the discourses, producing a more balanced writing of world art history.¹⁴ That undertaking will not be an encyclopedic accumulation of national and nationalist art histories, but a critical, interrelated academic enterprise, without neo-colonial implications.

12 Kobena Mercer, “Ethnicity and Internationality: New British Art and Diaspora-Based Blackness,” *Third Text: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art & Culture*, 13, no. 49 (Winter 1999/2000): 51-62, reference of p. 57; Juneja, “Global Art History,” 274.

13 Peter Krieger, “Revolución y Colonialismo en las Artes Visuales—El Paradigma de la *Documenta*,” *Universidad de México*, 617 (November 2002), 89–92.

14 For different views on world art history: Ulrich Pfisterer, “Origins and Principles of World Art History: 1900 (and 2000)” in *World Art Studies: Exploring Concepts and Approaches*, ed. Kitty Zijlmans and Wilfried van Damme, (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2008), 69–89; David Summers, *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of the Western Modernism* (London: Phaidon, 2003); *Is Art History Global?* James Elkins, ed., (London, New York: Routledge, 2007); see also the critical revision of these titles in the two quoted texts of Monica Juneja.

This enterprise, however, is determined by the negative impact of globalization and its ideological frontiers. They create other obstacles to a comprehensive vision. Commerce impairs the free exchange of ideas and values among the world community of art historians. Analytical thought only attracts the small academic community, while opulently illustrated and affirmative coffee table books on art sell well. We have to face the fact that the so-called “Taschen effect,” i.e. the production of overwhelming, exciting, opulently illustrated, but mostly superficial books on art generate more public interest than specialized art historical research books.¹⁵ Only huge and heavy exhibition catalogues, which reflect the current advances in research, may reach a wider circle of readers. However, even in an increasing number of museums, research seems to be regarded as a dispensable luxury, not really useful, and too complex for the production of blockbuster shows and their related coffee table books.

A globalized art history is not the same as worldwide promotion of trendy visual topics. Art historian Wolfgang Kemp once ironically predicted that what would sell in our discipline, and via its instrument of distribution, the museum (book)shop, would be “underwater archaeology of impressionist gold treasures.” Art historians may sense a problem in legitimizing their work, as it is threatened by evaluations that find the humanities to be commercially inefficient, with a boring marketing of thoughts.

Not only do economic borders limit creative global art history, but the recent tendencies of the discipline also reveal certain obstacles to complex research strategies. The increasing de-historization in the field of “visual studies” leads to some problematic results; interpretations of visual phenomena that are not substantiated by historical research can be characterized as a form of free association.

Lately, overviews have shown that in many art historical institutes around the world, students focus mainly on contemporary art. Recent statistics of the Graduate Program at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), for example, indicate that about 80 percent of the master’s and doctoral theses deal with twentieth-century topics, and more than 50 percent with contemporary art production (including architecture, de-

sign, film, photography, etc.). They reduce their scope to simple criticism, primarily about current cultural conditions and trends. Even worse, some only re-narrate the autistic myths and self-constructions of contemporary artists, who claim attention by creating their personae as trademarks.¹⁶

It seems as if the notion of history is getting lost in our discipline. Conceptual frontiers are reducing the epistemological potential of our discipline. Many students are no longer able to define long-term developments of iconography and style. But innovative art historical concepts such as political iconography are impoverished without deep knowledge of visual history, such that one of the central functions of our discipline, to create and preserve memory, no longer seems to be a key value.

One more of many other possible obstacles to a multilateral art historiography is the international academic exchange effected through a centralized use of language. A global revision of our discipline is based on English, the *lingua franca* that serves the world community of art historians as a platform for free and interesting exchanges of ideas. Of course, this is not an obstacle, but an option for communication. However, we face the problem that non-English publications are increasingly marginalized in international discourses. Even the research presented in German, French, Italian, and Spanish—the old European standard languages of art history—is less received in the English-speaking world community of art historians. Many current students of art history in the U.S., UK, and Commonwealth countries (except bilingual Canada) lack the multilingual experiences of the older generations of academics in these countries. Thus, the variety and complexity of our discipline is being reduced.

Also, as we have shown previously in a colloquium on the differences in art historical terminologies between Mexico and Europe,¹⁷ specific cultural phenomena such as the hybrid Mexican baroque, with its pre-Hispanic ornamental and iconographic influences, sometimes do not match the established art historical terminology in English, German, or French. These philological matters of art history contain the danger of intellectual impoverishment.

16 Peter Krieger, "Words Don't Come Easy - Comentarios a la Crítica y Exposición de las Artes Plásticas Actuales," *Universidad de México* 597598 (Octubre/Noviembre 2000): 25–29.

17 Patricia Diaz, Montserrat Gali, and Peter Krieger, eds. *Nombrar y Explicar*. (Mexico: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 2011).

Switching among several languages sharpens one's epistemological sensibility. A basic neural operation is the transformation of visual stimuli into words. Exposing oneself to linguistic differences allows a scholar to enhance the complexity of precise descriptions and convincing interpretation of images. Neurologists confirm the advantages of multilingual learning, which sensitizes the scholar to terminological differences, thus stimulating non-linear brain operations.¹⁸

This, of course, is not a criticism of the *lingua franca*, which offers the practicality of promoting global academic communication. I simply want to reverse the current reduction in learning languages other than English.

There are productive proposals for doing just that. One of them is Iain Bond Whyte's initiative at the University of Edinburgh to run the program and online journal called "Art in Translation" (AIT), hosted by the Getty Foundation.¹⁹ This is "the first journal publishing English-language translations of seminal works now available only in their source languages." Other initiatives and programs also help realize what philosopher Ortega y Gasset once called in Latin "*traducere navem*," bringing the ship charged with academic content from one continent to the other, translating texts and transferring ideas. I shall mention here three important initiatives and projects.

First, the 2016 CIHA congress was dedicated to the problem of finding (and translating) adequate terms for art historical writing. The main tool of our discipline is the description and interpretation of visual phenomena. But an enormous variety of linguistic modes in different languages, including the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean construction of signs, generates a complex and sometimes contradictory communication of ideas. As an international organization, CIHA fosters ongoing reflection on the interaction of words, images, and meanings.

Second, the recent exhibition and book project *Picturing the Americas: Landscape Painting from Tierra del Fuego to the Arc-*

18 Wolf Singer, *Der Beobachter im Gehirn. Essays zur Hirnforschung* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2002).

19 AIT, accessed November 26, 2015. http://www.getty.edu/foundation/initiatives/current/cah/art_in_translation.html. Since March 2009, AIT has been published by Bloomsbury Publishing with the support of the Getty Foundation.

tic, curated and edited by Peter John Brownlee, Valéria Piccoli, and Georgiana Uhlyarik, adds to this discourse.²⁰ This catalogue, which covers nineteenth- and twentieth-century landscape painting all over the Americas, is published in its three major languages: English, Spanish, and Portuguese. It is a model for future Pan-American art historical collaboration, one that is grounded in a reorganized academic geography of this continent.

Third, the Getty Foundation's "Connecting Art Histories" program "aims to increase opportunities for sustained intellectual exchange across national and regional borders.... It springs from the recognition that all forms of art historical study will be stronger when scholars from around the world inform each other's ideas and methodologies." This program, which currently focuses on Latin America, is an essential contribution to an open-minded, heterogeneous world art history.²¹

II. Transdisciplinary, Transcultural, and Transhistorical Challenges

The challenges and options of contemporary global art history lead to the ideal of overcoming any borders of homogeneous cultural territory and allow free migration of ideas and subjects. This type of imagined mutual learning implies three major challenges, which I'll briefly explain with some examples of current art historical research.

First, the **transdisciplinary challenge**: Even beyond the Pan-American context, Alexander von Humboldt's early nineteenth-century concept of *trans-* and not *interdisciplinary* research deserves reconsideration. Art history, gradually extended into a historical "science of the image" (*Bildwissenschaft*), and not reduced to dehistoricized "visual studies," or, recently, even "visual sociology," can revise the catalytic function of the image in political, economic, cultural, and also environmental processes throughout the history of civilization, from rock drawings up to today's digital image constructions.

20 Peter John Brownlee, Valéria Piccoli, and Georgiana Uhlyarik, eds. *Picturing the Americas: Landscape Painting from Tierra Del Fuego to the Arctic*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).

21 Getty Foundation, accessed November 26, 2015. <http://www.getty.edu/foundation/initiatives/current/cah/>.

Martin Warnke's innovative studies on political iconography are based on the intelligent—rather than simplified or commercialized—recovery of Aby Warburg's intellectual heritage.²² Horst Bredekamp's fascinating explorations of the images' epistemological functions in scientific discoveries prove that art historical research serves as a platform for *interdisciplinary* research, starting from one point of view, in this case the visual constructions.²³ But this type of research stimulates the next step of *transdisciplinary* dialogue, which aims to create networks of knowledge beyond the established frontiers of C.P. Snow's two cultures, the humanities and the natural sciences. In this sense, global art history invites different participants of the universities' universe to develop hybrid forms of knowledge without one discipline acting as a leader. We are still far from this academic utopia, but the creative multidimensional revitalization of Humboldt's legacy enables us to tear down the extant disciplinary borders, crossing thematic, territorial, and conceptual limits.

My own contribution to this process of disciplinary revision is related to the aesthetics of current environmental self-destruction on this planet, revolving around growing megacities, exploited landscapes, and polluted skylines. Focused on the paradigmatic case of Mexico City, I studied how the image of water in urban settings has created an impact on collective memory of the city's inhabitants;²⁴ how the threatening air pollution has generated ephemeral, fascinating, and terrifying visual configurations;²⁵ and how specific geological conditions alter our narrow temporal concept of cultural history, leading to the much larger framing of Earth's archaic geo-history.²⁶ The aesthetics of geological formations in particular—I am not talking about Land Art—reveal varied insights into Earth's growth and structure. Some have later been transformed into such cultural,

22 Uwe Fleckner, Martin Warnke, and Hendrik Ziegler, eds., *Handbuch Politische Ikonographie*, (München: Beck, 2011).

23 Horst Bredekamp, *Darwins Korallen. Die frühen Evolutionsdiagramme und die Tradition der Naturgeschichte* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2006); Horst Bredekamp, *Galileis denkende Hand. Form und Forschung um 1600. (Galileo's O, Band IV)* (Berlin, München, Boston: De Gruyter, 2015).

24 Peter Krieger, ed., *Acuápolis* (México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 2007).

25 Peter Krieger, "Pollution, Aesthetics of" in *Manifesta 9. The Deep of the Modern. A Subcyclopedia*, Cuauhtémoc Medina and Christopher Fraga, eds. (Cinisello Balsamo, Milano: Silvana Editoriale), 227–229.

26 This is the topic of my forthcoming book.

visual schemas as the early twentieth-century volcano paintings of the Mexican painter Dr. Atl.²⁷

This transdisciplinary challenge negates the existing borders and limitations of academic dialogue. It requires, as Ottmar Ette put it, the Humboldtian capability of thinking about different aspects together, in order to understand the complexity of our habitat on Earth.²⁸

Second, we explore the **transcultural options** of global art history and science of the image without borders: the notion of seemingly homogeneous territories, marked by definitive cultural characteristics, fostered one-dimensional, normative, and chauvinistic fixations of national identity. These normative constructions of visual identity are protected by borders, which are symbolically encoded as a cultural complex. This prevents people from understanding the dominating hybrid cultures all over the world.

Against this conceptual limitation, we may again quote Alexander von Humboldt's cosmopolitan science. It promoted ethical, political, and environmental responsibility, oriented toward "the interests of all humankind."²⁹ The virtual crossing of the world's territories in transdisciplinary and transcultural research is one of the main ideas of the studies of the neo-baroque in the twenty-first century.³⁰ Based on a complex understanding of the historic Roman baroque and that of seventeenth-century Madrid involving what I call "impression management" in times of crisis, we may detect neo-baroque indicators all over the world right now.³¹

27 Peter Krieger, "Las Geo-Graffias del Dr. Atl: Transformaciones Estéticas de la Energía Telúrica y Atmosférica" (English translation: "Dr. Atl's Geo-Graphies: Aesthetic Transformations of Telluric and Atmospheric Energy") in *Dr. Atl, Rotación Cómica. A cincuenta años de su muerte* (Guadalajara: Instituto Cultural Cabañas, 2015), 12–47; Peter Krieger, "Gerardo Murillo ("Dr. Atl"), *La sombra del Popo*" in Peter John Brownlee, Valéria Piccoli, and Georgiana Uhlyarik, eds., *Picturing the Americas: Landscape Painting from Tierra Del Fuego to the Arctic*. (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2015), 256–257.

28 Ottmar Ette, *Alexander von Humboldt und die Globalisierung. Das Mobile des Wissens* (Frankfurt/Main: Insel, 2009), 31, 32, and 35.

29 Ette, *Alexander von Humboldt und die Globalisierung*, 18.

30 Walter Moser, Angela Ndaliansis, and Peter Krieger, eds., *Neo-Baroques: Politics, Spectacle and Entertainment from Latin America to the Hollywood Blockbuster* (forthcoming: Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2016); this publication is the result of the collective research on the *Transcultural and Transhistoric Efficiencies of the Baroque Paradigm*, part of the project *The Hispanic Baroque. Complexity in the First Atlantic Culture*, directed by Juan Luis Suárez, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, financed by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

31 Peter Krieger, "Form Follows Effect: Principles of Baroque Impression Management in

Beyond the traditional art historical, primarily Eurocentric understanding of the neo-baroque as stylistic eclecticism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, current debates on that cultural phenomenon focus on the continuing methods of producing illusion that can be put to use by religious and political ideologies.³² Today, they are mainly related to the visual values of consumer society. The seventeenth-century Counter Reformation and today's consumer ideology have common values and techniques, such as the synesthetic conquest of the senses, present in the Roman Jesuit churches as well in the artificial environments of shopping malls. This is now a global phenomenon; one of the most influential transmissions of that aesthetic idea is that of Las Vegas's spectacular architecture.³³

But the globalized neo-baroque has also a specific and contradictory, almost anarchic source in Latin American tradition.³⁴ The historical Latin American baroque was characterized by style modifications by local craftsmen, who included their pre-Columbian visual heritage in the imported Spanish monarchic and Catholic iconographies. This cultural questioning of enforced colonial designs is still vivid in the lowrider culture of Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles, as Monika Kaup has shown.³⁵ Young men convert a standardized capitalist product, a car, into an individual piece of popular, neo-baroque art. Research on the Latin American neobaroque reveals how the borders of transcultural impacts can be ironically deconstructed.

This type of research disrupts traditional Eurocentric, conservative art historiography. Beyond any fixation on style, however, baroque visual formulas can be culturally transformed into neo-baroque constructions of alternative, diverse Latin American identities. Heinrich Wölfflin, the father of the art history of

Contemporary Mexican Catholic Church Architecture. (An implicit homage to Wölfflin.)" in *The Invention of Baroque: Visualized Paradoxes of a Corporate Identity*, Jens Baumgarten, ed. (Sao Paulo, 2016).

32 Angela Ndalians, *Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2005).

33 Peter Krieger, *El Neobarroco de Las Vegas en la Ciudad de México* (México: Escotto Editores, 2016).

34 Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup, eds., *Baroque New Worlds. Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*. (Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press 2010).

35 Monika Kaup, *Neobaroque in the Americas. Alternative Modernities in Literature, Visual Art, and Film* (Charlottesville, VA; London: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 244, 248, and 272–289.

the baroque, would never have imagined these cultural developments; but in reality, his influential book on the *Basic Principles*, published a hundred years ago, contains abstract *topoi* of visual analysis that describe the phenomena of the contemporary neo-baroque.³⁶

To sum up, I quote again Monica Juneja's conceptual work on the "transcultural history of art," which is not meant just to add multiple national historiographies. Instead, she looks at the "transformational processes that constitute art practice through cultural encounters and relationships." Her purpose is to create collective consciousness about the "non-linear and non-homogeneous" logic of art production, distribution, and reception.³⁷ What's more, "Such a view has the potential to destabilize many of the values that underpin the discipline of art history and [that] have remained unquestioned for too long."³⁸ In other words, global, transcultural research strategies clearly tear down the implicit conceptual and territorial borders of our discipline.

Third, **transhistorical research** can uncover long-term cultural effects of current settings. An example is the research on current neo-baroque: switching from the seventeenth-century historical settings of Rome and Madrid to the cultural conditions in twenty-first-century Las Vegas or Mexico City—as I do in my forthcoming book on *The Las Vegas Neobaroque in Mexico City*—may cause conceptual problems in strict historiographical terms. Many phenomena of these two different spheres of time and space are not comparable. However, transhistorical themes, such as the urban aesthetic motive of covering decay with spectacle, do exist. Contemporary neo-baroque scenography, both in the image of megacities as well as in its virtual representations in television and online, has clear roots in the baroque theater, with its sophisticated machines for producing illusions.

36 Peter Krieger, "Baroque and Neo-Baroque: Long-Term Effects of the Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe in Mexico" in *The Global Reception of Heinrich Wölfflin's Principles of Art History (1915–2015)*, Evonne Levy and Tristan Weddingen, eds. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art/Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, 2016).

37 Juneja, "Global Art History," 281; and Juneja, "Kunstgeschichte und kulturelle Differenz," 7, referring to the conceptual definition of Juneja's chair "Asia and Europe in a Global Context" at the art history department at Heidelberg University, Germany.

38 Juneja, "Global Art History," 282.

Staging social and cultural contrasts, focusing on spectacular visual impacts, has also become an established strategy of contemporary art in megacities. A *memento mori* of neo-baroque cultures has historical roots in the European seventeenth century. Even the environmental aesthetics of self-destruction through air pollution finds one of its conceptual origins in the English baroque thinker Robert Burton, who in 1621 already regarded atmospheric contamination as a cause of melancholy.³⁹

I just have sketched the debates on the neo-baroque, which ignore the historiographical borders of epochs, centuries, and decades. The example explains my belief that art historians should recognize the many obvious transhistorical phenomena, and step over frontiers of thinking and interpreting. In this sense, trespassing will *not* be prosecuted, but rather encouraged. And in this process of transgression, history is not excluded, but recognized as an essential way to understand contemporary cultural phenomena.

III. Potential of Art History/Science of the Image

One major innovation in recent art historiography is that the so-called science of the image (*Bildwissenschaft*)⁴⁰ has torn down the borders of a self-referential, sometimes boring discipline. Of course, *Bildwissenschaft* maintains its foundation in established art historical methods. But it widens the frame of research in visual cultures. By doing so, it produces inspiring knowledge for our contemporary societies, in which growing image flows determine worldviews and collective memory, perhaps more than words do.

Art historical and visual, aesthetic research has many objectives, but one of the most important for me is the education of visual illiterates. I use this term to describe people affected by visual impacts but who lack the instruments of critical analysis. In times of image mass production by television, internet, and digital photography, it may be useful to consult art historical

39 Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (New York: New York Review Books, 2001; reprint of the 6th edition of 1621).

40 Some titles on *Bildwissenschaft* ("science of the image") include: Klaus Sachs-Hombach, ed., *Bildtheorien. Anthropologische und kulturelle Grundlagen des Visualistic Turn* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2009); Jörg Probst and Jost Philipp Klenner, eds., *Ideengeschichte der Bildwissenschaft* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2009); Lambert Wiesing, *Artifizielle Präsenz. Studien zur Philosophie des Bildes* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2005).

research on the production, distribution, and reception of images in specific political, social, and cultural contexts.

In this article I have tried to frame the current condition of our discipline using a metaphorical understanding of the conceptual boundaries of free development and migration of ideas. Fortified frontiers, as well as intellectual borders, are temporary obstacles that may disappear or reappear in different configurations. In the humanities, they are virtual but powerful constructions that direct flows of intellectual energy. Part of that energy is carried by migrants, whose territorial and mental mobility helps to reorganize the world's map of knowledge.

However, the current political situation, especially in Europe with its massive migratory flows from African and Arabic countries, shows us that migration challenges everyone to change their mental habits—the migrants as well as the established settlers. This change sometimes generates more problems than advantages. Due to the complexity of hybrid, multi-ethnic processes, the established populations often seek refuge in nationalist, even xenophobic practices and many migrants retire to homogeneous ghettos in the new place. But perhaps the long-term perspective reveals the potential of cosmopolitan citizenship,⁴¹ beyond nationalist, ethnic, or religious borders.

Transferred to the academic situation, especially in art history, this comparison makes us think about the complexity of cultural expression in the art works that we analyze, and about our own contemporary cultural setting in which we act. Hybrid modes of research in art history may strengthen the collective mental capacity to accept complexity, tolerate contradictions, and negotiate conflicts. All these problems arise when frontiers are open. There is no limit to circulating ideas and subjects in a globalized academic context.

A lesson from biology supports this plea for unrestricted academic interchange: symbiosis is one of the most successful modes of coexistence.⁴² Most organisms on Earth live in symbiotic relationships. These alliances are the most important driving forces of evolution. Although symbiotic relations can also

41 Karl Schlögel, *Planet der Nomaden* (Berlin: wjs-Verlag 2006): 116.

42 *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, March 21, 2015, 38–39.

generate disadvantages for some related elements, contemporary life sciences emphasize that cooperation is more important and effective than (Darwin's notion of) competition. Although I do not intend to biologize the humanities, these concepts show how creative and inspiring a transdisciplinary, transcultural, and transhistorical science of the image can be. With this inspiration, we can hope for an art history without borders.

We may ask: how much migration of ideas and initiatives do we want and can we bear? Do we need virtual frontiers that promise orientation, security, and identity? In spite of intellectual border controls and their existing restrictions, I advocate a mental disposition of openness and discovery, one without limits, according to philosopher Ernst Bloch's utopian principle: "thinking means transcending" (in German: *Denken heisst überschreiten*).

At the very least—and this is one of the main objectives of this publication, initiated by the Brazilian Committee of Art History (CBHA)—investigating and criticizing the exclusionary frontiers of our globalized discipline is a step toward mutual respectful inclusion. In this sense, my intervention is meant as a productive provocation that aims at the decentralization and decolonization of art historiography beyond any conceptual limits, ideological frontiers, and disciplinary borders.

Frontiers are not only enclosures, but also spaces of transition and connection⁴³ in a reorganized, complex, heterogeneous, and truly post-colonial world map of art historical knowledge production.

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**Out of Place: Migration, Melancholia
and Nostalgia in Ousmane
Sembène's *Black Girl***

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In the opening scene of Ousmane Sembène's *Black Girl* (*La Noire de...*) the ocean liner Ancerville arrives on the French Riviera. While bags are cleared and white passengers make their way towards the exit, Diouana, a young Senegalese domestic waits for her French patron to pick her up. Dressed in a smart polka dot dress, tasteful costume jewelry and scarf to protect her hair from the wind, Diouana, played by Thérèse Moissine Diop, looks like a modern, chic African who might well have come to France for a vacation. She meets her patron, played by Robert Fontaine, who leads her to his car. He gets into the automobile, opens the passenger door, and Diouana gets in. As they make their way from the port, the patron asks Diouana if she had a good trip. She answers, "Oui, Monsieur." As the camera pans over the mountains of the South of France, the patron tells the maid that France is beautiful. As before, she answers "Oui, Monsieur."

Other than these simple exchanges, the trip to the family's apartment is punctuated by views of the French Riviera, which are accompanied by the kind of music we might expect to hear at a beach resort. Along with Diouana, the viewer sees dreamy buildings, expansive boulevards, beaches that serve as the playground of a bourgeoisie that has escaped the dreary day-to-day life of parts unknown. This beauty, this seeming lavishness bespeaks of a world of luxury and refinement for Diouana. It connotes her successful escape from Senegal, from the day-to-day of Dakar, from a life of poverty. She dreams that here she will be taken to wonderful shops that have beautiful dresses, silk undergarments, wonderful shoes, wigs and other delights. At one moment, she yearns to be photographed on the beach and imagines that, upon seeing the image, her family and friends in Dakar will be quite jealous. In essence, this trip, Diouana believes, will catapult her into a comfortable, bourgeois, and glamorous European existence.

Set in the French Riviera and Dakar, *Black Girl*, the director's as well as Africa's first feature-length film, is derived from the director's 1962 novella "The Promised Land," itself based on a 1958 news story in *Nice-Matin* about the suicide of a young African maid on the Côte d'Azur. *Black Girl* chronicles the arrival of Diouana, a Senegalese maid, to France, her dashed hopes, and her descent into depression, despondence, despair, melancholia, and, ultimately, suicide in Antibes. Sembène's film, an



1. Ousmane Sembène.
Still from *Black Girl*.
1965. Courtesy Kino
International.

overtly political affair, denounces, in the director's own words, "the French Neocolonialist, the new African bourgeoisie, his accomplice and above all, the new black slave trade."¹ A migration fantasy gone horribly wrong, the film exists among a number of things as an allegory of French racism and neocolonialism as well as continued Senegalese dependence on its former colonial ruler on the heels of the nation's 1960 independence.

Dakar was the scene of intense anti-French sentiment in the early and mid-1960s. In addition to Senghor's close personal and political ties with French president Charles de Gaulle, the former colonizer's continued presence and influence pervaded each and every primary area of Senegalese public life. During the early years of Senegalese independence French expatriates, who in Dakar numbered approximately 30,000—or 10% of the city's population at the time—comprised 33% of the na-

1 Ousmane Sembène, "We Are Governed in Black Africa by Colonialism's Disabled Children," 1971 interview with Guy Hennebelle, in Annett Busch and Max Annas, ed., *Ousmane Sembène Interviews* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 19.



2. Ousmane Sembène.
Still from *Black Girl*.
1965. Courtesy Kino
International.

tion's cabinet positions; they constituted 66% of the University of Dakar faculty. Such things, coupled with continuing French aid, ongoing underdevelopment (due in large part to France's policies in West Africa), and an enduring French military presence, persuaded many on the left that Senegal was, in essence, a neo-colonial state, and Senghor a puppet of de Gaulle. Although not registered overtly in Sembène's film, the oppressive weight of the colonial past and neo-colonial present permeates *Black Girl*, which premiered at the First World Festival of Negro Arts, which took place in Dakar from April 1 to 24, 1966. Although the film took the award for best African feature, the production's overt politics was lost neither on its viewers nor the Bureau of Cinema, formed by the French Ministry of Cooperation in 1963. In fact, insisting that *Black Girl* was anti-French, the Bureau originally turned down the film's script. In an ironic move, however, the Bureau eventually purchased the rights to the movie, but only after Sembène produced it independently.²

2 Shiela Petty, "Introduction," in Sheila Petty, ed., *A Call to Action: The Films of Ousmane Sembène* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 4.

Once Diouana and her patron reach the French family's apartment building, Diouana takes in the high-rise structure. As she looks up, the camera stays on the side of the high rise building, highlighting the maid's awe and wonder (Fig. 1). She and her patron enter the apartment, where Diouana is greeted by the woman who had hired her in Dakar. They exchange pleasantries. The apartment is quite modern, its walls quite sparse, save for the mask that Diouana had given the mistress upon the beginning of her tenure in Senegal (Fig. 2). From here, the mistress, played by Anne-Marie Jelinek, shows Diouana around the apartment, proceeding from the kitchen to the bathroom and, finally into what will be Diouana's room. There's a bed, a table, stark furnishings. The piece de resistance, however, is the view from the window, which boasts a beautiful panorama of the Cote d'Azur. While they look out, the mistress talks about the gorgeous setting, naming some of the cities in view: Jau-les-Pins, Nice, Cannes, Antibes.

Things quickly change. In a flash, Diouana is scrubbing the bathtub, cleaning the kitchen, and doing the laundry. European vacation music gives way to a Senegalese melody. At this moment, Diouana realizes that she has, in fact, been hired as an all purpose maid, a job that she believes is beneath her. She feels duped. What's worse, except to visit the grocer, she never leaves the apartment. Scrubbing the bathroom, making meals, and cleaning the apartment become Diouana's sole occupation. The three children she cared for in Dakar are nowhere to be found. The views of France from the car, and from the window exist only at a distance. She never partakes of this France. She exclaims, "All I do is clean, that's not why I came to France. I came to take care of the children."

Things go from bad to worse for Diouana. As she continues to clean and cook and cook and clean, she becomes increasingly despondent and depressed. At the same time, her mistress becomes increasingly harsh and irritable. Unlike the kindness (or at least tolerance) the mistress displayed in Dakar, in Antibes she has become abusive, shrilly barking orders and accusing Diouana of laziness. The mistress's harshness is only exacerbated by the fact that Diouana refuses to wear proper maid attire, instead donning the mistress's chic cast-offs given to Diouana in Dakar, a wig, and smart black pumps. At one point the mistress snaps, "You're not going to a party! You've been dressed like that for three weeks!"

Diouana's dress, however, is both aspirational—it illustrates the hopes and desires that she holds for France—and protest. The dresses, the wig and the shoes are a tacit resistance to her mistress's treatment and a statement of her displeasure at being the cleaning lady, the cook and the laundress. Moreover, the mistress sees Diouana's dress as a sign of insubordination, and as a direct affront to her authority. As far as the mistress is concerned, Diouana does not know her place, and, combined with not understanding or particularly caring about Diouana's state, the mistress further increases her abuse. The only solution the mistress can think of is to order Diouana to at least wear an apron with her inappropriate outfit.

Diouana's attire becomes even more out of place, as it were, when the French couple hosts European guests for lunch. The mistress orders Diouana to make rice and maff (a Senegalese peanut stew), dishes that they never requested in Dakar. While the group eats (and Diouana serves), they converse about Dakar, Africa more generally and African independence. One guest, an older, portly fellow, remarks, "Since independence, Africans are less natural." Further French stereotypes about Africa and Africans are bandied about over lunch, coffee, dessert, liquor, and cigarettes. As Diouana is serving and clearing plates, the same man gets up, exclaims that he has never kissed a black woman, and plants one firmly on Diouana's cheek. Visibly angry, Diouana retreats to the kitchen. The mistress follows. In a feeble attempt to calm her maid, the mistress tries to convince Diouana that the guest's unwelcome sexual advance was simply a joke. She then compliments the maid on the meal, expresses her admiration, and then orders her to make some good coffee. After the coffee is served, Diouana, still extremely angry and stressed, has a flashback to Dakar, to the moment just before the mistress hired her.

The flashback, one of two in the film, constitutes a pivotal moment in *Black Girl*, for it gives a glimpse at what set the current state of affairs into motion. Perhaps more importantly, the change in location allows for Diouana to momentarily escape her imprisonment in a stark, white, claustrophobic apartment in Antibes.

As Diouana returns to Dakar, the camera, which takes her subject position, retraces her search for gainful employment as a maid to the whites. Diouana makes her way from her home in the Medina, the city's oldest African neighborhood, to the Plateau,

Dakar's administrative center and home, at least in the 1960s, of much of the expatriate community. The camera's movement from the Medina to the Plateau, not unlike that of the earlier scenes of the Cote d'Azur, marks a kind of mini-migration for Diouana. The Medina registers as poor and "native;" the Plateau's Art Deco and International Style edifices are reminiscent of the apartment building that holds her in Antibes.

While the flashback reminds Diouana of home, and of those around her, it also illustrates the hierarchical structure of the Plateau. While searching for employment in this quarter, while going from one apartment to another, Diouana has doors slammed in her face. She is accosted by dogs. Not just the re-tracing of the beginnings of her migration, this flashback registers as Sembène's critique of continued French racism and neocolonialism in the Senegal. The director further amplifies his filmic critique through the camera's attention to the Plateau's streets, populated by whites and bourgeois Africans, and to buildings, which are shot from far above and from below, amplifying and exaggerating their mass.

Sembène's psychologically dark and foreboding vision of the Plateau in the scene is strikingly familiar to that he depicted in his 1963 film *Borom Sarret*. Here, a hapless cart driver is convinced by a nameless Senegalese man in suit and tie, to take his things from the Medina to the Plateau. Knowing that horse drawn carts are prohibited in that part of the city but desperate to earn money to feed his family, he agrees to do the job. As the men enter the quarter, they see empty streets. The buildings rise up from the depopulated streets. They are imposing, larger than life. Once the two arrive at their destination, the suited man, before paying the cart driver, takes his things and disappears. The cart driver, intimidated and knowing that he needs to get his horse-drawn cart out of the Plateau as quickly as possible, waits for the man to return. He doesn't. Instead, a gendarme (police officer) arrives and cites the driver for having the horse drawn cart in the Plateau. The officer humiliates the cart driver, taking everything but his horse. He even takes the cart driver's prized medal, which he earned for his military service to France. The scene reads as a tale of the abuse of the Senegalese at the hands of President Leopold Sedar Senghor's government, which many viewed as a neocolonial tool of the Charles de Gaulle, the Poet-President's close friend, and France.

But Diouana's experience in the Plateau, at least at this moment, does not result in destitution and depression. As ominous as the Plateau is, as treacherous as it could be for non-bourgeois Senegalese people, Diouana, despite dealing with slammed doors and vicious dogs, continues undeterred. She's most certainly out of place in this quarter, but in stark contrast to *Borom Sarrat's* cart driver, she is in awe of this place. Although she's looking for work, in an odd way, she acts like a tourist. Blithely walking in front of the Senegalese National Assembly, situated in the Plateau, Diouana nearly bumps into three African civil servants—stand-ins for Senghor and his cabinet—carrying on an absurd conversation about the state of the nation. She seems not to care. Diouana does begin to grow weary, and she realizes that knocking on doors is getting her nowhere. She decides to try one last apartment building before giving up. There she meets a kind, educated Senegalese man, who directs her to the place (near the Plateau's Independence Square) where women go to find work as domestics. On the way, Diouana passes two elegantly dressed Senegalese women. She longs to be just like them.

Day after day Diouana returns to this place. Eventually, the mistress comes to find domestic help. Dressed in a smart skirt suit and sunglasses, the mistress peruses the Senegalese women in front of her as if they are loaves of bread at the market. All but Diouana rush the white woman. She resists them, takes note of Diouana, and offers her a job. Like the scenes of the Plateau's architecture, Diouana's presence in this modern day slave market located by Independence Square, the mistress' creepy perusal of black female bodies, and Diouana's willingness to become part of this exploitative system further elaborate on French neocolonialism and Senegalese complicity in it.

However, while this representation of the Plateau proffers a difficult place ruled by race and class hierarchies, unlike *Borom Sarret* or Senegalese Director Djibril Diop Mambety's 1969 *Contras' City*, *Black Girl's* Plateau is not dehumanized. The deserted streets of *Borom Sarret* and the painstaking exploration of architecture of *Contras' City* render the Plateau as blank spaces that more directly serve as metaphors of the ineptitude and inhumanity—and racism—of France and an overly dependent Senegalese bourgeoisie. What all three films share, however, is a keen awareness of the participation of architecture and space in the racialized economies and inequities of Dakar.

Returning to the city in a second flashback, one that reviews Diouana's decision to go to France, Diouana walks through Independence Square with the Senegalese man she met earlier. Now he is her boyfriend. At this moment, he is trying to converse with her, but all she can think about is her employers' invitation to join them in France. She wonders if France is prettier than Dakar. Her boyfriend doesn't know. They have their photo taken by an itinerant photographer, and Diouana brings this with her to France. As they talk by the memorial dedicated to the fallen Senegalese soldiers who served in World War II, the film cuts to news footage of a wreath being laid at the monument's base. Returning to the scene, Diouana leaps onto the monument, dancing on top of it. Her boyfriend chastises her, and the two run off to avoid being cited, or worse, by the police. He is annoyed at her disrespect. She seems not to know that she did anything wrong. The scene highlights Diouana's naïveté with respect to the monument and those memorialized by it, and such guilelessness exists as a parallel to that with which she enters her employment.

In stark contrast, all of the film's Senegalese characters—with the exceptions of Diouana and her kid brother—realize that working for the French can be a troublesome affair. When Diouana was first hired by the couple, her mother's response was "be brave." Her boyfriend says nothing, but given the "revolutionary" décor of his apartment, complete with fabrics printed with the image of Patrice Lumumba, the slain President of the Congo, it's not a stretch to believe that he was not enamored with her decision. Perhaps even worse, the Plateau's buildings, its "foreignness," instead of raising a red flag, represents for Diouana the possibility of social transcendence. The Plateau is a dreamscape in which the maid imagines that her employers will offer her a life of luxury and gaiety in Europe.

Each time the film cuts back to the Antibes apartment, Diouana is increasingly depressed, desperate, and angry. She hates her job, her employers, and her life in France. That said, it would be a mistake to think of the flashbacks as nostalgia for home. They are rather escapes from her French enslavement. While it's clear that France provides nothing but alienation and bondage for Diouana, it is also a space of alienation and bondage for the French couple. The husband turns his alienation inwards, descending into alcoholism and withdrawal from his family.

The mistress turns her alienation outwards, characterized by her increasingly harsh treatment of both Diouana and her alcoholic husband. At one point she exclaims, "I hate this life!"

As is the case for Diouana, Dakar also serves as a touchstone for the French couple, who reminisce about the city and the luxury and happy life it offered them. The couple's home, as seen through Diouana's flashbacks, teems with art and stands in stark contrast to the Antibes apartment, which, save for the mask given to them by their maid, sports almost bare walls. Along these lines, Dakar's absence is the couple's source of longing.

During the 1960s roughly 10% of Dakar's population—approximately 30,000 people—were French expatriates, and along with an African elite, they controlled the country's political and economic life. This group also had very little contact with the Senegalese. Even after Senegalese independence they were largely looked after and taken care of by the French government. Rita Cruise O'Brien, who published a landmark study of the French in Senegal in 1972, notes "The newest element in the resident French minority was the petit blanc, who brought with him to Africa a minimum of relevant skills, and whose success epitomized the potential for upward employment mobility among whites in the colonies at that time."³ Moreover, such upward mobility was unavailable to many of them in the restricted job markets in the metropole.⁴ Diouana's employers, who quite neatly fit Cruise O'Brien's description, from their downgraded surroundings in Antibes, talk and dream about Dakar. And in doing so, they cast the city as nostalgic object. Yet, the couple's Dakar is not enacted through the flashback, but rather through its surrogates: Diouana and the mask. However, Diouana, in dresses, wig and pumps, spoils the couple's idyllic vision of Dakar. The maid in her inappropriate dress represents a Dakar that is modern, somehow tainted. This modern Senegalese woman personifies a Dakar that is not exotic, not distant, and not natural. To echo the lunch guest who sexually harassed Diouana, this Dakar, with the advent of Senegalese independence, has become less natural for the French couple. Most importantly, Diouana summons a Dakar that is not the one of their memory.

3 Rita Cruise O'Brien, *White Society in Black Africa: The French of Senegal* (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1972), 66.

4 O'Brien, 86

Aside from the two female protagonists, who are at once binary opposites and mirrors of one another, *Black Girl's* most important presence is the mask.⁵ It is the mask that is, for Diouana, a reminder of home. It is the mask, for the patron and mistress, which is a reminder of their better existence. It is the mask that is the focal point of the apartment. And it is the mask that registers both the film's rampant cultural mistranslations, giving insight into not only the relationship between Diouana and the mistress, but also, more broadly, of Africans and the French. Finally, the mask is a repository and a metonym of place, and in this way, it is both a representation of "Dakar" for the characters, but also of "Africa" more broadly.

Fredric Jameson, writing on Sembène in an essay on Third World literature in multinational capitalism, is one of the few who has commented on the mask. Rightly understanding Sembène's work as a national allegory, the literary critic explores the ways in which certain parts of the filmmaker's oeuvre diagnoses the failures of cultures in the face of underdevelopment and foreign forces. For example, while addressing Sembène's 1976 *Xala* and *The Money Order*, published in 1965 (and made into a film titled *Mandabi* in 1968), Jameson notes Sembène's acute attention the dead-end scenario that many of his characters encounter. However, Jameson is stuck when attempting to come to terms with Sembène's use of what the critic calls "archaic or tribal elements" in *Black Girl*. He notes:

"On another level, however, this tale raises the issue of what must finally be one of the key problems in any analysis of Ousmane's work, namely the ambiguous role played in it by archaic or tribal elements. Viewers may perhaps remember the curious ending of his first film, *The Black Girl*, in which the European employer is inconclusively pursued by the little boy wearing an archaic mask..."⁶

5 My attention to the mask is indebted to Andrea Gyorody's 2010 unpublished seminar paper, entitled "Biography of an Overdetermined Object: The Mask in Ousmane Sembène's *Black Girl*." In this work, Gyorody rightly understands the mask as a site of projection for the anxieties that plague the film's female protagonists. She also understands it as a metaphor for time, for the relationship between the modern and the traditional and as a site of the construction of subjectivity for both maid and patron.

6 Jameson, 82. Andrea Gyorody brought this article to my attention.

While Jameson's analysis is astute, he missed the function of the mask in *Black Girl*. He seems to have overlooked the mask's presence in much of the film, and, in doing so, cannot quite fathom what its use may be. The mask is a mask to be sure, but it is also a gift. The mask originally belonged to Diouana's little brother, who, in the film uses it as his toy. In the first flashback, he dons the mask and is told to take it off. Once employed by the whites, Diouana picks up the mask and dances around a friend, singing, "I'm going to work for the whites, I'm going to work for the whites." Diouana then takes the mask from the boy, promising to give him 50 francs for it when she is paid. In a gesture of goodwill and fealty, Diouana gives the mask to her mistress. Deciding that the mask is "authentic," the French couple places it among other "tribal" objects in their Dakar home. The mask seems to be the only recognizable "artifact" that travels with the family to Antibes. Diouana immediately notices it once she arrives.

As Diouana grows increasingly depressed, the mask is one of the only objects that remind her of home. It, not her Dakar flashbacks, mobilizes her nostalgia and homesickness. In this way, the mask is not a nod to "tradition," but is rather a point of access to her home. While the mask is most certainly "tribal" for the patron and mistress, it is a souvenir and a repository of nostalgia for their better lives. In the end, in an act of open defiance, Diouana takes the mask off of the apartment wall and places it with her things. When the mistress sees this, she tries to take it back. The two physically fight for possession of the object. In the end, Diouana keeps her mask.

That the mask functions in these different ways, and signifies differently depending on subject position is very much in line with what masks do. In this sense, the mask's presence speaks to the roles of primitivism, negritude, African identity, and African nationalism in the making of *Black Girl*. From the early 20th-century avant-garde, to Senghor's *Négritude*, to the very construction of African identities on the continent and in the diaspora, masks—even for those who did not traditionally make them (this is the case in the areas around Dakar)—serve as multivalent symbols that reign supreme. Sembène takes advantage of the mask's capacity to be a site for the mediation and structuring of complex and competing agendas in the world of his film. Moreover, like architecture and

cities, masks have the capacity to signify place, geographically, socially, culturally, and psychologically. And the place of this mask, for all of the protagonists, as I mentioned earlier, is Dakar, albeit different ones.

Diouana's taking of the mask is an aggressive act that stands as a refusal of the "benevolence" of her mistress. However, her final refusal—and her escape from modern-day slavery—is her suicide. Once she is gone, the patron and mistress collect her things. The patron yells, "We're going back to Dakar!" The film cuts back to Dakar, where the patron has gone to the Medina in order to return Diouana's personal effects and to give her mother the maid's back wages. Everyone in the neighborhood knows of Diouana's demise, and they treat the visitor with suspicion. A structural twin to Diouana's tenuous position in the Plateau, the patron—clearly out of place and unlike Diouana in the European Quarter—is nervous. People stare. And they register as masks. The patron looks for the maid's family home. The patron finds Diouana's mother and offers her the maid's belongings and back wages. She refuses to take them. She then turns him away.

Upon seeing his old mask, Diouana's younger brother takes it and begins to play with it as he did earlier in the film. As the patron leaves, the child/mask follows him. As the husband increases his speed, so does the child. Ultimately, the husband is chased from the Medina, and the film's final scene rests on the child/mask. And the young boy's chase, as it were, is the ultimate refusal. In this sense, contrary to what Jameson would have his readers believe, the mask is not at all "curious."

Dakar's Plateau is neocolonialism's home. The Medina stands as neocolonialism's refusal. The mask, a metaphor for the Medina, betrays the couple, rejecting them just as Diouana did. With such distinctions, and in its role as site of myriad desires of home, "Africa," the traditional and the modern, *Black Girl's* Dakar constitutes an intense allegory of Senegalese political and psychological life. Ultimately rebuking French neocolonialism and the worlds of African elites who enable it, *Black Girl* trades in and insists upon a politics of radical social, political and psychological revolution in a newly independent Senegal.

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Out of Place:
Migration,
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New Worlds:
Frontiers,
Inclusion,
Utopias

The Global Dimension of Art History (after 1900): Conflicts and Demarcations

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It is a well-known fact that the academic discipline of art history was slow in responding to the broadening range of images and objects that became available for study in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from a variety of sources outside the traditional European focus. Despite the fact that private collectors and museums eagerly collected, exhibited, and published such works—often in competition with each other in the context of an ongoing colonization—these non-European artifacts “rarely made their way into academic art historical research.”¹ This discrepancy triggered conflicts and provoked disputes over the responsibility for the demarcation of the field. This text will try to outline the debates between an already institutionalized field and the actors of an emerging “global” art history that were mainly rooted in anthropological and ethnographical research, and investigate the ideological background of these arguments. The main point of the contribution is to analyze the popularization of “world art” through the assertion of its aesthetic value and to focus on a media history of inexpensive books and brochures that tried to proliferate reproductions of “foreign” art to a wider public.

An anecdotal reference to this emerging “boundary work” in art history can be found in some letters by Walter Benjamin written in late 1915, when he enrolled at the Ludwig Maximilian Universität in Munich and took classes with Heinrich Wölfflin. Benjamin reviewed these courses at length in two letters to his friend Fritz Radt. In the first one from November 21, he chose strong words to describe Wölfflin’s total incompetence in engaging with the art historical material presented in class, medieval miniature paintings as it happens. Benjamin characterized the style of the lecture as artificial and quirkily controlled, to a degree that could produce the impression that Wölfflin purposefully played a role² in order to cope with the expectations of the public and to propel his reputation even further. Benjamin considered the courses a “brutal affront toward the audience”. In a second letter from December 4, he became even more drastic

1 Julia Orell, “The Emergence of East Asian Art History in the 1920s: Karl With (1891–1980) and the Problem of Gandhara,” in *The Making of the Humanities. Volume III: The Modern Humanities*, ed. Rens Bod, Jaap Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014, 431–448, here 431.

2 Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin und sein Engel. Vierzehn Aufsätze und kleine Beiträge*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag 1983, 80–84 [Letter from Walter Benjamins to Fritz Radt, Munich, Sunday, November 21, 1915], here 81.

in his assessment. Wölfflin was denied the slightest capability to understand art at all:

A by no means overwhelmingly gifted man, who, by nature, has no more of a feel for art than anyone else, but attempts to get around this by using all the energy and resources of his personality (which have nothing to do with art). As a result, he has a theory that fails to grasp what is essential but which, in itself, is perhaps better than complete thoughtlessness. In fact, this theory might even lead somewhere were it not for the fact that, because of the inability of Wölfflin's capacities to do justice to their object, the only means of access to the artwork remains exaltation, and a moral urge of obligation. He does not see the artwork, he feels obliged to see it, demands that one sees it, considers his theory a moral act; he becomes pedantic, ludicrously cationic [from Marcus Porcius Cato 234–149 B.C.], and thereby destroys any natural talents that his audience may have. For the combination of an ungrounded, surreptitiously obtained concept of refinement and distance, and the brutality with which he obscures his lack of (receptive) genius, has the effect of attracting an audience that clearly has no idea what is going on.³

In short, Wölfflin had no sensorium for the appreciation of art, because he lacked receptive genius and a feeling for the art object, things that Benjamin obviously looked for in the field of art history. He subsequently avoided Wölfflin's classes and fled into the realm of global art, more specifically into a seminar by Walter Lehmann, a scholar of South American language, art, and culture who later became one of the directors of the Völkerkundemuseum (Ethnographical Museum) in Berlin. In Lehmann's private apartment, the young student saw "glass cabinets with the most wonderful art objects from the American past, Chinese porcelains, small exotic oil paintings, and a scientific collection of ancient maps." The topic of the course

3 Scholem, *Walter Benjamin*, 84–89 [Letter from Walter Benjamins to Fritz Radt, Munich, December 4, 1915], here 84–85.

was old Mexican culture and language.⁴ In the seminar, Benjamin met not only the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, but “became acquainted with the memorable figure of the Spanish priest Bernardo Sahagún.” Inspired by Lehmann’s knowledge, he bought an “Aztec-Spanish dictionary [...] in order to learn the Aztec language”⁵—an undertaking that he abandoned after a short period of time.

Benjamin’s experiences in Munich are symptomatic and can be considered indicative of a turn in the perception of global art in Germany during and after the First World War. A younger generation of art historians tried to expand the field significantly in making art works more accessible for a broader public. In a brief article written in 1919 entitled “Weltkunst” (World Art) published in the “Kunstblatt” edited by Paul Westheim, the German art historian and specialist for Indian, Chinese, and Japanese art William Cohn contributed to this ongoing “boundary work.” He complained about his European colleagues and remarked with some vigor:

They are exclusively interested in antiquity, in Italian, German, Dutch, French, and Spanish Art, and at the furthest might consider Egyptian and Islamic Art as even noteworthy. At everything else they look condescendingly and indifferently with the well-known arrogance of the European who considers himself the untouchable model of the world, not only in the realm of technology but also in intellectual and aesthetic culture. It has to become clear once and for all that this is an indefensible standpoint.⁶

4 Scholem, *Walter Benjamin*, 84–89 [Letter from Walter Benjamin to Fritz Radt, Munich, December 4, 1915], here 87.

5 Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship*. Translated from the German by Harry Zohn. (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), 33.

6 William Cohn, “Weltkunst,” in *Kunstblatt* 3 (1919), 62–63, here 62. Cited after Lutz Windhöfel, *Paul Westheim und Das Kunstblatt. Eine Zeitschrift und ihr Herausgeber in der Weimarer Republik* (Köln / Weimar / Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1995), 285: “Sie sind (die europäischen Kunsthistoriker, lw) immer wieder – mit wenigen Ausnahmen – ausschließlich eingestellt auf die Antike, auf italienische, deutsche, niederländische, französische und spanische Kunst. Höchstens noch ägyptische und islamische Kunst werden für beachtenswert gehalten. Auf alles andere blickt man mit dem bekannten Hochmut des Europäers, der nicht nur auf dem Gebiet der Technik, sondern auch der geistigen und ästhetischen Kultur das unantastbare Vorbild der Welt zu sein meint, verächtlich und teilnahmslos herab. Es muss ein für allemal klar werden, dass das ein unhaltbarer Standpunkt ist.”

Besides voicing such strong opinions, Cohn had already taken steps to institutionalize his new approach to “world art” in founding the first Western journal for East Asian art, the influential *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, with Otto Kümmel in 1912. A further move in claiming ground in the field was the popularization of global art through the production of inexpensive books and brochures that consisted almost entirely of illustrations and addressed mainly non-academic readers. For example, Cohn edited the series *Kunst des Ostens* (Art of the East), for which he invited friends and colleagues like Hedwig Fechheimer, Otto Kümmel, Ernst Grosse, Friedrich Sarre, Ernst Kühnel, and Curt Glaser to write on Egyptian, Persian, Moorish, and East Asian art.⁷ In a review of Cohn’s own book in this series, *Indian Sculpture* from 1921, Ernst Diez characterized the new approach to global art in Germany as a total paradigm shift:

The valuation of Eastern, Far Eastern, and even Atlantic art has undergone a radical turn in the last years. These fields are no longer of interest only as exotic areas studied by ethnologists, but are instead integrated into art history and assessed as pure art.⁸

7 Hedwig Fechheimer, *Die Plastik der Ägypter*. (Die Kunst des Ostens I) (Berlin: Cassirer, 1920); William Cohn, *Indische Plastik*. (Kunst des Ostens II) (Berlin: Cassirer, 1921); Hedwig Fechheimer, *Kleinplastik der Ägypter*. (Die Kunst des Ostens III) (Berlin: Cassirer, 1921); Otto Kümmel, *Die Kunst Ostasiens* (Kunst des Ostens IV) (Berlin: Cassirer, 1921); Friedrich Sarre, *Die Kunst des alten Persien. Mit 150 Tafeln und Textabbildungen* (Kunst des Ostens V) (Berlin: Cassirer, 1922); Ernst Grosse, *Die ostasiatische Tuschkmalerei. Mit 160 Tafeln*. (Die Kunst des Ostens VI) (Berlin: Cassirer, 1922; Ernst Kühnel, *Miniaturmalerei im islamischen Orient*. (= Kunst des Ostens VII) Berlin: Cassirer, 1922); Heinrich Glück, *Die christliche Kunst des Ostens. Mit 132 Tafeln*. (Die Kunst des Ostens VIII) (Berlin: Cassirer, 1923); Ernst Kühnel, *Maurische Kunst*. (Kunst des Ostens IX) (Berlin: Cassirer, 1924); Ernst Grosse, *Ostasiatisches Gerät. Mit 140 Tafeln*. (Kunst des Ostens X) (Berlin: Cassirer, 1925); Curt Glaser, *Ostasiatische Plastik*. (Kunst des Ostens XI) (Berlin: Cassirer, 1925).

8 Ernst Diez, “Cohn, William: Indische Plastik (Band II der ‘Kunst des Ostens’, Berlin, Bruno Cassirer, 1921),” in *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft zu Wien* 52 (1922): 293: “In der Wertung der östlichen, fernöstlichen, ja auch der atlantischen Kunst ist in den letzten Jahren insofern ein radikaler Umschwung eingetreten, als diese Kunstkreise nicht mehr wie bis vor kurzem als exotische, vorwiegend den Ethnologen interessieren, sondern in den Betrachtungskreis der Kunstgeschichte einbezogen und rein künstlerisch gewertet werden. Auch W. Cohn, der nicht Ethnologe, sondern Kunsthistoriker ist, stellt gleich im ersten Satze seines Vorwortes fest, daß die indische Plastik in seiner Arbeit ‚nicht als Objekt der Völkerkunde oder Religionsgeschichte, sondern allein als Kunst behandelt werden soll, wenn auch notgedrungen, der allgemeinen Fremdheit des Gegenstandes wegen, die geschichtlichen und religiösen Zusammenhänge aufgezeigt werden müßten. [...] Das Buch ist nicht nur für weitere Kreise, denen zum ersten Male ein umfassender Einblick in die indische Formenwelt geboten wird, sondern auch für die Fachleute von grundlegendem Werte, denn es war bisher eine mühsame Arbeit, aus zahlreichen Werken all das zu schöpfen, was hier in handlichem Format vereinigt genossen und studiert werden kann.”

The purpose of the book was indeed not scientific, as Cohn underlined in his preface: “Indian sculpture shall be treated here not as an object of ethnology or the History of Religion but exclusively as works of art.”⁹ This empathetic approach to foreign art works had an inner logic; it broke with the philological method of classical art history¹⁰ in promoting instead an immediate aesthetical access to the work of art—naturally presented in these publications in the very reductive form of black and white photographs. The director for East Asian Art at the Völkerkundemuseum in Berlin, the aforementioned Otto Kümmel, developed this point even further in his book *Die Kunst Ostasiens* (The Art of East Asia), published in 1921. He claimed: “This book has no scientific value whatsoever. It does not try to convey art historical facts nor does it illustrate laws of art science; who is in search for such things shouldn’t lay hands on these pages. It is only addressed to the friend of art (Kunstfreund), who does not care about art history and art science at all.” Kümmel’s only motivation to present the objects in his book was “their inner quality.”¹¹

The art critic Wilhelm Hausenstein took this tendency to an extreme when he published his work *Barbaren und Klassiker: Ein Buch von der Bildnerie exotischer Völker* (Barbars and Classics: a Book on the Art Production of the Exotic Peoples) in 1922. After a one-page preface in which the author emphasized that art could only be conceived through images and not words,¹² the book showcased 177 plates of global art from Oceania, Africa, America, and Asia. Only after this accumulation of figures did

9 William Cohn, *Indische Plastik. Mit 161 Tafeln und drei Textabbildungen.* (= Kunst des Ostens Band II) Berlin: Bruno Cassirer Verlag, 1921, V.

10 By necessity, since Cohn spoke neither any Indian dialect, Chinese, nor Japanese.

11 Otto Kümmel, *Die Kunst Ostasiens. Mit 168 Tafeln und 5 Textabbildungen.* (Kunst des Ostens IV) (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer Verlag, 1921), 1: “Diese Buch hat keinerlei wissenschaftlichen Wert. Es will weder kunstgeschichtliche Tatsachen mitteilen, noch kunstwissenschaftliche Gesetze aufzeigen; wer dergleichen sucht, nehme es lieber nicht in die Hand. Es wendet sich ausschließlich an den Kunstfreund, dem Kunstgeschichte und Kunstwissenschaft gleichgültig oder nebensächlich sind. Nur der innere Wert der Werke [...] hat über ihre Aufnahme bestimmt.”

12 Wilhelm Hausenstein, *Barbaren und Klassiker. Ein Buch von der Bildnerie exotischer Völker. Mit einhundertsevenundsiebzig Tafeln.* (München: R. Pieper & Co. Verlag, 1922), [Ohne Seitenzählung]: “Bildende Kunst muß voraus im Bild begriffen sein. Vom wort her kann ein Verstehen nur unterstützt und entwickelt, aber nicht gegründet werden. Wer dies Buch in Händen hält, soll die erste Aufmerksamkeit und Arbeit den Tafeln zuwenden. Besitzt sein Auge und Gedächtnis die Bilder ganz, dann möge er auch lesen und möge nehmen, was etwa die geschriebenen Seiten ihm leihen können. Dies ist selbstverständlich. Aber es scheint nicht überflüssig, der Selbstverständlichkeit einmal besondren Nachdruck zu geben. Darum sind die Tafeln – Wegweiser zur exotischen Bildnerie – den Worten vorangestellt, die sich um Deutung und Wertung bemühen.”

Hausenstein present an explanatory text that he characterized as optional for the user of the book.

Thus, inexpensive “coffee table books” dominated the art history market in Germany in the early twentieth century.

What radiated through these positions and publications were the teachings of the— at the time—much-debated “Einfühlungstheorie.” These “aesthetics of empathy” advocated on the one hand the universal value of works of art and argued on the other for the emotional autonomy of the beholding individual. They declared mass consumption compatible with profound experiences that, in the best-case scenario, were supposed to occur during contemplation of even a mediocre reproduction of “masterpieces”—wherever they came from. Empathy theory provided excellent ammunition for the argument that an interest in art was not a branch of science or the privilege of self-proclaimed experts, but rather a pursuit open to every person of sensibility. To cite Richard Muther, a professor of art history in Breslau and a writer on art, “one does not have to be a trained historian to experience strong emotions, and enjoy them for what they are, in front of paintings. All one needs is to have a soul in one’s body and eyes in one’s head.”¹³ According to Wilhelm Waetzold, general director of the Berlin Museums from 1927 to 1933, the inner quality of art could reveal itself only “to those approaching not from the place of reason but from their own soul,” those who, with the help of their own feeling, take in the artwork and assure themselves of its worth.¹⁴ Such proclaimers of “art for all,” who raised feeling to a universal tool of recognition, did not want to train art scholars; they wanted to teach people to be art lovers.¹⁵ Given these preconditions, the oft-quoted dictum¹⁶

13 Richard Muther, “Ästhetische Cultur,” in Richard Muther, *Studien und Kritiken*. Band II: 1901. (Wien: Wiener Verlag, 1901), 1–23, here 15.

14 Wilhelm Waetzoldt, *Du und die Kunst. Eine Einführung in Kunstbetrachtung und Kunstgeschichte* [1938] (Berlin: Druckhaus Tempelhof, 1948), 19–20.

15 Ferdinand Avenarius, “Unsere Sache,” in *Der Kunstwart* 9, no. I (October 1895), 1–3, here 1–2.

16 For example in Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung. Ein Beitrag zur Stilpsychologie* [1908], ed. Helga Grebing (Munich: Fink, 2007), 73 and 75. See Theodor Lipps, “Einfühlung und ästhetischer Genuß,” in *Die Zukunft* 54 (1906): 100–114, here 100. Republished in Theodor Lipps, “Einfühlung und ästhetischer Genuß,” in: *Aesthetik*, ed. Emil Utitz (Berlin: Pan, 1924), 152–167, here 152. See also Theodor Lipps, “Ästhetik,” in *Systematische Philosophie von W. Dilthey, A. Riehl, W. Wundt, W. Ostwald, H. Ebbinghaus, R. Eucken, Fr. Paulsen, W. Münch, Th. Lipps*, ed. Paul Hinneberg (Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1907), 349–388, here 369. Criticism in August Döring, “Über Einfühlung,” in *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 7, no. 4 (1912): 568–577, here 575–577.

by the philosopher and psychologist Theodor Lipps, “aesthetic enjoyment is objectified self-enjoyment” (1906), assumed a thoroughly emancipatory aspect. This pleasure-sensitive self-obsession now enabled the justification of interpretations of art that, rather than insisting on explanations, were oriented simply toward bringing art works to life in a personal way.¹⁷

The writer and art historian Oskar Beyer called for a “reevaluation” of art history with his 1923 book *Welt-Kunst* (World Art). His programmatic introduction dismissed the old methods of art history that had tried to analyze objects mainly historically or philologically, and ridiculed any intellectual approach to works of art. For him, the only way for a proper reception was the strong experience in an immediate encounter with the value and vitality of the given object.¹⁸ That became a common opinion shared, for example, by the editors of inexpensive book series like the *Bibliothek der Kunstgeschichte* (The Library of Art History) as a way to cover aspects of global art history, as with Otto Burchard’s *Chinese Burial Ceramics* from 1923, or the brief introduction into *Old Buddhist Painting in Japan* by William Cohn, also published in 1923. Even more influential was the *Orbis Pictus. Weltkunst-Bücherei*—the Orbis Pictus/World Art Library—edited by Paul Westheim. The idea behind Orbis Pictus was to proliferate reproductions of global art works to a wider public and to educate the masses in their own “capac-

17 Richard Hamann, *Der Impressionismus in Leben und Kunst* (Köln: Dumont-Schauberg, 1907), 141: “For empathy theory, however, the explanation of works of art lies in speaking of every line, every luminosity, every space, and every object as if an entire person were contained therein. The lines begin to gambol and leap and the shadows and lights to shun or caress one another; the surfaces have their life, and cozy interiors start to lose their reality. Thus empathy theory becomes the justification for art interpretation of the kind that wants not to explain, but rather to translate art into vibrant effects, with the result that the entire work dissolves into strong but sporadic impressions. It is the aesthetic of lyricism.” [My translation.]

18 Oskar Beyer, *Welt-Kunst. Von der Umwertung der Kunstgeschichte* (Dresden: Sybilen-Verlag 1923), 14: “Dem neuen Wollen wächst die Aufgabe zu, die Schwächen, Lücken und Unzulänglichkeiten der alten Methoden nachzuweisen, wobei es auf Entlarvungen hinauslaufen wird. Vor allem wird das Künstliche, Einseitige, ja Armselige an jener geschichtlichen Beleuchtung offenbar zu machen sein, in der man alle Kunstgebilde zu betrachten sich gewöhnt hatte, und zwar schon durch den Nachweis, daß zahlreiche Stilgebiete in geschichtlicher Hinsicht heute noch völlig dunkel sind oder in ewigem Dunkel bleiben werden. Es muß nicht minder deutlich festgestellt werden, daß die Methode: durch geschichtliche oder philologische Forschung, also auf intellektuellem Wege an die Kunst heranzukommen, ein phantastischer Irrweg ist, da der Kunstwert (also das, was einzig wichtig und entscheidend) immer ein Unmittelbares, nur im Erlebnis Faßbares sein kann. Nur vom Erlebnis dieses unmittelbaren, gegenwartsträchtigen Kunstwertes aus darf also jede stil- und entwicklungsgeschichtliche Bemühung künftig inneres Recht gewinnen.”

ity to enjoy.”¹⁹ It is significant that the aforementioned Walter Lehmann published the first monograph on “Altmexikanische Kunstgeschichte ein Entwurf in Umrissen” as Volume 8 in the series “Orbis Pictus” in 1921, a book that the publishing house immediately had translated into English under the title *The History of Art in Ancient Mexico: An Essay in Outline*. In his preface, Lehmann pointed out that the book was not written to serve a small group of experts, but to educate and entertain all friends of true art.²⁰ That was boundary work on the grounds of a popularized empathy theory.

Herbert Kühn, author of *Die Kunst der Primitiven* (The Art of the Primitives), a book “which embraced the entire spectrum of prehistoric and indigenous art forms: the products of Aztecs, Bushmen, Eskimos, Africans, and so forth”²¹ could—in the year 1925—point to the fact that “the boundaries of the field of research in the history of art” had been “enormously extended in the last years and decades.” For Kühn, the days “when Classical Antiquity and Renaissance alone seemed to afford problems for historical research in art” were long past.²²

19 Johannes Richter, *Die Entwicklung des kunsterzieherischen Gedankens als Kulturproblem der Gegenwart nach Hauptgesichtspunkten dargestellt*. Dissertation, Universität Leipzig, 1909 (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1909), 120–121.

20 Walter Lehmann, *Kunstgeschichte des Alten Peru. Erläutert durch ausgewählte Werke aus Ton und Stein, Gewebe und Kleinode* (Berlin: Verlag Ernst Wasmuth, 1924), 7.

21 Ulrich Pfisterer, “Origins and Principles of World Art History—1900 (and 2000),” in *World Art Studies: Exploring Concepts and Approaches*, ed. Kitty Zijmans and Wilfried van Damme. (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2008), 69–89, here 81.

22 Herbert Kühn, “Vorwort,” in: *IPEK* 1 (1925), I–VII, here V: “Der Umkreis des Forschungsgebietes der Kunstgeschichte ist in den letzten Jahren und Jahrzehnten ungemessen erweitert worden. Die Zeit, der die Antike und die Renaissance allein Aufgaben der kunstgeschichtlichen Forschung schienen, sind längst vorüber. Neben diese beiden Gebiete trat die Forschung des Barock, des Rokoko, des 19. Jahrhunderts. Vor unseren Augen erwachte die Gotik zu neuem Leben, die romanische und byzantinische Kunst zog die Forscher an. Zuletzt dehnte sich die kunstwissenschaftliche Forschung auch aus auf die Phänomene der Kunst Ostasiens und Indiens. Der Kreis der Kunstgeschichte der Welt war damit noch nicht geschlossen. Als letztes, und für die moderne Stilforschung vielleicht wichtigstes Gebiet muß die prähistorische und ethnographische Kunst in den Rahmen der kunstwissenschaftlichen Arbeit einbezogen werden. Für alle anderen Gebiete der Kunstgeschichte bestehen wissenschaftliche Zeitschriften, die die Arbeiten der Forscher sammeln. Eine solche Zeitschrift bestand für das Forschungsgebiet der prähistorischen und ethnographischen Kunst bisher nicht. Das Jahrbuch will sich ausschließlich dieser Aufgabe widmen, sein Arbeitsgebiet ist trotz vieler Berührungspunkte ein anderes als das der prähistorischen und ethnographischen Zeitschriften. Einbezogen in den Arbeitsumkreis ist die prähistorische Kunst aller Kontinente der Erde, ferner aus den Rahmen der Ethnographie die Kunst Afrikas, Amerikas, der Südsee und der Naturvölker Asiens. Es ist das Ziel des Herausgebers, alle Schulen und wissenschaftlichen Lehrmeinungen gleichmäßig zu Worte kommen zu lassen. Die Zeitschrift ist als eine gemeinsame Arbeit aller Nationen gedacht. Alle wissenschaftliche Arbeit sollte unabhängig sein von der Politik, sowohl der inneren wie der äußeren, unabhängig von all den Strömungen, die heute in dieser Richtung laufen, morgen in jener. Ein Volk, das

In the first edition of his *Jahrbuch für Prähistorische und Ethnographische Kunst* (Yearbook of Prehistoric and Ethnographical Art), Kühn formulated his methodological convictions and challenged, amongst others, Heinrich Wölfflin and his principles:

Measured against the art of the Neolithic, the Bronze, and Early Iron Age, Wölfflin's principles of "linear" and "painterly" promptly collapse. These terms, as fruitful as they seem for the Renaissance and Baroque, are not sufficient to describe the abstract, geometric art of these times. They are equally inadequate for the art of Africa, the South Sea, and parts of America. In the perspective of world art, Wölfflin's principles as well as all the other methodological approaches of European art history can hardly be upheld.²³

But the recommended alternative proliferated in the many inexpensive publications on global art—the strongly felt experience in an immediate encounter with the object—was in itself problematic and could be attacked by "classical" art historians who denied any significance of empathy theory for art historical research and disdained the aesthetics of self-enjoyment.

Richard Hamann, among others, criticized the empathy theory as a sentimental "anthropomorphization" of art objects. In his view, the rational description of transcendent objects was being suspended in favor of a self-satisfied evaluation of inner feelings; he was not willing to accept that in his day and age, a popular taste driven by emotions could assert itself over a strictly intellectual processing of a work of art. Naturally, Hamann was not alone in his elitist suspicion of empathy as an art historical means of appre-

sich selbst ausschaltet von der großen wissenschaftlichen Arbeit anderer Kulturvölker, schadet sich selbst. Der Herausgeber betrachtet es als eine angenehme Pflicht, darauf hinzuweisen, daß sich wissenschaftliche Vertreter aller Völker bereit erklärt haben, an den Aufgaben und Zielen dieser Zeitschrift mitzuarbeiten."

23 Herbert Kühn, "Die Bedeutung der prähistorischen und ethnographischen Kunst für die Kunstgeschichte," in *IPEK* 1 (1925), 3–13, here 8: "An der Kunst des Neolithikums, der Bronzezeit und erste Eisenzeit gemessen, zerfallen plötzlich Wölfflins Grundbegriffe von zeichnerisch und malerisch. Diese Begriffe, so fruchtbar für die Zeit von Renaissance und Barock, sind nicht zureichend für die abstrakte, geometrische Kunst dieser Zeit. Sie sind ebenso unzureichend für die Kunst Afrikas, der Südsee, eines Teils von Amerika. Sie haben plötzlich unter dem Gesichtspunkt der gesamten Kunst der Welt nur eine Teilbedeutung, die sie an eine bestimmte Form kettet. Und ebenso ergeht es den anderen Begriffen, die aus der europäischen Kunst für die Kunst Europas abgezogen sind."

hension. In his late essay “Stilgeschichte und Sprachgeschichte” (History of Style and History of Language), written in 1934, Julius von Schlosser sought to protect the great works of art from the importunacy and willfulness of the common folk. Schlosser tried to prevent an art history guided by the internal transformation offered by processes of empathy and aesthetic imitation—in short, the investigation of the emotional effects brought about by the experience of art. According to him, nothing was worse than observing how the common beholder obscured the artist’s expression with a description of his own empathic impression. Such enthusiasts as these handled a work of art, in his estimation, as if it “were nothing more than soft clay,” ready to be transformed by their inclinations and opinions and was reduced thus to its emotional effect.²⁴ Schlosser found such “aesthetic subjectivism”²⁵ obscene and Theodor Lipps’ empathetic aesthetic theory wrongheaded.²⁶

The conflict about the right to demarcate the extension and methodological constitution of art history, which I tried to outline briefly here, dissolved abruptly when the Nazis came into power in 1933. Global art was marginalized in Germany and the advocates of global art history, like Walter Lehmann, were driven out of their jobs or emigrated, like William Cohn and Paul Westheim, to England or Mexico. With the actors the discussions about the boundary of the field emigrated into very different contexts.

24 Julius von Schlosser, “‘Stilgeschichte’ und ‘Sprachgeschichte’ der bildenden Kunst. Ein Rückblick.” Vorgelegt von Karl Voßler am 12. January 1935. (= Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Abteilung Jahrgang 1935. Heft 1) (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Kommission bei der C. H. Beck’schen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1935), 16: “Wie schwer ist es, was so natürlich erscheint, eine gute Natur, ein treffliches Gemälde, an und für sich zu beschauen, den Gesang um des Gesanges willen zu vernehmen, den Schauspieler im Schauspieler zu bewundern, sich eines Gebäudes um seiner eigenen Harmonie und seiner Dauer willen zu erfreuen. Nun sieht man aber meist die Menschen entschiedene Werke der Kunst geradezu behandeln, als wenn es ein weicher Ton wäre. Nach ihren Neigungen, Meinungen, Grillen sollen sich der gebildete Marmor wieder ummodellieren, das festgemauerte Gebäude sich ausdehnen oder zusammenziehen, ein Gemälde soll lehren, ein Schauspiel bessern und alles soll alles werden. Eigentlich aber, weil die meisten Menschen selbst formlos sind, weil sie sich aus ihrem Wesen selbst keine Gestalt zu nehmen, damit alles loser und lockerer Stoff werde, wozu sie auch gehören. Alles reduzieren sie zuletzt auf den sogenannten Effekt, alles ist relativ, und so wird auch alles relativ, außer dem Unsinn, der Abgeschmacktheit, die dann auch ganz absolut regiert.”

25 Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*. Elfte unveränderte Auflage. (München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1921), 2 and 4–5.

26 Schlosser, “Stilgeschichte’ und ‘Sprachgeschichte,” 5: “Ich habe seinerzeit jene dicken Wälzer der deutschen Ästhetiker, wie Lipps, Volkelt, Dessoir u. a. mit heißem Bemühen studiert, aber nicht den mindesten Nutzen von ihnen zu ziehen vermocht, obwohl sie mit Flickchen und Lappen kunsthistorischer Belesenheit – viel weniger Anschauung – reichlich genug behangen waren; heute sind sie längst in einem der dunkelsten Winkel meiner Bibliothek bestattet.”

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New Worlds:
Frontiers,
Inclusion,
Utopias

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**Perspectives on
Institutional Critique:
Lea Lublin and Julio Le Parc
between South America
and Europe**

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During the sixties and seventies, a significant number of artists saw museums more as problematic spaces rather than as mere environments for exhibition. In diverse and distant cities, there were many art projects that pointed to cultural institutions as managers of conservative social representation, particularly of bourgeois self-representation. The tactics used to destabilize¹ these Enlightenment-born institutions and their unfulfilled promises of creating a public sphere for culture went from boycotts and self-exclusion to thorough analysis of the exhibition apparatus.

These art proposals have been studied—mainly by the Anglo-Saxon academy—in terms of “institutional critique.” This notion was coined in 1975 by Mel Ramsden from the English Art and Language group² and has been useful in articulating the aesthetic practices of the progressive political radicalization of those years, without restricting such analysis to iconographic issues. However, in resonance with the widespread anti-Americanism of the mid-sixties, Ramsden had thought of the institutional critique particularly in relation to the New York scene: how the art institution, co-opted by the market and the art “bureaucrats,” was being used there to reinforce American and capitalist hegemony.³ In this sense, although Ramsden conceived it more as a critical practice than as a theoretical definition, the notion of “institutional critique”—in the same way as “cultural field”⁴ or “avant-garde”⁵—tends to be understood as a universal category,⁶ one which presupposes a series

1 Andrea Giunta, “Imaginarios de la Desestabilización,” in Rodrigo Alonso, cur., *Sistemas, Acciones y Procesos 1965-1975* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Proa, 2011), 49–58.

2 Blake Stimson, “What Was Institutional Critique?” in Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, eds., *Institutional Critique. An Anthology of Artists’ Writings* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2009), 20–42.

3 Mel Ramsden, “On Practice” (*The Fox* n. 1, 1975), in Alberro and Blake, *Institutional Critique*, 170–199.

4 Pierre Bourdieu, “Campo Artístico y Proyecto Creador” (1966), in Jean Paulhan et al., *Problemas del Estructuralismo* (México: Siglo XXI, 1967), 135–182.

5 Hal Foster has disarticulated Peter Bürger’s stands on the avant-garde by insisting on the retrospective character of its actual conceptualization, which was only developed from the postwar period on by the neo-avant-gardes: Hal Foster, *El Retorno de lo Real* (Madrid: Akal, 2001). Also, several texts published during the 1990s by authors such as Rita Eder, Annateresa Fabris, Andrea Giunta, Gerardo Mosquera, Mari Carmen Ramírez, and Jorge Schwartz were fundamental to understanding the specificities of Latin American avant-gardes.

6 One of the critics of the concept of “artistic field” points out that it tends to universalize the French case or, in other words, that it idealizes the cultural field: María Teresa Gramuglio, “La Summa de Bourdieu,” *Punto de Vista* 47 (December 1993): 38–42.

of standardized characteristics even of institutions alien to the art scene (and to the art market) within which these concepts and historiographic tools were born. This is even more problematic when considering that one of the strongest criticisms of cultural institutions during the sixties and seventies was, precisely, that they naturalized modern art and bourgeois taste, disguising this alienation as “universality.”

Through the analysis of two cases, this work proposes a situated reflection on institutional critique practices that consider the differential inscriptions of art institutions within their particular cultural scenes and contexts. Some productions of Julio Le Parc and Lea Lublin, two Argentinians based in Paris since 1958 and 1964, respectively, will enable us to approach the geopolitical asymmetries between the institutional landscapes of Paris and Buenos Aires or Santiago de Chile. Both migrant artists not only knew well those different cultural scenes but also looked at them with a critical eye, integrating these asymmetries into the very fabric of their artwork or public exhibitions.

First, we will focus on kinetic art, a production with a universalist vocation which found in Paris—the capital of universality—one of its more active epicenters.⁷ We will contrast the experience called *Une journée dans la rue* (1966), organized on the streets of Paris by the Groupe de Recherche d’Art Visuel (GRAV, formed by Le Parc, Horacio García Rossi, Francisco Sobrino, Yvaral, Joël Stein, and François Morellet), with the retrospective exhibition of Le Parc in 1967 at the crowded halls of the Centro de Artes Visuales of the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella (CAV-ITDT) in Buenos Aires. These cases enable us to disaggregate the notion of institutional critique and investigate the different inflections of that “demystification of the arts,” as Le Parc liked to say, claimed by kinetic art when exhibited in such different places as the streets of Paris and the halls of the ITDT in Buenos Aires.

Secondly, we will examine the *Cultura: Dentro y Fuera del Museo* project, which Lea Lublin carried out at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes of Santiago de Chile in 1971, and then managed to partially reprise in Paris. Lublin’s complex proposal for

7 On the universal vocation of kineticism, see my “The Multiplication (and Rebellion) of Objects: Julio Le Parc and the European Triumph of Kinetic Art” in Isabel Plante y Cristina Rossi, *XIII Premio Fundación Telefónica a la Investigación en Historia de las Artes Plásticas* (Buenos Aires: FIAAR-Fundación Espigas, 2011), 15–74.

such a traditional institution as an encyclopedic museum of art within the context of the democratic arrival of socialism into power invites questions as to the extent this can be analogous to emblematic cases of institutional critique such as Marcel Broodthaers' *Musée d'art Moderne. Département des Aigles* (1968–1972) or the artistic protests carried out at the MoMa around those years.⁸

Interwoven between Europe and South America, the artistic careers of Lublin and Le Parc enable us to question the boundaries of such distant but interconnected cultural scenes. Their itineraries also bring visibility to the gap between the cultural and institutional contexts in which these artists have had an impact on either side of the Atlantic Ocean. Both Le Parc and Lublin participated, in their own way, in the questioning of cultural institutions, but introduced what could be called “the geopolitical density of institutional critique” into their work. The analysis of these cases brings into focus the utopic horizon related to the figure of the “Third World” and its distance from Europe—a horizon that turned out to be culturally productive within those times of Latin America’s international emergence and was not alien to these migrant artists.

Kineticism Here and There

In 1966, Julio Le Parc represented Argentina at the 33rd Venice Biennale with some forty kinetic works and manipulable objects. According to reviews, the Argentine artist’s room was one of the most widely visited and, against all predictions pointing to Roy Lichtenstein as the favorite, Le Parc obtained the Grand International Painting Prize. Individual recognition such as this, however, was not consistent with GRAV’s collaborative work and institutional critique, which, pursuing “art demystification,” intended to create participatory art of changing shapes, multiple editions, and not always identifiable authors.

Their cognitive notion of perception enabled kinetic artists to claim that optical and kinetic resources were not mere tricks of illusion. Subjecting peripheral vision—the vision of one’s sur-

8 See Francis Frascina, “My Mai, *Guernica*, MoMA, and the Art Left, New York 1969–70,” in *Art, Politics and Dissent. Aspects of the Art Left in Sixties America* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), and Rachel Haidu, *The Absence of Work. Marcel Broodthaers, 1964–1976* (Cambridge, MA: October Books and MIT Press, 2010).

roundings that facilitates spatial orientation—to conditions of perceptual instability meant attacking the viewer’s sensation of himself and his environment. Thus, kineticism attempted to denaturalize everyday perception and, therefore, call into question a society that the artists thought had become unacceptably automated.

Two months before the opening of the Venice Biennale, on April 19, 1966, the GRAV organized *Une journée dans la rue* with various participative activities beginning every two hours in strategic places around Paris. The circuit began at 8 a.m. by handing out surprise gifts to the passers-by at the Chatélet subway station, one of the busiest in the city. Then, on the elegant Champs Élysées Avenue, a “permutational structure” made of square Plexiglas sheets designed by Francisco Sobrino was waiting to be handled by the public.⁹ At noon, Yvaral’s *Structures Cinétiques Pénétrables*, installed in front of the Opéra, invited viewers to look at the imposing house of high culture with a new eye. Later, not far from the Louvre Museum, a giant kaleidoscope created by Sobrino multiplied and fragmented the image of the viewer who looked through one of its ends. On Boulevard Saint-Germain-des-Près, the group laid out a series of manipulable objects created by its members. This station turned out to be the one that attracted the largest audience, according to critic Pierre Restany.¹⁰ In Montparnasse, they mounted a floor composed of small unstable platforms designed by Le Parc. In the evening, across from Saint-Germain-des-Près church, the group distributed inflated balloons to women and pins to men. In the Latin Quarter, filled with small movie theaters, they handed out whistles to viewers of “art” films.

Throughout the day and evening, they distributed a fold-out leaflet in which, in addition to mapping the times and places of the activities, the GRAV argued that the “material city” was pervaded by a network of daily practices that might lead to downright inertia. The various interventions of the *Journée* sought to sprinkle the city with perplexing situations in need of answers from its dwellers. Restany observed most of the experience and noted that the reactions of clerks, domestic help, and “yé-yé”

9 We follow the pieces’ authorship as indicated in *GRAV 1960-1968* (Centre d’Art Contemporain de Grenoble, 1998).

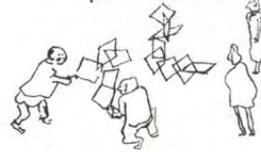
10 Pierre Restany, “Quand l’art descend dans la rue,” *Arts et Loisirs* 31 (April 27, 1966): 16–17.

Programme du Mardi 19 Avril 1966



8 H. CHATELET - Entrée du Métro rond-point central. Distribution de petits cadeaux surprises aux voyageurs.

10 H. CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES - Coin rue La Boétie - Montage et Démontage d'une structure permutative.



12 H. OPERA - Entrée du Métro rond point central. Objet cinétique habitable, abandonné à la curiosité des passants

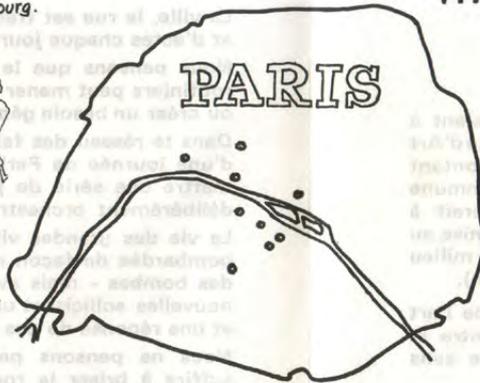
23 H. BD SAINT-MICHEL
De la Seine au Luxembourg.
Promenade avec
Flashes électroniques.



14 H. JARDIN DES TUILERIES.
Face avenue Général Lemonnier.
Le Kaldoscope géant-moyen sera abandonné à la curiosité des enfants et des adultes, de même que des ballons géants sur le bassin.



22 H. QUARTIER LATIN
rue Champollion
Sifflets en cadeau pour les spectateurs de cinémas d'art.



18 H. MONTPARNASSE
Face à la Coupole.
Les habitués du quartier et les passants pourront chercher leur équilibre en marchant sur des dalles mobiles.



20 H. BD SAINT-GERMAIN
Entre la rue de Rennes et la rue du Dragon.
Distribution de ballons et épingles.



16 H. ODEON - BD SAINT GERMAIN
Présentation Foraine.
Divers éléments à actionner, manipuler, essayer, etc.

1. GRAV, *Une journée dans la rue* (1966). Interior of the fold-out leaflet. Le Parc Archive.

girls were positive but isolated. Paradoxically, despite taking place on the streets rather than in a museum, from the critic's perspective, the experience confirmed the detachment between art and life.

The GRAV was part of that set of artists who, from different aesthetic traditions, tried to reconcile art and life to create a new unity in which banal objects were integrated into the aesthetic production, and art actions affected the daily environment to provoke an aesthetic and ethical transformation. The group intended to reach the mass public through devices that did not require a high level of cultural capital. In their logic, the street could be the ideal place to achieve their goal. However, in spite of drawing large audiences to art galleries,¹¹ kineticism did not achieve the same level of success in the public space and the street experience was not repeated.

New Worlds:
Frontiers,
Inclusion,
Utopias

¹¹ The exhibition *Lumière et Mouvement* (Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1967) attracted a formidable amount of visitors and was extended for three months longer than planned.

A year later, in August 1967, Le Parc's retrospective exhibition was opened at the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, with remarkable attendance: more than 150,000 visitors over two weeks.¹² In the short-film about the exhibition produced by the ITDT, Le Parc commented:

Since the Buenos Aires public is less attached to artistic and cultural tradition, I think that they can receive this type of experience in a much freer and more spontaneous manner, and thus make direct contact with the objects on exhibit.¹³

First, to the rhythm of jazz, the film showed images of the crowds in the halls; then, the reactions of visitors reflected in the stainless steel surfaces; following this, there were close-ups of the works' visual effects in a dim light; lastly, at the end of the film, viewers were shown under the baffling stroboscopic lights given off by *Mouvement Surprises* (1967). This last sequence of images in combination with the pop music soundtrack seemed to record an evening at a nightclub rather than a visual arts exhibition. Buenos Aires viewers responded in accordance with Le Parc's expectations: spontaneously and enthusiastically. The strategy consisted of producing objects that could reach people who did not frequent exhibitions and, at the same time, get rid of the pompous name of "art."

In the definition of "art field" published by Pierre Bourdieu in 1966, the French sociologist worked with what was familiar to him. To a large extent, his intellectual field matched the boundaries of Paris. In this sense, his perspective was similar to the vantage point of many peripheral cultural actors: in some way, the City of Light was equivalent to the art field. As the capital of modern culture, Paris was an exceptional case: it was the geographic point where the crisscross of forces enjoyed the longest tradition and ascendance.

Le Parc had moved to France attracted by the opportunities and challenges offered by *the* art field par excellence. On his glorious return to Argentina, however, the fact that Buenos Ai-

12 159,287 visitors were recorded. *Memoria y Balance 1967* (Buenos Aires: ITDT, 1968).

13 Interview by Le Parc in *Exposición realizada en el Instituto Torcuato Di Tella con el auspicio de la Asociación Ver y Estimar y el Fondo Nacional de las Artes* (ITDT, 1967). Short film directed by Jorge Alberto de León. ITDT Archives.

res' artistic tradition had not reached Parisian levels lent an advantage to his project. A little further from autonomy in the cultural sphere, Buenos Aires could be the place where the kinetic utopia came true, with art and life coming together in the ITDT's crammed halls. Still, this private, modernizing, internationalist, and appealing institution was the heart of the local avant-garde and had a public of its own, a public used to novel forms of art.¹⁴

Museums Inside and Outside the “Third World”

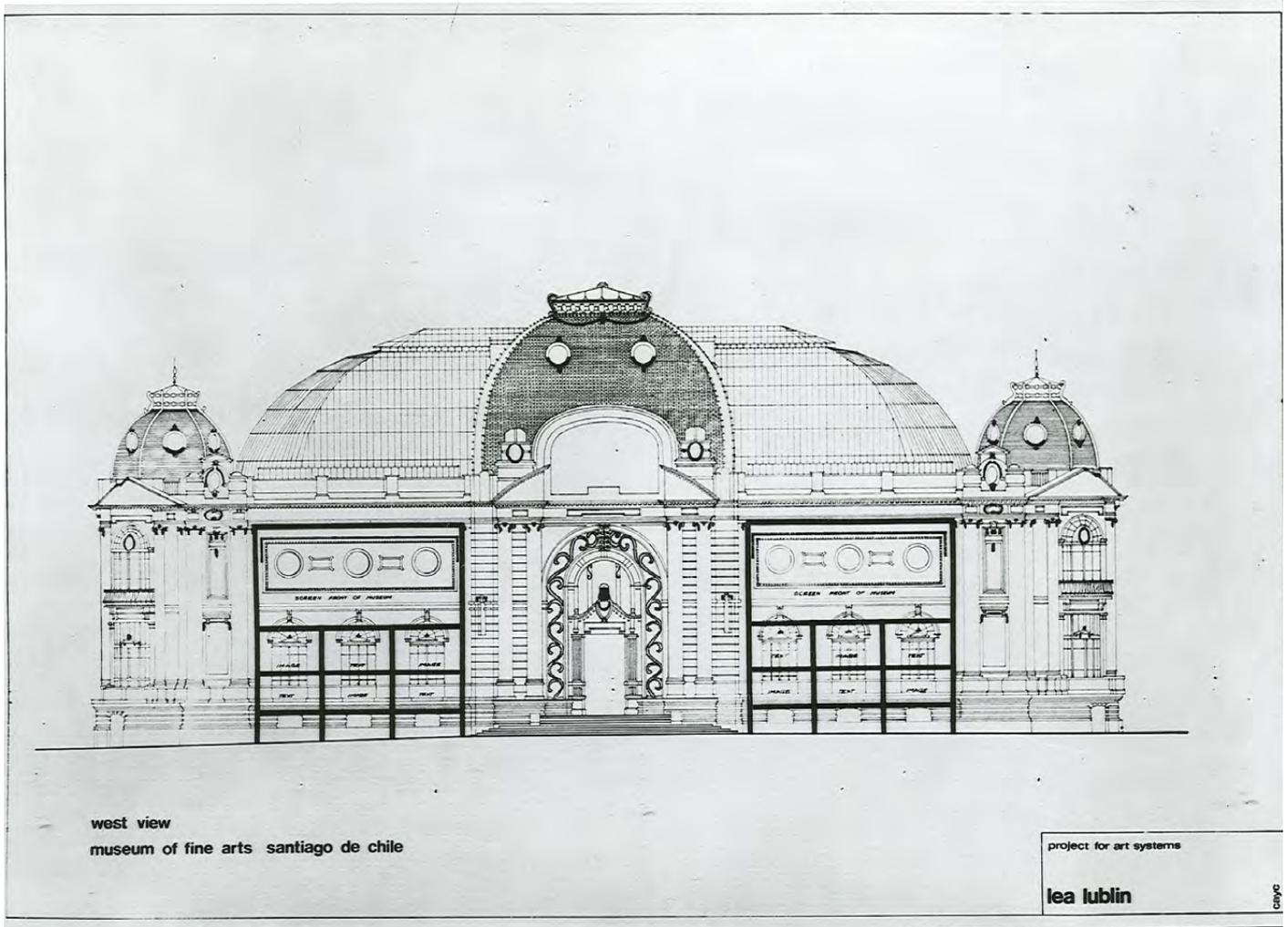
Lea Lublin produced her ambitious project *Cultura: Dentro y Fuera del Museo* (Culture: Inside and Outside the Museum) at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Santiago, Chile, at the end of 1971. This was one year after socialist Salvador Allende of the Unidad Popular party was elected president.

In the artist's own words, that interdisciplinary project was intended to “raise questions about how the world is represented and how the different plastic and visual languages used in transmitting it are constituted.”¹⁵ She proposed, then, an “active reflection” (e.g. mediated by participatory devices) on the differentiated circulation of the representation of social processes “outside the museum” on the one hand, and the intellectual and technical processes of art and knowledge “inside the museum” on the other. To this end, *Cultura* deliberately accentuated the differences between the traditional National Fine Arts Museum's “inside” and “outside,” while also producing porosity in the boundaries separating the museum from Chilean society and political reality. Thus, Lublin was totally aligned with the institutional critique's reflections, but articulated them along geopolitical lines. What was happening “outside” the Museo in Santiago in 1971 was unprecedented anywhere in the world: socialism had come to power through democratic means.

This project was viable in the context of the renovation initiated by artist Nemesio Antúnez when he became director of the Museo in 1969. The Museo was looking to articulate the rela-

14 A sociological study carried out at the ITDT concluded that “the predominant part of the audience is composed by young people with university education and artistic inclinations.” Germán Kratochwil, “Arte Pop en Buenos Aires”, *Mundo Nuevo* 26–27 (Paris, August–September 1968): 106–112.

15 Lea Lublin, “Dentro y Fuera del Museo,” *Artinf* (Buenos Aires, July 1971).



2. Lea Lublin, *Cultura: dentro y fuera del museo* (1971). Architectural plan of the Fine Art Museum façade, Santiago de Chile, including part of Lublin's project. This blueprint was part of the *Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano* exhibition, organised by the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CayC) in 1972.

tionship between the institution and the citizenry in general through a program of exhibitions which included Lublin's project and others such as Gordon Matta-Clark's *Claraboya*, (one of his first architectural "cuts"), also presented in 1971.¹⁶

In turn, the cultural policies implemented during Chile's access to socialism articulated notions like "critical culture" and "popular culture," which made it possible to revise the functions of museums from the inside of these public institutions themselves.¹⁷

Lublin spent three months in Chile and managed to secure the cooperation of local institutions like Chile-Films, television stations, and the School of Fine Arts. However, despite her efforts, the project was exhibited for only a few days and some

16 Tatiana Cuevas and Gabriela Rangel, cur., *Gordon Matta-Clark. Deshacer el Espacio* (Lima: Museo de Arte de Lima, 2010).

17 Martín Bowen Silva, "El Proyecto Sociocultural de la Izquierda Chilena durante la Unidad Popular. Crítica, Verdad e Inmunología Política," *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos* (January 2008), accessed October 8, 2014.

parts of the project could not be completed.¹⁸ In any case, the press spread her explanations: “Inside lies what is classified, arranged in order, frozen. The physical play is on the streets while the intellectual play is inside; outside lies reality while inside there are representations of reality.”¹⁹ In Lublin’s work, representation is no less important than reality. In line with the interest in semiotics of some of her collaborators, she believed that symbolization was an essential process for apprehending reality. In this sense, culture was not something to be discarded as a whole, as the anti-intellectual camp of the New Left claimed.²⁰ In Allende’s Chile, public art institutions could represent obstacles to the process of social change, but they also held the possibility of becoming instruments for facilitating the new state’s aims. In this context, in an attempt to harness the full potential of the museum to affect the symbolization and representation processes, Lublin leveraged a wide variety of resources and devices.²¹

The project’s “Fuera del Museo” (Outside the Museum) section had three parts. First was the “Muro de los Medios de Comunicación Masiva” (Wall of Mass Communications Media). Screens were installed in front of the elegant façade of the 1910 building, showing audiovisual footage of the most important recent events to take place in Chile. The “Muro de la Historia” (Wall of History) was on the southern lateral façade of the building, projecting images related to key figures in the history of Chile and Latin America. The white surface of the northern lateral façade became the “Muro de la Expression Popular” (Wall of Popular Expression), renewed daily so that the public could make drawings or graffiti on it.

The “Dentro del Museo” (Inside the Museum) section was also organized in three parts or chapters. First, visitors following the route of the installation were offered information on the most important conceptual breakthroughs in the arts and sciences since the mid-nineteenth century. This information was articu-

18 Ana Herlfant, “Cultura Dentro y Fuera del Museo,” *Eva* (Santiago de Chile, January 7, 1972).

19 Ernesto Saúl, “Juegos Respetuosos,” *Ahora* (Santiago de Chile, December 28, 1971).

20 See Oscar Terán, *Nuestros Años Sesentas. La Formación de la Nueva Izquierda Intelectual en la Argentina, 1956–1966* (Buenos Aires: Puntosur, 1991).

21 We follow Jorge Glusberg’s description in *Del Pop a la Nueva Imagen* (Buenos Aires: Gaglianone, 1985), which was contrasted with press information and archive photography.

lated through diagrams that Lublin called “Paneles de Producción Interdisciplinaria” (Interdisciplinary Production Panels). Lublin had produced them in collaboration with specialists in physics, social sciences, linguistics, psychoanalysis, and visual arts (such as Eliseo Verón, the Argentine semiologist residing in Paris; Mario Pedrosa, the Brazilian art critic exiled in Chile; and the Chilean physicist Carlos Martinoya).²²

Then the Panels alternated with a series of curtains made of translucent strips, which the artist called “Pantallas Transparentes” (Transparent Screens), on which slides of a selection of art ranging from Impressionism to 1971 were projected. Visitors had to walk through these in order to continue along the installation route. Finally, in the middle of the room, closed-circuit television showed a live transmission of what was happening outside the museum on the three Walls.

In 1972, Lublin returned to Paris and began working on a new version of this project. It was only in 1974 that she managed to develop a version that was limited to the section on art discourse for Galerie Yvon Lambert. She set up the “Pantallas Transparentes” but not the “Paneles de Producción Interdisciplinaria.” There were no interventions in the gallery’s exterior, but she did bring material previously foreign to the art realm: the work *Polílogo Exterior* (Exterior Polylogue), which consisted of tape recordings of gallery owner Yvon Lambert, Lublin herself, writer Philippe Sollers, and poet and essayist Marcel Pleynet—the latter two both co-founders of famed magazine *Tel quel*—all expounding, in a sort of collective monologue, on the difference between word and image and on the current state of painting and art.

It seems highly unlikely that the Chilean version could have been brought to fruition in a Parisian museum. In this sense, Bernard Teyssède quipped that he could hardly imagine the Musée National d’Art Moderne ceding one of its exterior walls to allow people to express their thoughts on President Georges

22 The list of collaborators changes depending on the sources. The Argentine team announced by Lublin gathered Juan Carlos de Brasi (philosophy), Jorge Sabato (physics), Jorge Bosch (mathematics), Eliseo Verón (humanities), Diego García Reynoso (psychoanalysis), Oscar Masotta (social history of madness), Juan Carlos Indarta (linguistics), Alberto Costa (architecture), and Analía Werthein (visual arts).

Pompidou via graffiti.²³ Another Parisian museum, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, intended to offer a refreshing program at the ARC (Animation, Recherche, Confrontation), its department of contemporary art created in 1967, under the direction of Pierre Gaudibert.²⁴ But in general terms, French cultural institutions turned out to be particularly conservative for those artists interested in breaking with modernity during the sixties.²⁵

The Country and the City? Western and Asymmetric Institutions

In his book, *The Country and the City*, published in 1973, Raymond Williams analyzed from a cultural studies perspective the ways in which capitalism transformed British society. The author highlighted the symbolic dimension of the terms “country” and “city” as they appeared in literary and social discourses. Both “country” and “city” were, at the same time, cultural spaces, settings, and historically defined iconographies.²⁶ Although Williams’ analysis focused on the nineteenth century, chapter 24 jumped to the period of the book’s writing for the author to reflect on his contemporary times: by 1973, those figures of “the country” and “the city” defined during the previous century could be applied on a worldwide scale.

Even though political colonization was supposedly over, argued Williams, it could be said that metropolitan states were to Third World countries what cities had formerly been to the countryside. The promise of progress—all of “the country” will eventually become “the city”²⁷—was a fallacy, as the production and economy of those rural states were structured to a great extent around supplying raw materials to the urban states.

23 Bernard Teyssède, “Le Parcours de Lea Lublin”, in *Parcours 1965-1975* (Anvers: International Cultureel Center, 1975), 1–12.

24 Annabelle Tenèze, *Exposer l'art Contemporain à Paris. L'exemple de l'ARC au Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1967–1988* (Mémoire de DEA, Ecole de Chartres, 2004).

25 Isabel Plante “Imágenes, Lengua y Distancia. París desde Latinoamérica”, *Argentinos de París. Arte y Viajes Culturales durante los Años Sesenta* (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2013), 25–56.

26 Beatriz Sarlo, “Prólogo a la Edición en Español”, in Raymond Williams, *El Campo y la Ciudad* (1973) (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2001), 14–15.

27 Raymond Williams, *El campo y la ciudad*, 345.

But the political landscape of those years posed a paradox to the Marxist orthodoxy: while the history of capitalism had been understood as the triumph of the city over the countryside, the rising to power of socialism had not occurred in central states, but in the “underdeveloped” ones. On a global scale, continued Williams, the “country” seemed to be fulfilling the dreams of the “city.”

Identified with focoism and the theory of dependence, the South American New Left—with which many intellectuals, including Le Parc and Lublin, sympathized—shared the Third World perspective proposed by Williams, which suggested that History with a capital H had moved to the “country.”²⁸ From this viewpoint, regional cultural institutions were thought to contribute to the very colonized and alienated society they wanted to denounce. However, the dichotomy between the “country” and the “city” figures was not enough to account for the complexity of the institutional panorama’s similarities and asymmetries between the large cities of the Southern Cone and those of the “First World.”

The Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Santiago had an encyclopedic profile: created as a public institution around 1880, it had come to reinforce the western and modern character of the Chilean state. In 1910, the Museo opened an elegant building of its own in the Beaux-Arts style, designed by the Chilean-French architect Émile Jéquier. As mentioned above, under the direction of Antunez since 1969, the social role of the museum had become an object of revision—a revision which acquired new nuances under the cultural policies of Allende’s administration beginning in 1970.

For its part, the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella was a private institution funded by an Argentine manufacturing company that did not produce raw materials, but rather cars and labor-saving devices of its own design.²⁹ In 1963, the Instituto brought its Visual Arts, Musical Experimentation, and Audiovisual Experimentation centers (CAV, CLAEM, CEA) together in one building in downtown Buenos Aires. In this sense, the Instituto offered

28 Claudia Gilman, *Entre la Pluma y el Fusil. Debates y Dilemas del Escritor Revolucionario en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2003).

29 John King, *El Di Tella y el Desarrollo Cultural Argentino en la Década del Sesenta* (Buenos Aires: Gaglianone, 1985).

significant resources and visibility to art modernization in Buenos Aires, a city whose cultural effervescence had fascinated French art critic Pierre Restany in 1964.³⁰

Cultural institutions had contributed to the shaping and representation of South American modern states since the nineteenth century as well as modernizing the metropolis of the region during the postwar period, and were also objects of distrust due to their conservative character. How, then, should one consider such fruitful terms as “institutional critique” in order to avoid simplistic global perspectives? How might we understand the specificities of the aesthetic productions in eccentric but interconnected scenes during the late sixties and early seventies? A key might be found in the comparative analyses offered by studying migrant artists: artists who made their way in new places without losing contact with their cities of origin.

For the past two decades, the study of international cultural connections and art networks has tended to problematize the center-periphery logic, and has enabled us to re-examine the aesthetic proposals of modern or pop art from their local inflections and transnational articulations.³¹ The Latin American cultural and factual history and the geographic itineraries of numerous artists challenge us to think, from here in the Far West,³² about both belonging and limits in relation to Western traditions.

Back to our case studies. Even though Buenos Aires presented a very stimulating art scene, the art market and international visibility of the Parisian art landscape were on another level entirely. Lea Lublin and Julio Le Parc, among many others, tried their luck there because, in Williams’ terms, Paris represented “the city” and had a tradition of hosting foreign artists and intellectuals. But if “the country” seemed to be fulfilling the dreams of “the city” as Williams stated, the Chilean and Argentine cultural institutions conveyed a dissimilar meaning to those of Paris or New York.

30 See Isabel Plante, “Pierre Restany et l’Amérique Latine. Un détournement de l’axe Paris–New York,” in Richard Leeman, dir., *Le Demi-Siècle de Pierre Restany*. (Paris: Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art – Éditions des Cendres, 2009), 287–309.

31 Books such as *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*, *Discrepant Abstraction*, or *Pop Art and Vernacular Cultures* (all compiled by Kobena Mercer and published by The MIT Press and InIVA between 2005 and 2007) are illustrative of the productivity of this perspective in the Anglo-Saxon academy.

32 We take the expression from Alain Rouquié’s book *Amérique Latine: Introduction à l’Extrême Occident* (Paris: Séuil, 1987), even if it doesn’t work very well in English.

These migrant artists developed proposals that were sensitive to those differences in the institutional panoramas, intellectual traditions, and cultural backgrounds of the audience in each city. Their work embraced those asymmetries between South America and Europe, enabling us to rethink the notion of institutional critique in relation to a panorama of interconnected cultural scenes with different hierarchies, traditions, political contexts, and imaginaries. Hence, we are interested in recovering the full meaning of the place from which they articulated their aesthetic proposals: a geographical place and a place of enunciation, which, due to the militarization of South American governments from 1974, has faded in terms of being a culturally productive figure.

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Historiography of Indian Art in Brazil and the Native Voice as Missing Perspective

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In *Native North American Art*, a work that presents an overview of the art of Native American groups from pre-colonial occupation through the contemporary moment, authors Janet Berlo and Ruth Phillips draw attention to the fact that even today, there are still scant publications by native authors considering visual arts in relation to broader expressive and symbolic systems:

The specific examples and traditions we use to illustrate our thematic and regional discussions have, inevitably, been influenced by the state of the literature in the field, as well as by the areas of our scholarship and research. Although, recently, this literature has grown rapidly, as the bibliographic essay at the end of the book indicates, much more study is needed, particularly by Native authors able to offer indigenous perspectives on the role of visual art within broader expressive systems.¹

They write, of course, from a reality radically different from that of Brazil. In North America, the so-called native arts have been gradually absorbed into mainstream arts—although how this absorption occurs might sometimes give rise to criticism. In North America, there is a proper path for the circulation and exhibition of works made by native artists, as well as university courses with programs for the study and practice of native art. At least since the 1970s, native art has been accepted as a subject of scholarly studies, and wins the same space in very traditional publications in the field of art history such as *The Art Bulletin*, for example, which recently published an article by Sascha Scott (2013) on the Pueblo painter Awa Tsireh. Scott analyzes, among other things, the artistic strategies used by Tsireh for the preservation of Pueblo culture. In Brazil, the situation is very different. Not only does the issue of indigenous art find more space in anthropology than in art history, but the absence of the native point of view in the historiography of Indian art is evident—unlike what happens in literary studies, with the recent increase in the number of native writers.

1 Janet Berlo and Ruth Phillips, *Native North American Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 5–6.

This paper aims to examine, in two parts, the genesis and the specific challenges of this absence of native voice in the constitution of the history of native art historiography in Brazil. It begins with a brief definition of the problem of inclusion of archeology and indigenous material culture in the general historiography of art, choosing as its starting point the European interest in pre-Columbian archeology, which would later affect local perspectives on the so-called “indigenous art,” especially in the nineteenth century.

Even without any translation into Portuguese, the pioneering art history textbook published by Franz Kugler in 1842, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, presents itself as a truly global art history by devoting its third chapter, entitled “The Ancient Monuments of America,” to pre-Columbian architecture:

When Europeans [...] became familiar with America, they found in many lands from that part of the world people enjoying from a peculiarly developed degree of civilization, but whose culture was already more or less degenerate and which flourishing era was already belonged in part to an old history. Grandiose monuments of art were there as witnesses of these unique cultural circumstances.²

Kugler is presenting an interpretive pattern that would be repeated numerous times, even more than a century after the publication of his manual, including in the historiography of Brazilian indigenous art: the praise of pre-Columbian civilizations, and the lack of interest in the material culture of contemporary tribes, usually evaluated in comparison with European art and thus considered “degenerate.” Decades later, the sculptor Emile Soldi, a friend of Courbet, would devote an entire book, *Les Arts Méconnues* (1881), to exotic or “unknown” arts, presenting works then housed at the Trocadero in Paris, among them some Native American artifacts. The chapter dealing with these, entitled “The Ancient Arts of America, Peru, Mexico, and

2 Franz Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Ebner und Seubert, 1842),18: “Als die Europäer [...] mit Amerika bekannt wurden, fanden sie in verschiedenen Ländern dieses Welttheils Völker, die sich einer eigenthümlich ausgebildeten Culturstufe erfreuten, ja, deren Cultur bereits mehr oder minder entartet war und deren Blüthenalter schon einer zum Theil frühen Vergangenheit angehörte. Grossartige Denkmäler der Kunst standen als die Zeugen dieser eigenthümlichen Culturverhältnisse da.”

Guatemala,” starts with a more emphatic attempt at recovering native material production, although Soldi’s value patterns are fairly similar in practice to those adopted by Kugler:

It is stupid, but nevertheless very real, and something we find continually in history: the disdain for the losing race was so enormous that it still persists, and the works of art of these nations that European civilization began by mutilating are still denied or ridiculed.

Some pieces that came to Europe, small monuments, idols, and fetishes of an inferior art as that of our fields, seemed to justify this disdain. The great monuments had been destroyed or were difficult to recover. When they met again the light of day, the designers that reproduced them were accused of having embellished and even almost inventing them.³

For Soldi, as well as for Kugler, pre-Columbian art from Mexico and Peru was the most interesting. Soldi also drew attention to the lack of information about these art works, a situation that, while it lasted, would fatally lead European scholars to commit “about them many mistakes.”⁴

Following European and also American examples, in Brazil, the slow process of inclusion of indigenous archeology in art history started in the nineteenth century. Particularly emblematic of this process was the play *A Estatua Amasonica. Comedia Archeologica* (The Amazonian Idol: Archeological Comedy) by Manuel de Araújo Porto Alegre (1851), a Brazilian painter, teacher, and art historian. The play’s starting point is an article by Adolphe

3 Emil Soldi, “The Ancient Arts of America, Peru, Mexico, and Guatemala,” in *Les Arts Méconnus. Les Nouveaux Musées du Trocadéro* (Paris: Ernest Leroux Éditeur, 1881), 334: “Chose stupide, mais pourtant trop réelle, et qu’on retrouve continuellement dans l’histoire, le dédain pour la race vaincue fut si grand qu’il persiste encore, et que les œuvres d’art de ces nations que la civilisation européenne commença par mutiler, sont encore aujourd’hui niées ou ridiculisées.

“Quelques exemplaires apportés en Europe, petits monuments, idoles ou fétiches d’un art inférieur comme celui de nos campagnes, semblaient donner raison à ce dédain. Les grands monuments étaient détruits ou étaient difficiles à retrouver. Quand ils furent remis au jour, les dessinateurs qui les reproduisaient furent accusés de les avoir embellis et même à peu près inventés”.

Joanne (1847), published in *L'illustration*, about François Castelnau's travel to South America. On this trip, Castelnau has found in the Brazilian Amazon, among other things, a figurine that he considered the representation of an Amazon. In his play, *Porto Alegre* imagines how the Brazilian court would receive such news, creating the character of Count Sarcophagin, to whom he transfers some of his own ideas about the importance of studying Brazilian archeology. For the Count, the statue is nothing less than an indication of the existence of another great Brazilian Empire prior to the present:

This statue reveals a whole new world, a civilized world that appeared and disappeared, a people who lived, flourished, and died, a civilization that mysteriously became extinct, an idea that existed, shined, and eclipsed in the darkness of the past: this statue is the relic of a great empire, is a broken link in the interrupted chain of the past: is the fragment of the skeleton of a giant, muffled by a cataclysm, and buried by the more remote barbarism. For another like this, I would give all the diamonds.⁵

During the play, the Count and his guests present two conflicting views on native archeology: one that values it under the assumption that it is the product of a more advanced civilization than the contemporary native populations who then inhabited the country, and one that rejects it as the result of barbarism. The note of humor for the audience of the time was, ultimately, to discover that the idol was fake, a reinforcement of the idea that, among a savage people, there is no art.

This evaluative instability in which the value of artifacts is linked to the way we evaluate those who produced them actually marks, at least in its early years, the historiography of Indian art in Brazil.

5 Manuel de Araújo Porto Alegre, *A Estatua Amasonica: Comedia Archeologica* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia de Francisco de Paula Brito, 1851), 10: "Esta estatua revela um mundo inteiramente novo, um mundo civilizado que appareceu e desapareceu; um povo que viveu, floresceu, e morreu; uma civilização que mysteriosamente se extinguiu, uma idéa que se realizou, brilhou e se eclipsou nas trevas do passado: esta estatua é a relíquia de um grande império; é um elo da cadêa interrompida do passado: é o fragmento da ossada de um gigante, abafado por um cataclisma, e sepultado pela mais remota barbaria. Por outra igual a esta, daria eu todos os diamantes".

This is the case with one of the first texts published in Brazil that truly addresses “Indian art,” *Artes Industriais Indígenas* (Indigenous Arts and Crafts) by Felix Ferreira (1882), who a few years later in 1885 would publish the first more general and systematic study of Brazilian art, *Belas Artes: Estudos e Apreciações* (Fine Arts: Studies and Appraisals). In a short essay, part of a publication dedicated to the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition of 1882, Ferreira, like his European colleagues, and also like Araújo Porto Alegre, showed himself to be concerned with assembling a value scale that ranked, as far as possible, the national “indigenous art.” To this end, he put it as being superior to the “Hottentot impoverished industry,” although he admitted that it is, in turn, lower than Inca art. The Inca model, by the way, was an obsession for many Brazilian thinkers during the nineteenth century: in fact, they tried to find in the national prehistory some lost and evolved civilization that could compete with the Incas and Aztecs; but for the accomplishment of such an ambition, some method is required:

To study carefully such products, comparing to each other, bringing them together in copious amounts, to sort them by genre, by species, by shape and perfection, and to restore syllables shuffled by the hand of time, this means to reconstitute pages that year to year, century to century, could perhaps lead us to a time when this part of South America was inhabited by an advanced race, obeying certain laws, bent to right worship, and exerting perhaps commerce and navigation, communicating with other parts of the world, finally living under the beneficial influence of a civilization that an extraordinary catastrophe buried forever.⁶

Despite proposing such a method, Ferreira never, in fact, applied it. In the end, he presented a mere theoretical reconstruction of

6 Felix Ferreira, “As Artes Industriais Indígenas,” in *Revista da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira* (1882), 107: “Estudar atenta e comparadamente entre si esses produtos, re-unil-os em copiosa quantidade, classificá-los pelo gênero, pela espécie, pela forma e pela perfeição, e recompor syllabas baralhadas pela mão do tempo, é reconstituir paginas que de anno a anno, de século a século, nos conduzirão, talvez, a uma época em que esta parte da América do Sul foi habitada por uma raça adiantada, que obedecia a certas leis, curvava-se a certo culto, e exercia, quem sabe, o commercio e a navegação, comunicava-se com outras partes do mundo, vivia enfim sob o influxo benéfico de uma civilização que extraordinária catástrofe sepultou para sempre, deixando apenas, entre os degenerados descendentes dessa raça, dúbias tradições e mal distintos vestígios do passado.”

the procedures that had been adopted by scientists in Brazil with greater impetus beginning in the 1870s. One among them is especially important, Charles Frederick Hartt (1840–1878), an American geologist who not only publicized Marajoara archeological ceramics abroad, but also showed interest in contemporary Amazonian tribes. If Ferreira considered only a few Indian objects that he saw in an exhibition, Hartt, in contrast, learned native languages and legends and showed sympathy for the most despised indigenous group in Brazil at nineteenth century, the Botocudos, while also collecting pieces of Marajoara ceramic and studying parietal paintings and engravings. Hartt's enthusiasm for archeology and ethnological research was unmistakable, as was his recognition of the little interest that such matters then awoke in the country:

Calling my attention to the study of Brazilian ancient art, I found myself in a new and extremely interesting field. It is vast and difficult to explore, and I was able to make only a slight recognition, but in it I have discovered mines of gold, diamond, and pearls.⁷

Hartt's varied research on indigenous ethnology and archeology would be gathered posthumously in Portuguese in the 1885 publication *Contribuições para a Etnologia do Valle do Amazonas* (Contributions to the Ethnology of Amazon Valley), in which is possible to find his article "The Evolution of Ornament," probably his text which would have the most impact on future generations of Brazilian historians and artists by suggesting that the ornamentation of native ceramics could be used to infer the several stages of civilization of their producers.

Marajoara ceramics would be considered proof of the existence of a missing higher civilization, and Hartt's arguments would not infrequently be taken out of context to reinforce this national myth. One of his readers was Edgar Roquette Pinto (1884–1954), a Brazilian anthropologist who participated in the Rondon Mission and who became a pioneer of radio in Brazil by founding the Rádio Sociedade do Rio de Janeiro (Ra-

7 Charles Frederick Hartt, "A Origem da Arte ou a Evolução da Ornamentação." *Archivos do Museu Nacional* VI (1885), 98: "Chamada a minha atenção para o estudo da arte antiga do Brasil, achei-me num campo novo e extremamente interessante. É vasto e difícil de se explorar, tendo podido fazer somente um ligeiro reconhecimento, mas nele tenho descoberto minas de ouro, diamantes e pérolas."

dio Society of Rio de Janeiro) in 1923, later transformed into the Rádio do Ministério da Educação e Cultura (MEC) (Radio of the Ministry of Education and Culture); Roquette Pinto also chaired the first Congresso Brasileiro de Eugenia (Brazilian Eugenics Congress) in 1929. In his 1928 conference, *Estilização* (Stylization), published in the first issue of *Revista do Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* (*SPHAN magazine*) in 1937, Roquette Pinto, adapting Hartt's findings to eugenics theory, stated that the "germ of the race" (here, of the "marajoara race") enabled the emergence of the "purest style [...] in the magnificent ceramic from Marajó, a work of art of imperishable beauty that primitive islanders imagined and built in the regions cut by Ecuador."⁸ The writer and collector of indigenous artifacts Gastão Cruls (1888–1959), whose articles on Indian art in Brazil were published in *SPHAN magazine* in 1941 and 1942, also praised Marajoara ceramic, comparing it with that of other pre-Columbian cultures.⁹ Cruls clearly preferred those contemporary Indian artifacts that could be easily associated to prestigious genres in European arts. Therefore, he compared to Western painting the painted wooden disks that adorned the central poles of Urucuiana longhouses from the Jari river region.

The authors analyzed so far seem to evaluate in the same way several aspects of indigenous material culture, despite their very different fields of study. In other words, some opinions of an experienced researcher such as Cruls about natives of Brazil (the superiority of Marajoara culture, for example) coincide with those of a historian without any field experience like Felix Ferreira.

The "anthropological turn" in Brazilian historiography of Indian art is marked by the works of the anthropologists Darcy and

8 Edgar Roquette Pinto, "Estilização." *Revista do Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* 1 (1937): 52: "[...] estilo puríssimo (...) na magnífica cerâmica de Marajó, obra de arte de imperecível beleza que insulados primitivos imaginaram e construíram nas regiões cortadas pelo Equador."

9 Gastão Cruls, "Arqueologia Amazônica." *Revista do Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* 6 (1942): 186: "As one can read in this passage of *Arqueologia Amazônica*: "... for the grace of its contours, as for the beauty of its designs, and for the diversity of objects originated by it, this ceramic betrays a great acculturated people who, for various traits, owning nothing to his brothers, which in Central America and on the Andes reached the highest degree of civilization" [... já pela graça dos seus contornos, já pela beleza dos seus desenhos, já pela diversidade dos objetos a que deu motivo, essa cerâmica trai um povo de grande aculturação e que por vários traços nada fica a dever aos seus irmãos que na América Central e sobre os Andes chegaram ao mais alto grau de civilização"].

Berta Ribeiro, authors of several publications on the material culture of different Brazilian tribes.¹⁰ In their surveys of different contemporary Brazilian tribes, it is possible to see in a more dramatic way the theoretical transformations resulting from fieldwork, as formulated by Wilfried van Damme:

[...] this transition from the museum to the field entailed several closely related theoretical shifts—from objects to subjects as sources of information, from the interpretative authority of analytical outsiders to that of knowledgeable insiders, and from an interest in the past and processes of stylistic change to an interest in the present and the semantic cultural integration of art.¹¹

The Ribeiros published in 1957 a pioneering work in the modern study of Brazilian feather art, *Arte Plumária dos Índios Kaapor* (Feather Art from Kaapor Indians), a clear sign of such a “turn.” Before Darcy and Berta, only Raimundo Lopes (1934) and Cruls (1952) had written about Kaapor feather art. The Kaapor Indians relate to Tupi culture and were pacified in 1928. *Arte Plumária dos Índios Kaapor* was a result of the two anthropological expeditions that Darcy Ribeiro conducted to Urubu-Kaapor villages between December 1949 and March 1950 and from August to November 1951, within an ethnological research program of the Indian Museum Studies Section of the Indian Protection Service; and of studies on feather art conducted by Berta Ribeiro as a member of the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro. In this text reappear some notions already present in the writings of previous authors, such as the concept that art and its ornamental motives arises from the technical domain and, therefore, from technical ideas; the valuation of realistic representation; comparisons between indigenous art and Baroque style; and the “will to art” and painting as a major artistic genre. However, there were also several new and politically important aspects: Darcy and Berta Ribeiro did not apply the word “prim-

10 Together they wrote *Arte Plumária dos Índios Kaapor* (1957) and, much later, among other works, Berta published *Arte Indígena, Linguagem Visual* (1989). Darcy is also the author of “Arte Índia,” a chapter on contemporary Indian art in *História Geral da Arte no Brasil* (1983), organized by Walter Zanini.

11 Wilifried van Damme, “Siberian Ornaments, German Scholars, and a Transitional Moment in the Anthropology of Art, c. 1900,” *Art History* 38, no. 3 (2015), 513.

itive” to the Urubu-Kaapor. Rather, in their writings, the Indians appear with a defined ethnic identity (they are Urubu-Kaapor); have their own names, as with the skilled tuxaua Diwa¹²; are not inferior or naive when compared to the “Western”; and are praised in life for their creativity, virtuosity, sensitivity, and artistic imagination, something unprecedented considering previous texts that extolled only the Marajos, already dead.

Even with such a dramatic change in approach, in relation to the indigenous art in Brazil, an anachronistic perspective seems to be the rule. The art historian Pietro Maria Bardi wrote the following, in a passage of his *História da Arte Brasileira* (History of Brazilian Art):

Indian life unfolds in an already completed culture, framing the art phenomenon, beginning with urbanism and architecture, in the most simple and purely functional forms, with painting and sculpture as pretty complements to life, and dance and music daily exercises: every act created and renovated, while following a tradition lost in time.¹³

In 1979, the chapter on native arts written by Ottaviano De Fiore for the book *Arte no Brasil* (*Art in Brazil*) is equally disconcerting: “Arte indígena: o eterno presente de um universo mágico e ritual (Indian art: the eternal gift of a magical and ritual universe).”¹⁴

In recent years, it has been said, the theme of “Indian art” in Brazil, at least in survey works of art history, went predominantly into the hands of anthropologists who have direct contact with different tribes.

Since the 1990s have been published reference works such *Grafismo Indígena: Estudos de Antropologia Estética* (Indige-

12 Ribeiro and Ribeiro, *Arte Plumaria*, 13.

13 Pietro Bardi, *História da Arte Brasileira* (São Paulo: Melhoramentos, 1975), 14: “A vida dos índios se desenrola numa cultura já concluída, enquadrando o fenômeno arte, a começar da urbanística e da arquitetura, nas formas mais simples e puramente funcionais, sendo a pintura e a escultura complementações jeitosas, e a dança e a música exercícios do cotidiano: cada ato criado e renovado, mas na observância de uma tradição perdida nos tempos.”

14 Ottaviano De Fiore, *Arte no Brasil*. (São Paulo: Abril Cultural, 1979): page 17.

nous Form: Studies of Aesthetic Anthropology) (1992), organized by Lux Vidal, with articles in which the native material culture is thoroughly described and interpreted, always using properly credited native collaborators. Value judgments, previously prevailing in such discussions, are left aside. In the small book *Arte Indígena no Brasil* (Indian Art in Brazil) (2009) by anthropologist Els Lagrou, European artistic categories are juxtaposed with natives' thoughts about their own material culture, so as to make such concepts more accessible to a general public that completely ignores its foundations.

The current predominance of studies of aesthetic anthropology on the general theme of indigenous art in Brazil points out some important issues for the art history of the area: if, on one hand, field research with indigenous communities is widely recognized in anthropology, in contrast, art history as practiced in Brazil runs into difficulties when it comes to addressing indigenous material culture without relapsing into the prevailing ethnocentric approaches from the mid-twentieth century, either due to a lack of anthropological training; through recent discussions on research methods within the discipline, which inhibit purely formal approaches to contemporary indigenous artifacts (institutionalized or not) in order to avoid disregarding authorship and production contexts; or via the general invisibility of indigenous issues for part of the Brazilian population, an invisibility that Brazilian Government has recently tried to lessen with the adoption of a quota policy, allowing members of indigenous communities access to higher education.

I will conclude this paper by considering this same “invisibility” in reference to a specific case, the current situation of the historiography of Indian art in the southernmost state of Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul. In a state where prejudice against indigenous communities is common, where the issue of demarcation of indigenous lands generates constant conflicts, and where the inclusion of native students at university is still quite recent, the absence of the indigenous perspective in art historiography is particularly evident and seems related both to a broader social issue and to local characteristics of the development of the art history field.

In a brief retrospective, we can see that a “marajoara fever” also occurred in Rio Grande do Sul; one of its main spokesmen

was Angelo Guido, an Italian painter and teacher at the Porto Alegre Arts Institute, who in 1937 published *O Reino das Mulheres sem Lei: Ensaio de Mitologia Amazônica* (The Kingdom of Outlaw Women: Essays on Amazonian Mythology), showing, like his contemporaries, the same obsession with Marajoara superiority:

What is beyond doubt is that a large part of the cultural heritage of Amazonian Indians was imported from other lands, and certain traditions, such as certain technical achievements, reveals the surprising fact that there was in the Amazon an early civilization that could have achieved high levels, perhaps as did Mexico and Peru, if it had found an environment more favorable to its development.¹⁵

Guido was, in fact, dealing with a neo-Marajoara revival that was also embraced by students of the Arts Institut, a reflection of the nationalist ideology attached to this theme. Much more comprehensive in Rio Grande do Sul is the paradigmatic cult of missionary Indian art from Jesuit missions (“arte missioneira”), usually the initial topic of every text or book on art from Rio Grande do Sul. The art historian Armindo Trevisan, despite the care he takes when describing works of “arte missioneira,” in certain passages endorses some nineteenth-century value judgments:

Indians stood out, in a unique way, in sculptural art. Aurélio Porto notes: “From a rough and poor pottery that reveals the backwardness of their culture, later the Indian from the Missions, artistically inspired by the Jesuits, would create these admirable pieces whose carving marks the apogee of colonial Jesuit civilization.” [...] In general, it can be said that in some of images from Jesuit missions, even crudely carved, it is possible to see an exceptional technical skill,

15 Angelo Guido, *O Reino das Mulheres sem Lei: Ensaio de Mitologia Amazônica* (1937), 70: “O que é fora de dúvida é que uma grande parte do patrimônio cultural do aborígina amazonense foi importada de outras terras e, certas tradições, como certas conquistas técnicas, revelam o fato surpreendente de ter havido na Amazônia um início de civilização que teria atingido níveis elevados, talvez como as do México e do Perú, se tivesse encontrado um ambiente mais favorável ao seu desenvolvimento.”

to which is added an expression sometimes of pronounced Amerindian taste.”¹⁶

There are a number of factors in the artistic environment of Rio Grande do Sul that make Indian art a hidden and, therefore, delicate issue: the persistent preference for the study of indigenous objects (especially those from Jesuit missions) and the lack of interest in contemporary native subjects, often associated with prejudice against these populations—bias that is present both outside and inside the academy; a prejudice, indeed, fed daily by land disputes and anti-indigenous positions taken by the mass media and, often, by the state apparatus. Another factor is the preference, in local academia, for formalist approaches supported by a valuation scale that takes into account technical and poetic aspects of the art work, its dialogue with Western artistic tradition, and also the institutional placement of artists. Ethnic Caingangue and Guarani students do not attend university courses on visual arts and art history (the first Guarani student in the visual arts course at UFRGS [Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul] dropped out before completing it), so they cannot defend in the universities, on their own terms, the material culture of their communities. Until recently, the predominant native in the local academy was a missing, imaginary, mythical one, without political dimension and therefore devoid of conflict, who only “appears” on excursions to the Jesuit missions and at the beginning of courses on Brazilian art history, in no way corresponding to the real native populations struggling to survive in Rio Grande do Sul, using weapons still little studied, as in the case of the tourist art produced by Caingangue and Guarani communities.

However, there are subtle signs, even in the south, that “indigenous art” is finally entering the academy, following the example of what already transpired in the United States some time ago. There are young Caingangue working with video, and Mbyá-Guarani, as the chief (cacique) Verá Poty, explored photography for

16 Armindo Trevisan, “O Rosto Indígena da Arte das Missões.” In Paulo Gomes, ed., *Artes Plásticas no Rio Grande do Sul: Uma Panorâmica*, 16–29. (Porto Alegre: Lahtu Sensu, 2007), 21: “Os indígenas destacaram-se, de maneira singular, na arte escultórica. Aurélio Porto nota: “De uma cerâmica tosca e pobre que revela o atraso de sua cultura, passa, mais tarde, o índio das Missões, sob a inspiração artística dos jesuítas, a lavar essas admiráveis peças cuja cinzeladura marca o apogeu da civilização jesuítico-colonial”. [...]. Em linhas gerais, pode-se afirmar que, em algumas das imagens missioneiras, mesmo toscamente esculpidas, já se percebe excepcional habilidade técnica, à qual se acrescenta uma expressão, por vezes, de nítido gosto ameríndio.”

years, as it was possible to see in the 2015 exhibition that portrayed fifteen Guarani villages of Rio Grande do Sul, organized by Poty and Danilo Christidis at the Museum of UFRGS in Porto Alegre. Nonetheless, the fact that Indian art in Brazil enters the curriculum as a matter of study long before its producers are actually integrated into the many local art systems is something that still requires deep thought.

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The Power of the Local Site: A Comparative Approach to Colonial Black Christs and Medieval Black Madonnas*

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The art historical discourse on early modern Christian artifacts in colonial Latin America has long been characterized by an emphasis on the European roots of these objects and by their insertion into the tradition of European religiosity. This is particularly true with regard to cult images of Christ and the saints, especially for those around which an unusually fervent religious veneration evolved. In the more recent past, scholars have begun acknowledging the non-European roots of artifacts of colonial visual culture by labeling them with adjectives such as “hybrid” or “syncretic.” However, by doing so, they tacitly imply that the European visual culture imported during the early modern period was, in contrast, monolithic, canonical, and certainly orthodox. In this paper, I would like to show that the visual culture that developed in medieval Europe was no less “hybrid” or “syncretic” than that which evolved during colonial times in Latin America. By doing so, I propose a methodological approach to early modern visual culture that contributes to “de-colonizing” art history by considering European and colonial visual culture within a single framework, which allows us to trace parallel developments while acknowledging fundamental differences between the two. Here I take as examples two visual types: the so-called “Black Christs” of early colonial Mesoamerica and the “Black Madonnas” of the High Middle Ages in Europe, whose particular “darkness” has been explained by scholars in surprisingly similar ways. “

The devotion to Black Christs that developed in the Spanish Americas presumably starting in the sixteenth century is a case in which the quest for antecedents in European visual culture is particularly unpromising. Whereas an army of Black Christs is dispersed over the territories of the former Spanish colonies, in Europe, the occurrence of these figures is very rare.¹ By contrast, several hundred Black Madonnas have been counted in Europe; these are, however, very scarce in the Spanish Americas.² While attempts to trace the dark coloration of the Latin American “Cristos Negros” to prototypes from Europe are doomed to

1 The few exceptions include the famous Volto Santo in Lucca, Italy; the Black Christ in the Cathedral of St. Flour, France (which, however, might not have acquired its dark coloration before the mid-nineteenth century); and Queen Jadwiga’s crucifix in the Wawel Cathedral in Krakow, Poland.

2 I am well aware that the “Queen and Patroness” of Brazil, Nossa Senhora Aparecida, is a Black Madonna. However, I have chosen to constrain the scope of my comparative analysis to the cultural ambits of Europe and Mesoamerica.

failure, correlations between the two continents and their visual cultures emerge on a different level. Scholars have analyzed both Mesoamerican Black Christs and medieval Black Madonnas by linking the figures' color to the particular geographical location in which their devotion initially took root. In both cases, the reasoning is based on the proximity of the Christian cult images to sites of pre-Christian worship, very often centering on caves. Thus, instead of the unidirectional lines of influence that one might expect where colonial art is concerned, parallel developments emerge in the adoption of non-Christian elements linked to particular geographical settings.

The “Local” and the “Global” and a Non-Eurocentric Approach to Art History

This observation calls for some methodological reevaluation. In order to simultaneously grasp both the dimensions of missionary activity and the impact unfolded by the protagonists of the evangelization process who claimed universal truths on the one hand and the agency of local actors and the enduring power of traditions on the other, it is useful to consider the concept of “glocalization” as it has been employed by sociology.³ Roland Robertson was among the first to use this notion, which was originally developed in the field of business studies in the 1980s, in a sociological context. In writing that “globalization—in the broadest sense, the compression of the world—has involved and increasingly involves the creation and incorporation of locality, processes which themselves largely shape, in turn, the compression of the world as a whole,”⁴ he stresses that, in the past and in the present, the “local” and the “global” converge.

Borrowing from Robertson, Paolo Aranha has recently suggested adapting the concept of “glocalization” to the description of the local conditions of “global” missionary activity, thus transforming it into a useful tool for historical analysis. I would like to build on his proposition to aim for “a more comprehensive interpretation of the missions which is able to relate the departure and the destination, the message of salvation and the

3 In her paper given at the CIHA conference in Rio de Janeiro, August 25–29 2015, Margit Kern also proposed an approach to art history centered on the notion of “glocalization.”

4 Roland Robertson, “Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity,” in *Global Modernities*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson, (London: Sage Publications, 1995): 40.

concrete environment where it was supposed to be implanted, the European clerics and the non-European ‘pagans’ whose conversion was sought”⁵ and suggest broadening the range of historical phenomena to be considered from this angle. In a colonial setting, it appears sensible to adopt such a perspective not only when considering missionary activity in a narrow sense, but also when examining Christian cult images in general. For regardless of the circumstances under which concrete instances of images venerated in a Christian context might have been created, they may generally be considered the result of an initial effort of evangelization undertaken by the protagonists of an “imported” religion striving for dominance over existing belief systems, which they aimed at eradicating, and claiming universal truths meant to be spread among a local population believed to consist of “heathens.”

As we will see, in the case of Mesoamerican Black Christs, local “pagan” religious worship led to a fundamental reinterpretation of the visual culture brought to the “New World” from Spain. In a similar, but somewhat converse, mode, local traditions were influential in bringing about the medieval Black Madonnas in Europe. To examine this latter process, which took place during the initial development of a European Christian visual culture, let us consider the most convincing scholarly explanation for the dark coloration of these Marian representations.⁶

5 Paolo Aranha, “‘Glocal’ Conflicts: Missionary Controversies on the Coromandel Coast Between the XVII and XVIII Centuries,” in *Evangelizzazione e Globalizzazione: Le missioni gesuitiche nell’età moderna tra storia e storiografia*, ed. Michela Catto, Guido Mongini, and Silvia Mostaccio (Città di Castello: Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, 2010): 80.

6 This is not to state that all medieval Black Madonnas’ dark coloration may be accounted for by applying the same explanatory pattern. Sophie Cassagnes-Brouquet, *Vièrges Noires. Regard et Fascination* (Rodez: Editions du Rouergue, 1990), 169-181; Gude Suckale-Redlefsen, “Schwarze Madonnen,” in *Schöne Madonnen am Rhein*, ed. Robert Suckale, (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 2009), 171-173; and Jeanette Favrot Peterson, *Visualizing Guadalupe. From Black Madonna to Queen of the Americas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 32-35, provide good overviews of the different clusters of explanations as advanced by scholarship with regard to the genesis of the Black Madonnas’ darkness and of their respective validity. Compelling evidence points to the superimposition of Christian shrines upon sanctuaries dedicated to female divinities of pre-Christian religions that were considered black. This set of explanations is repudiated by certain authors who reprove of the alleged underlying archetypal assumptions. However, links between medieval Black Madonnas and “pagan” mother goddesses may be established on the basis of strong archeological evidence.

The “Black Madonnas” of Medieval Europe

In examining Black Madonnas,⁷ the perception of the effigies as dark, which rests upon their sharp contrast with the light-skinned renderings of Mary that predominated in medieval Europe and beyond, is decisive. The earliest mentions of Black Madonnas in chronicles occur in the later Middle Ages. Archeological evidence points to a corpus of statues initially meant to be dark, which may be considered to be the group of historically authentic Black Madonnas.⁸ These all date back to the eleventh to thirteenth centuries and often correspond to the type of the Virgin and Child in Majesty. While innumerable “black” Madonnas that acquired their dark coloration at a later date—either as the result of environmental influences such as candle soot, or due to a deliberate subsequent “blackening” of the statues—weren’t originally meant to be black, they were often used to replace “authentic” Black Madonnas that had been lost or damaged.⁹

Medieval Black Madonnas mostly appeared in Western Europe, where they were particularly numerous in France. Here, a certain concentration may be observed in the southern part of the country and they were distributed at regular intervals along the great pilgrimage routes, along the paths formerly employed by Greek merchants, and at the locations of the most important sites used by the Gauls.¹⁰ Moreover, Black Madonnas were frequently bound to certain (often natural) settings such as elevated spaces, sources, wells, or caves. Such a connection to particular geographical settings reoccurs in the legends that narrate their miraculous discovery: often, they are said to have

7 By this, I designate statues only, as the two-dimensional renderings of Mary that are also often termed “Black Madonnas” follow a different tradition (cf. Cassagnes-Brouquet, *Virges Noires*, 18).

8 Whether their darkness resulted from deliberate blackening or from the deliberate use of dark materials such as ebony or black stone seems irrelevant for the discussion of this phenomenon.

9 For this reason, I would like to caution against the tendency to exclude these statues from the discussion of this phenomenon and to adopt an all too narrow definition of what a “Black Madonna” might be. For historical and archeological findings on Black Madonnas cf. E. Saillens, *Nos vierges noires. Leurs origines* (Paris: Les Éditions Universelles, 1945); Cassagnes-Brouquet, *Virges Noires*; Jean Hani, *La Vierge Noire et le Mystère marial* (Paris: Guy Trédaniel Éditeur, 1995), 15–44; and Suckale-Redlefsen, “Schwarze Madonnen”; cf. also Ean Begg, *The Cult of the Black Virgin* (London and New York: Arkana, 1985).

10 Cf. the map showing the distribution of black statues of the Virgin in ca. 1550 in France in Saillens, *Nos vierges noires*.

been “found” either under the earth, in a tree, in a flowering bush, in a spring, in a lake, etc.

Let us consider the Black Madonna of Notre-Dame-du-Puy as a particularly illustrative example. The statue was burned by French revolutionaries in 1794, and it has since been claimed that found in its ashes was a stone consecrated to the Egyptian goddess Isis, for which the statue had served as a reliquary. Although an Egyptian origin of the statue can be ruled out today,¹¹ dealing with the beginnings of Marian devotion in Europe is worthwhile.

As is well known, it was only after the councils of Ephesus in 431 and Chalcedon in 451 that the veneration of Mary was fully permitted. In spite of Emperor Theodosius’ proclamation of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire in 380, at that time, numerous other, polytheistic beliefs persisted throughout Europe. The beliefs and cults that generated the greatest fervor were those dedicated to the different manifestations of a deity known as the “great mother” or “mother of the Gods.” Presumably, the veneration of this divinity persisted alongside that of Mary until Marian devotion finally replaced the former. In the era of transition to Christianity, many attributes of the pagan “mother goddess” were assigned to Mary.

The similarity between representations of the “mother goddess” and those of Mary is particularly striking with regard to a number of small-scale statues made for domestic purposes that correspond to the type of the “Virgin and Child.” These statues represent both Greco-Roman and Celtic deities, all of which were considered chthonic because, by virtue of their femininity, they were regarded as encompassing sources of fecundity. In Western Europe, the following manifestations of the “great mother” of the Greco-Roman religion were occasionally venerated through black effigies: Demeter (Ceres), Cybele, Isis, and Artemis (Diana). Even more important in fostering devotion toward Black Madonnas in medieval Europe, however, were the Celtic goddesses who enjoyed a special veneration in Gaul. In

11 In 1777, upon a careful examination of the Black Madonna of Notre-Dame-du-Puy, Faujas de Saint-Fond ascribed an Egyptian origin to it. His theory seemed confirmed when, in 1794, a stone covered with Egyptian hieroglyphs was found near the location where the ashes of the statue, which had been burnt shortly before, had been scattered. Cassagnes-Brouquet, *Vierges Noires*, 157–158, however, presents several arguments against this theory.

France, small-scale statues of Gaulish mother goddesses such as Belisama, Regantona, Brigantia, Brigit, Ana and Dana have been found in caves.

Ana, who was considered a black goddess, was often replaced by the figure of St. Anne, the mother of Mary, in local worship. But in many cases, Mary herself came to replace the Celtic Ana. For instance, Le Puy, where the aforementioned Black Madonna was burned by revolutionaries, was the most important region for the veneration of the Celtic Ana and was named “Anicium” in Gallo-Roman times and “Podium Aniciense”¹² in the tenth century. Indeed, at two out of the three most important medieval locations for the veneration of Black Madonnas in France, Chartres and Le Puy, a former veneration of the Celtic black Ana may be observed.¹³

The very name of the Black Madonna of Notre-Dame de Sous-Terre in Chartres may be understood as alluding to a cave, a location central to the rites associated with certain of the previously mentioned mother deities. Like many other Black Madonnas, this statue bears the inscription “Virgo paritura” (“the Virgin who is to give birth”), which refers back to the Celtic tradition as it has been accredited by medieval sources. For instance, the charters of the cathedral state that, 100 years B.C., at this very location, druids had erected a temple dedicated to “the Virgin who is to give birth,” as well as a statue of a virgin with child, that was believed to have performed many miracles. According to the different traditions, the “Magna mater” was always a virgin thought to have given birth to a divine child.¹⁴

Black virgins are frequently venerated in crypts or grottos. As the famous Madonna in Chartres shows, aside from their color, even their names sometimes testify to their chthonic origins. It is very likely that Mary inherited the chthonic cults of antique divinities associated with the fertility of the soil such as Persephone, whose dark effigies were blackened by long sojourns under the earth. Among those divinities invoked for their pow-

12 Anis was another appellation of Ana.

13 Hani explains that Celtic traditions were also paramount in establishing the cult of Mary in the third most important site, Rocamadour. Cf. Hani, *La Vierge Noire et le Mystère marial*, 30–36.

14 Cf. Cassagnes-Brouquet, *Vièrges Noires*, 47–49 and 142–146; Hani, *La Vierge Noire et le Mystère marial*, 36–37.

ers of fecundation and parturition that Mary came to replace appears Isis, who seems to have conferred her potency upon the Black Virgin of Notre-Dame de la Daurade in Toulouse: the belt worn by this virgin, which is also an attribute of the Egyptian goddess Isis, is ascribed the power of ensuring quick and painless births.¹⁵

The veneration toward medieval Black Madonnas in Europe, which probably began well before the eleventh century, can thus convincingly be interpreted as a Christianized version of the devotion to black virgins central to Greco-Roman religiosity and to Celtic priesthood.¹⁶ Mary, proclaimed *theotokos* (the “Bearer of God”) on the occasion of the Council of Ephesus, was considered to have provided the flesh necessary for the incarnation of God to occur. It is very likely that the authentic medieval Black Madonnas were meant to stress her prolific qualities, thus echoing the dark statues of female divinities they replaced, whose fecund aspects were symbolized by the darkness of the fertile ground.

The medieval Black Madonnas are a case in point that demonstrates how local factors—traditional forms of religious worship bound to certain geographical conditions—shaped the process of Christianity’s ascension to the dominant religion of the European continent. Thus the “global” ambitions of the new

15 The veneration of Isis, which was adopted by the Romans, was introduced in Gaul by merchants from the Mediterranean basin. Hera, the wife of Zeus and the divinity of marriage, was ascribed the same attribute and the same power. Cf. Cassagnes-Brouquet, *Vierges Noires*, 151–157.

16 As convincingly argued by Hani, *La Vierge Noire et le Mystère marial*, 40, the time gap separating the known statues representing “pagan” goddesses, dating to the first centuries A.D., and the much later “apparition” of the medieval Black Madonnas in the eleventh and twelfth centuries may be explained by analyzing the attitude of the Church toward three-dimensional effigies, which shifted during the Middle Ages. Between the fifth and the tenth century, the Church disapproved of statues of the saints and tried to eradicate all remnants of “pagan” cults. During this period, the statues of “pagan” mother goddesses were certainly hidden. When the Church slowly began accepting statues around the mid-eighth century, these images began to “reappear” in the locations where the corresponding cults had formerly been centered: in sources, in caves, in sacred trees, etc. These were now “Christianized” and could thus contribute to the development of the medieval Black Madonnas as we know them today. Hani’s reasoning roughly corresponds to that of Beate Fricke, “Fallen idols and Risen Saints: Western Attitudes toward the Worship of Images and the ‘Cultura Veterum Deorum,’” in *Negating the Image. Case Studies in Iconoclasm*, ed. Anne McClanan and Jeff Johnson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 66–95, who stresses the continuity between antique statues of emperors and gods, “especially Gaulish mother-earth-types,” and Christian imagery and concludes that (p. 80) “the new use of monumental sculpture in western Christianity by the end of the ninth century is the fruit of the reconsiderations of western roots reaching back to the imagery of Late Antiquity and the extensive debates on idolatry.”

Christian religion—if its universal claim for saving souls may be characterized in this way—were impacted by local determinants during the initial formative stages of Christian visual culture in Europe. It can be surmised that the effigies of earlier belief systems were integrated into Christianity through an act of reinterpretation,¹⁷ meaning that, in dealing with medieval Black Madonnas, we witness nothing less than the integration of an originally “pagan” system of representation—that of three-dimensional sculpture—into Christianity. This reveals just how “hybrid” and “syncretic” the later dominant model of Christian visual culture was, dating to its very beginnings in medieval Europe. Let us now turn to the evangelizing process as it took place in the colonies of the “New World” and see what parallels can be drawn between both continents.

The “Black Christs” of Colonial Mesoamerica

In accordance with the dark effigies of Mary discussed above, the devotional works referred to as “Cristos Negros” in popular or sometimes even in official Church texts in the regions of the former Spanish colonies display skin tones varying from dark brown to ebony. Scholarly accounts commonly attribute the coloration of Black Christs to indigenous influence.¹⁸ Indeed, in Mesoamerica, of the most important images of Black Christs that are reputed to perform miracles, approximately seven display a strong link with indigenous culture that reaches back to the sixteenth century. Moreover, these images are either located in rural areas or were originally located there.

17 Among the examples mentioned by Hani, *La Vierge Noire et le Mystère marial*, 27–36, the black statue of Isis in the church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris deserves special attention: he reports it was venerated as a Marian representation until its destruction in 1514.

18 For a brief overview of how different authors have established this link, especially with regard to the “Lord of Esquipulas” in Guatemala, cf. Miles Richardson, “Clarifying the Dark in Black Christs: The Play of Icon, Narrative, and Experience in the Construction of Presence,” *Yearbook. Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers* 21 (1995): 113. Richardson adopts an interpretation centered on the model of intertextuality and thus opens up another perspective. However, his analysis doesn’t answer the question of why dark Christs are mostly prevalent in Latin America and almost unknown to Europe, which shows just how important it is to account for the specific historical, local context in dealing with these icons. Peterson’s analysis of the dark coloration of Mesoamerican crucifixes centers on the idea that enduring connotations of darkness determined the perception of these statues as sacred. Cf. Jeanette Favrot Peterson, “Perceiving Blackness, Envisioning Power: Chalma and Black Christs in Colonial Mexico,” in *Seeing Across Cultures in the Early Modern World*, ed. Jeanette Favrot Peterson and Dana Leibsohn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 49–71.

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1. Señor de Esquipulas,
Basílica del Santo Cristo
de Esquipulas, Guatemala,
2014. Photo by the author.

Jeanette Peterson has analyzed why the veneration of statues of Christ—especially of those of Black Christs—flourished at sites associated with pre-Columbian male deities. In pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica, black skin coloration was perceived as the unmistakable sign of a particularly honorable and powerful status. It evoked the supernatural powers pertaining to a number of supreme male deities and denoted shamanic vision, centeredness, and sovereignty. The black color of these gods was considered a sign of their healing powers and of their capacity to predict the future. In Nahuatl, a linguistic connection even seems to exist between darkness and godhead. During certain religious rituals, Aztec priests anointed their skin with a soot

containing unguent in order to pay tribute to these gods and to capture the healing and visionary powers associated with their black coloration. Black skin also pointed to the process of “deification”—the transformation into a god and back again—undergone during religious rites.¹⁹

Regardless of the hostile attitude toward dark skin tones deployed by colonial authorities, in Mesoamerica, since the seventeenth century or even earlier,²⁰ Black Christs rank among the most highly esteemed Christian cult images. The most prominent example of a figure of Christ uncontestedly considered “black” in this area is the Señor de Esquipulas in Guatemala (Fig. 1), which has been copied innumerable times.²¹ While the Señor de Chalma, Mexico’s second most important cult image after the Virgin of Guadalupe, bears no evidence of any dark coloration now, this figure still counts among the miraculous Black Christs and is perceived as one to date. Owing to the environmental conditions to which the statue was exposed in the cave where legends claim it “appeared,” the original crucifix was dark. As Peterson points out, the real and the alleged black color of the Señor de Chalma must be considered in connection with the tradition of religious worship in caves, which was widespread throughout Mesoamerica and continued well into colonial times.²²

19 Peterson, “Perceiving Blackness, Envisioning Power: Chalma and Black Christs in Colonial Mexico,” *passim*.

20 Cf. for instance Francisco de Florencia, *Descripción histórica y moral del yermo de S. Miguel de la Cuevas en el Reyno de Nueva-España, y Invencion de la Milagrosa Imagen de Christo nuestro Sr. Crucificado, que se venera en ellas* (Cádiz: 1689), 16; Francisco de Florencia, who was in Chalma in 1683, describes the veneration of the original crucifix, which he considers to have been “denegrado”.

21 Cf. Stephan Francis de Borhegyi, “The cult of Our Lord of Esquipulas in middle America and New Mexico,” *El Palacio* 61,12 (1954): 387–401; Carl Kendall, “The Politics of Pilgrimage: The Black Christ of Esquipulas,” in *Pilgrimage in Latin America*, ed. N. Ross Cumrine and Alan Morinis (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 139–156; *En la diáspora de una devoción. Acercamientos al estudio del Cristo Negro de Esquipulas*, ed. Carlos Navarrete Cáceres (México D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, 2013).

22 Local worshippers and the media still refer to this image, which replaces an earlier, darker effigy destroyed by fire most likely in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries, by using the title of “Black Christ of Chalma” today. Since the eighteenth century, textual and visual descriptions of this effigy fluctuate between darkness and brightness. Peterson, “Perceiving Blackness, Envisioning Power: Chalma and Black Christs in Colonial Mexico,” convincingly argues that the dark coloration of the original crucifix became an integral part of its numinous power.

In fact, several Black Christs have links to caves: the Señor de Chalma and the Cristo Negro of Tila in Chiapas²³ are both reported to have appeared in caves, while the sanctuary of the Señor de Esquipulas in Guatemala is located near two cruciform caverns showing signs of centuries-long ritual use. In ancient Mesoamerica, caves were considered “topographic shrines” marking the center of a community and charging a particular location with sacrality. They were the destination of long religious processions. Colonial authorities were well aware of the dangerous draw of these caves and tried to redirect or eradicate the veneration that took place there. The apparition legend of the Señor de Chalma attests to the “replacement” of an image perceived by the colonizers as an “idol” with a statue of Christ and thus demonstrates the assimilative process at work in keeping to established sacred geography.²⁴

Surprising parallels emerge when the most convincing theories explaining the darkness of medieval Black Madonnas and colonial Black Christs are juxtaposed. Even though their coloration may be linked to preexisting religious cults, neither the Black Madonnas’ nor the Black Christs’ blackness lead back to one specific “black” deity. Rather, in both cases, a whole range of precursors emerges, which vary from one site to the other. In the case of the Black Madonnas, the dark coloration of the statues seems connected to the darkness of the fertile ground, which was decisive in conferring upon effigies of pre-Christian goddesses a black tonality well before Christianization took place. With regard to the Black Christs, a more general connotation of blackness appears to have been decisive, one connected to centeredness and wellbeing. Associated with sacred sites such as caves, this connotation could easily be transferred to Christ as the new patron of such a location.

23 Cf. J. Kathryn Josserand and Nicholas A. Hopkins, “Tila y su Cristo Negro: historia, peregrinación y devoción en Chiapas, México,” *Mesoamérica* 49 (2007): 82–113; Carlos Navarrete Cáceres, “El santuario de Tila y su Cristo Negro, apuntes etnohistóricos,” in *En la diáspora de una devoción*, 101–168.

24 For the apparition legend and its variations, cf. Peterson, “Perceiving Blackness, Envisioning Power: Chalma and Black Christs in Colonial Mexico,” 57–59.

Different Connotations of Darkness on Both Sides of the Atlantic

What conclusions may be drawn from this material for the project of developing novel forms of approaching art history? I would like to suggest that comparison of the interplay of “local” and “global” factors in generating visual cultures in different regions of the world can be fertile in developing a non-Eurocentric view on art history geared toward capturing the specificity of visual cultures around the globe.

Indeed, when we examine the very similar processes of assimilation of older traditions which we have observed with respect to both medieval Black Madonnas and to colonial Black Christs, the following question arises: why is the dark coloration restricted to a different holy figure in each geographical area—that of Mary in Europe and that of her son in Mesoamerica? This question seems even more pressing in light of the fact that the Spanish namesake and precursor of the Mexican national symbol of the Virgin of Guadalupe²⁵ is in fact an authentic medieval Black Madonna (Fig. 2).²⁶

It seems that for the emergence of the veneration of black effigies, geared toward Mary in Europe and Christ in Mesoamerica, local conditions were determining factors. As we have seen, the dark coloration of the Black Madonnas may be considered to metaphorically reflect the darkness of the fertile ground, thereby alluding to the fecundity of Mary in giving birth to the Son of God. The nexus between her dark coloration and that of the earth, which parallels the link established by the female

25 In her book *The Black Madonna in Latin America and Europe. Tradition and Transformation* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), Malgorzata Oleszkiewicz-Peralpa includes the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe among the so-called “Black Madonnas,” thereby stressing the continuity of this phenomenon between Europe and Latin America. I, however, disagree about counting this image among the Black Madonnas and believe the breach between Europe and colonial Mesoamerica should be emphasized as far as these images are concerned. For one thing, the skin tone of the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe is not nearly as dark as that of the other effigies of Mary considered “Black Madonnas” in this article, and it clearly relies on a different set of premisses. For another, the Mexican icon is a two-dimensional image and not a statue, thus not corresponding to the category of “Black Madonnas” under discussion here.

26 The late twelfth century sculpture of Santa María de Guadalupe in Spain is a seated Virgin in Majesty. Her left hand, which is usually hidden beneath her robes, reveals the wood she is made of, discernible where patches of black coloration have flaked off. On the basis of this evidence, Peterson, *Visualizing Guadalupe*, 28, concludes “that the only and original paint layer was black rather than a lighter ‘flesh color,’ as has been uncovered on some Black Madonnas.”



2. Santa María de Guadalupe, Real Monasterio de Guadalupe, Spain, 2014. Photo by the author.

dark figures of pre-Christian religions whose cults Mary inherited, was evidently based on an anthropological assumption. The belief that man is made from clay is famously formulated in Genesis 2.7, where, in the Hebrew version, the words for farmland (=adamáh) and man (=adám) are punned upon. It was also known to Greco-Roman antiquity.²⁷

In early colonial Mesoamerica, where a different set of anthropological assumptions prevailed, this connection could not be established. Indeed, in this cultural ambit, the predominant be-

27 Cf. "Erde," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, Sachwörterbuch zur Auseinandersetzung des Christentums mit der antiken Welt*, vol. 5: *Endelechius-Erfinder*, ed. Theodor Klauser (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1962), 1147–1150.

lief was that man is made from maize.²⁸ Accordingly, among the Aztecs, goddesses were associated with a light yellow-ochre skin color, which females of rank also adopted. Blackness, however, was ascribed almost exclusively to male deities.²⁹

I would like to suggest that Mary's "blackness" as it is displayed by the Spanish Guadalupe icon and so many more medieval statues of Mary, did not establish itself in this cultural ambit during the colonial era because assigning a dark coloration to the mother figure of the "new" religion imported by the missionaries simply made no sense to the local populations. However, the medieval Black Madonnas became important precedents for other dark statues—those of the so-called "Cristos Negros." Whether the Black Christs result from indigenous reinterpretation of Christian visual culture or whether they were commissioned by the missionaries who realized that concessions to pre-Columbian belief systems were decisive in converting the encountered populations, blackening these statues seems to have been paramount in securing acceptance and veneration by the indigenous.

In the Spanish colonies, local, geographically defined sites—namely dark caves used for ritual purposes—played a decisive role in assigning the statues of the "new divinity" introduced by Christian missionaries miracle-working powers. As the common locus where Black Madonnas and Black Christs often "appeared," the cave points to polytheistic religious belief systems connected to natural sites on both sides of the Atlantic. The observations made here about how local factors determined the development of a specific Christian visual culture in both Europe and in Mesoamerica show how fertile the comparative analysis of the "local" and the "global" on different continents may be in shaping an art history geared toward an archeology of visual conceptions rather than toward describing the influence of one "dominating" visual system on the realm of territories often assumed to have resembled a *tabula rasa* by Eurocentric approaches to colonial art.

28 Cf. Karl A. Taube, "Maize. Iconography and Cosmological Significance," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures, The Civilizations of Mexico and Central America*, vol. 2, ed. David Carrasco (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 150–152.

29 Cf. Peterson, "Perceiving Blackness, Envisioning Power: Chalma and Black Christs in Colonial Mexico," 59.

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Between Roman Models and African Realities: Waterworks and Negotiation of Spaces in Colonial Rio de Janeiro*

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Introduction

In a book published in 1723, a friar of the Barefoot Augustinians, Agostinho de Santa Maria, describes a street scene a short distance outside of Rio de Janeiro as follows:

A street runs from the monastery Nossa Senhora da Ajuda toward the town, bordered by noble houses, and constantly frequented by many persons, both black- and white-skinned. The blacks come and go, fetching water from the Carioca River and bringing it into the city. The Carioca is a river rising out of the mountains, its water is superb [...] And those of fair skin seek out, for their amusement and relaxation, the fresh and enjoyable localities in the surrounding area.¹

The blacks and whites pursue their different tasks in apparent harmony, making joint use of the bustling street for work and recreation. Such an idyllic image of the utilization of a public space was extremely rare in the descriptions of Rio de Janeiro. In later accounts, a stark contrast between the protected domestic sphere and the hostile public streets and squares was predominant.² In most depictions, these public spaces were characterized by a sense of disorder and threat caused by the ubiquitous presence of enslaved and freed blacks, from whom the whites sought to distance themselves as much as possible.

Who defines the spaces of a city, their configuration and functions, their utilization and value, their atmosphere, and thus their meaning and importance? And how do such processes come about? I wish to make these questions concrete by looking at the spaces constructed by and around the water supply

1 “Da mesma Casa, & Santuario de nossa Senhora da Ajuda [...] corre hua rua, que vay para a Cidade, toda povoada de casas nobres, & sempre frequentada de pretos, & brancos; os pretos vão, & vem a buscar, & trazer agoa da Carioca, que he hua Ribeyra, que desce da serra de excellente agoa; [...]. E os brancos vão buscar no campo os lugares frescos, & deliciosos para o seu alivio, & divertimento;” Agostinho de Santa Maria, *Santuario mariano, e historia das imagens milagrosas de nossa senhora*, vol. 10 (Lisbon: Antonio Pedrozo Galram, 1723), 20.

2 Cf. Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *House and Street. The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988).

infrastructure that transcended and structured the colonial city of Rio de Janeiro by means of a network of aqueducts, public fountains, and private water taps.³ At the fore of the inquiry are two central actors: the groups broadly termed “the white elites” and “the blacks.” I argue that these actors constructed the urban spaces of Rio in a continuous process of negotiation and renegotiation, imbuing those spaces with a specific identity. The white power elites, supported by technical experts, were active in the name of the Portuguese king or the municipal authorities, and identified themselves in large measure with the traditions stemming from their land of origin across the sea. They designed the water infrastructure and oversaw the construction of its facilities.⁴ The black slaves, on the other hand, who, most particularly in their function as carriers of water, were the direct users of the aqueducts and fountains, were indispensable for the actual supply of drinking water for the urban residents; they filled the facilities with the pulse of life, giving them their special atmosphere. The two groups had different ideas about the value and functionality of the waterworks. They never engaged in direct dialogue about the use and organization of the corresponding spaces; rather, they negotiated them through their respective behavior.

In reconstructing this process of negotiation, I have to make use of a highly asymmetrical array of source materials: while the attitudes, motivations, and actions of the Portuguese and their descendants are relatively well represented in the documentation they produced themselves—as well as directly in the waterworks—the actions of the blacks must be deduced from descriptions made by others, particularly from travel accounts written by foreign Europeans. Yet the authors of these descriptions were, by means of the accounts driven by their own inter-

3 A more detailed version of the arguments will soon be published in *Brasiliana - Journal for Brazilian Studies*.

4 For literature on Rio de Janeiro’s colonial water supply, cf. Magalhães Corrêa, “Terra Carioca. Fontes e chafarizes,” *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* 170 (1935): 9–214; Noronha Santos, “Aqueduto da Carioca,” *Revista do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* 4 (1940): 7–53; idem, “Fontes e chafarizes do Rio de Janeiro,” *Revista do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* 10 (1946): 7–133; José de Sousa Reis, “Arcuatum Opus. Arcos da Carioca,” *Revista do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* 12 (1955): 9–108; Rosauero Mariano Silva, “A luta pela água,” in *Rio de Janeiro em seus quatrocentos anos. Formação e desenvolvimento da cidade*, [ed. Secretaria de Obras Públicas] (Rio de Janeiro: Distribuidora Record, 1965), 311–37; Maurício de Almeida Abreu, “A cidade, a montanha e a floresta,” in *Natureza e Sociedade no Rio de Janeiro*, ed. Maurício de Almeida Abreu (Rio de Janeiro: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, Turismo e Esportes, 1992), 54–103.

ests and conceptions, likewise participant in the construction of the respective spaces. Thus the blacks tended to be highly underrepresented in the sources produced by the Portuguese, since as a rule they viewed Rio de Janeiro as a “normal” city along European lines. In contrast, the blacks were distortedly foregrounded in the accounts written by northern European travelers, because the slaves and their agency were considered a special feature of the exotic locality in the foreigners’ process of self-demarkation. This does not mean, however, that interpreting elites and blacks as opposed actors in the process of negotiating the configuration of urban spaces is illicit. It only implies that we will learn less about the thoughts, motives, and intentions of the blacks than about those of the whites.

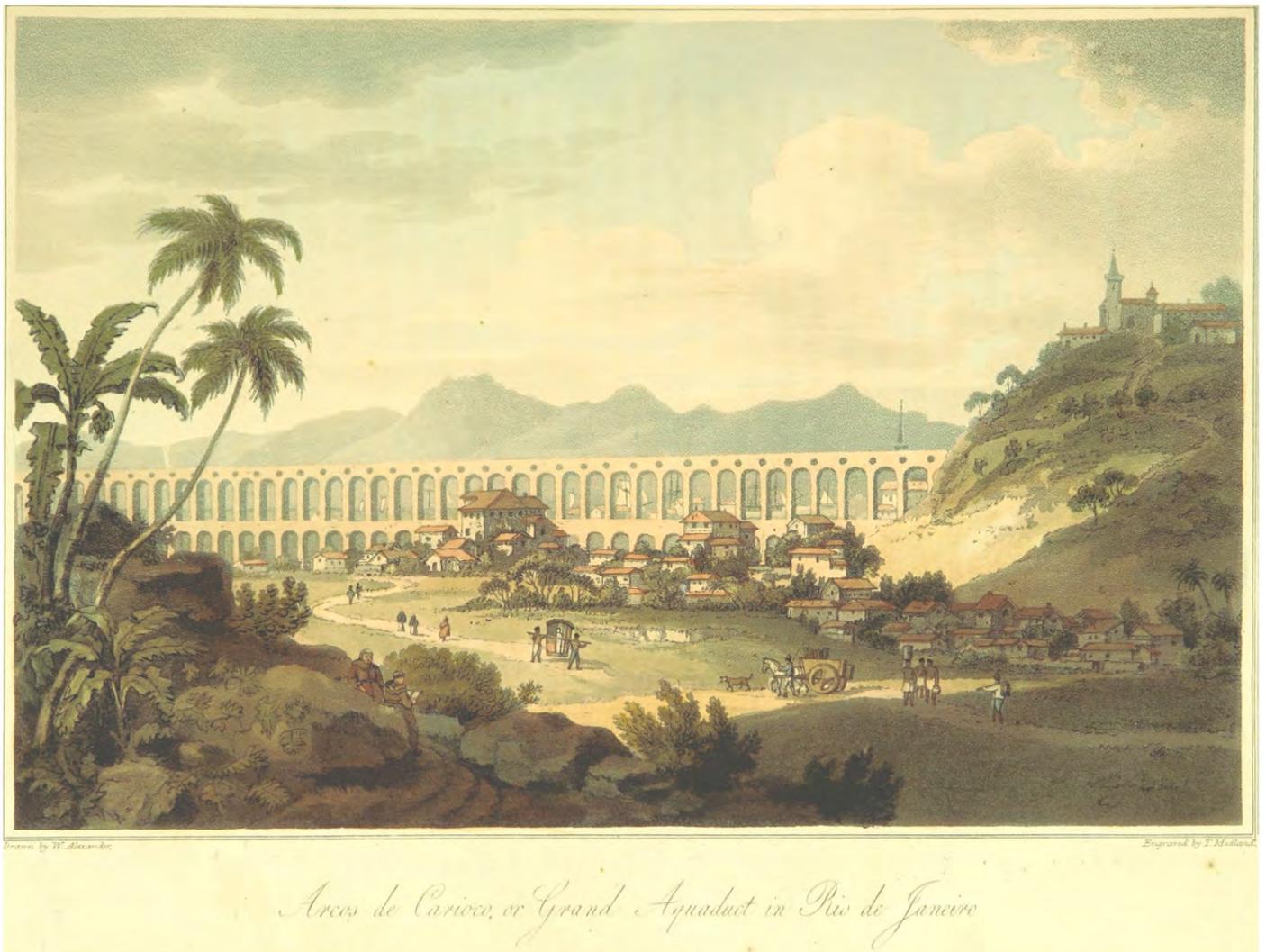
In the following, I will argue bearing in mind the spatial categories proposed by Henri Lefebvre. The Portuguese colonial masters and their descendants dominated the creation of the conceived space (*espace conçu*), a space that was materialized by architectonic set pieces of European origin, mirroring a specific program of dominion and civilization.⁵ The slaves and freed slaves created a lived space (*espace vécu*) around the aqueduct and fountains, which was shaped and defined by their own constraints and needs and had little in common with the conceived space of the Portuguese.

Roman Models

The notables of Rio de Janeiro were extraordinarily proud of their grand aqueduct with its two stories of arches, completed in 1723. It can be filed within a long tradition of aqueduct constructions in Portugal. In earlier times, the Romans had built a large number of impressive exemplars on the Iberian Peninsula that were renewed and expanded in many Portuguese towns in the sixteenth century.⁶ In particular, the humanistically oriented King João III (1521–1557) had a great interest in maintaining and restoring Roman culture and architecture, not least because he considered the Portuguese overseas empire to be the successor to the former Roman Empire. For this reason, he sent the Portuguese architect and painter Francisco de Holan-

5 Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Ed. Anthropos, 1974).

6 Walter Rossa, “Modern Age Aqueducts in Portugal,” in: *Aqueducts*, ed. Vittorio Gregotti (Bologna: CIPIA, 1994), 61–62.



1. John Barrow, Arcos de Carioco [sic] or Grand Aqueduct in Rio de Janeiro. Image extracted from: *John Barrow, A Voyage to Cochín China, in the years 1792, and 1793 [...]* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1806), 115. Original held and digitized by the British Library. Public domain.

da and other artists to the eternal city to study its Roman heritage as well as the urbanistic concepts of the Renaissance. In Rome, Holanda became acquainted with the *renovatio Romae*, a program by which the Renaissance popes sought to resurrect Rome as the center of Christendom, which included the restoration of its antique aqueducts.⁷ Many years later, he wrote a report in which he not only described his impressions from Rome but also proposed a program and draft plan for the urbanistic reconfiguration of Lisbon.⁸ One of his proposals was to build an aqueduct in Lisbon according to the Roman models. He not only argued that the city should offer its residents a level of comfort commensurate with its status as the capital of a world power, but also associated the architectonic renewal of

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7 Katherine Wentworth Rinne, *The Waters of Rome. Aqueducts, Fountains, and the Birth of the Baroque City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 45; Ronald K. Delph, "Renovatio, Reformatio, and Humanist Ambition in Rome," in *Heresy, Culture, and Religion in Early Modern Italy: Contexts and Contestations*, ed. Idem, and Michelle M. Fontaine, and John Jeffries Martin (Kirkville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2006), 73–92, here 85.

8 Francisco de Holanda, "Da Fabrica que Falece a Cidade de Lisboa," ed. Vergilio Correia and Alberto Cortês, *Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología* 5 (1929), 209–224.

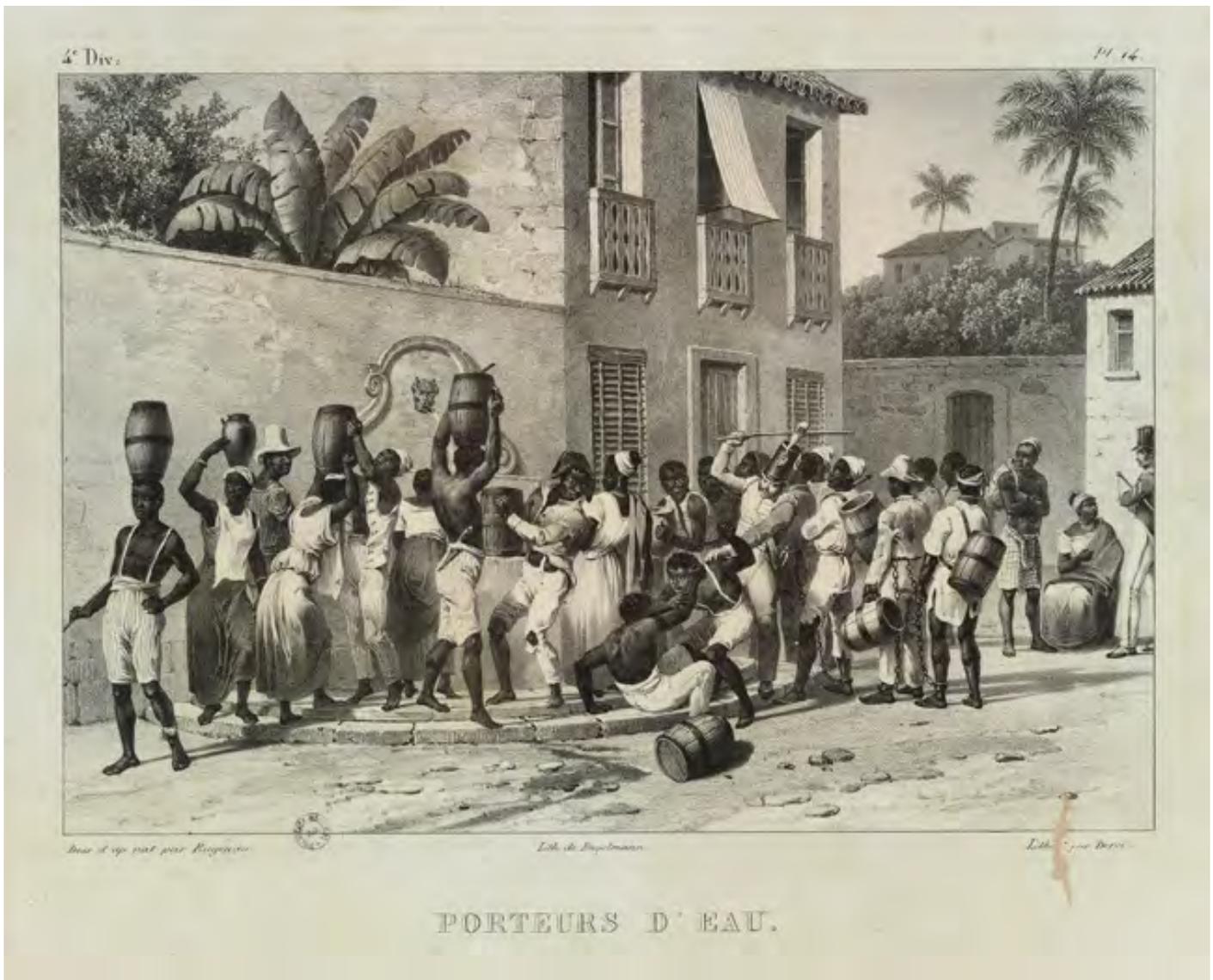
the city with the purification of the souls of its residents and interpreted it as a way to civilize them. To strengthen his argument, he drew on a historic review of the conquest of Lisbon by the Romans, according to which on the heels of the victory over the local pagans, the Roman conquerors urbanized, embellished, and ennobled all their settlements with a system for water provision, including large arches and an extensive network of pipes.

Similar conceptions were adopted by the Portuguese regarding the establishment of cities in the early modern colonial world. Cities were seen as an *expression* of piety and civilization, as well as a *means* for the attainment of these.⁹ With their architectonic appearance as well as their structures of political organization, the cities formed a central part of the identity of European settlers in America. Just as the Roman conquerors had established cities in Portugal reflecting the model of their own cities, the Portuguese built cities with corresponding features in the areas they conquered and settled. The construction of the aqueduct in Rio de Janeiro, however, should also be viewed in relationship to the urban reconfigurations that reflected the increased royal interest in Brazil since the end of the seventeenth century.¹⁰ This applies especially to Rio de Janeiro, which would become the main export hub for the gold recently discovered in the interior. Through the inscriptions on the aqueduct and fountains—almost all of them in Latin—the city’s inhabitants were constantly indoctrinated regarding a lasting connection between the material comforts of the city, the high degree of civilization of its inhabitants, and the representatives of the crown responsible for them.¹¹

9 Cf. e.g. Giovanni Botero, *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of the Cities*, ed. Geoffrey Symcox (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, [2012]), 10.

10 Nestor Goulart Reis Filho, *Contribuição ao estudo da evolução urbana do Brasil: 1500-1720* (São Paulo: Livr. Pioneira Ed. / Ed. da Univ. de São Paulo, 1968).

11 For the inscriptions cf. José de Souza Azevedo Pizarro e Araújo, *Memórias históricas do Rio de Janeiro e das províncias anexas à jurisdição do vice-rei do Estado do Brasil*, vol. 7 (Rio de Janeiro: Silva Porto 1822), 47–65; Santos, “Aqueduto da Carioca;” Santos, “Fontes e chafarizes;” Reis, “Arcuatium Opus.”



2. Johann Moritz Rugendas. *Porteurs d'eau*. Original held and digitized by the Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro. Public domain.

African Realities

Innumerable travel accounts of the second half of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as well as many drawings done by foreign painters, captured scenes at Rio de Janeiro's fountains. According to these descriptions, the spaces around the fountains were loud and chaotic, with many people conversing and arguing. Often the slaves and freedmen had to endure a long wait until they could fill their vessels, yet they would also deliberately take breaks at the fountains to smoke, eat, drink, or play, or occasionally even to take a bath.¹² The areas around the fountains were spaces of community life where the blacks could pursue the social needs that the whites satisfied in the private sphere of their homes and gardens. Although they were freely accessible and observable,

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¹² Cf. e.g. the vivid description in James Hardy Vaux, *Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux*, vol. 1 (London: W. Clowes, 1819), 219.

these places formed a kind of intimate space for the black population, in which, to a certain degree, their own rules and hierarchies held sway.

The white population felt uncomfortable with these scenes. To the whites, idle slaves seemed objectionable, if not downright dangerous. As the Jesuit Jorge Benci wrote in a treatise published in 1700 on how to deal correctly with slaves, a double threat emanated from them.¹³ On the one hand, idleness led to vice and a godless life of sin. Benci claimed that while this was also true for the whites, the blacks were much more prone to all manner of outrages. Yet idleness was not only an insult to the Lord, it also represented a concrete risk to the whites. According to Benci, it provoked slaves into being rebellious and recalcitrant; they even might try to shake off the yoke of slavery. For that reason, he warned slaveholders to make sure their slaves were constantly kept busy at work so that they would remain peaceable and tame. Only in that way could their masters lead a relaxed and quiet life. Likewise, the growing group of freed slaves posed a problem in the perspective of people of European origin. Socially marginalized and with few legal possibilities for work, they were considered lazy, vicious, and depraved. As did the slaves, the black freemen would also congregate at the fountains, and for the whites, this, too, constituted a threat to social order.

But it was not just black people's presence at the fountains that disturbed the white population. Frequently, there were quarrels and fights between the slaves waiting at the fountains, with some being injured and even killed.¹⁴ Apart from that, slaves and freedmen were repeatedly accused of destroying the fountains as well as the aqueduct and its pipe system, either by negligence or on purpose. Unlike the white elites, the slaves were not interested in the functionality of the aqueduct, nor did the previously described image of urban culture and refinement going back to Roman antecedents have much meaning for them. Indeed, with their chaotic and sometimes violent behavior, they strongly disturbed that image. The blacks had, to

13 Jorge Benci, *Economia cristã dos senhores no governo dos escravos* (Livro brasileiro de 1700). Estudo preliminar de Pedro de Alcântara Figueira e Claudinei M. M. Mendes (São Paulo: Grijalbo, 1977), 175–178.

14 Arquivo Nacional do Rio de Janeiro (ANRJ), *Secretaria de Estado do Brasil*, cód. 952, vol. 24, f. 303; vol. 27, f. 302.

a certain degree, appropriated the spaces created by the water supply infrastructure: their lived realities overlaid and submerged the urban identity postulated by the white elites.

The Counteractions

Despite this reality, the municipal administration nonetheless sought to enforce its conceptions. It installed sentinels who were to discipline the blacks, imposed penalties, and interfered materially by rendering the infrastructure particularly secure, undertaking repairs and relocating or remodeling structures.¹⁵

The special role that the slaves played in the system of water distribution can be seen even in connection with the very construction of the aqueduct. When it was first planned in the early seventeenth century, it was far from obvious that it would actually be built, as the city had a white population of only between 3,500 and 7,500¹⁶ and the distance to the Carioca River of some 2 to 3 kilometers was not a great challenge for the slaves. But with the aid of the aqueduct, it was easier to keep the slaves under surveillance. If they fetched water at a fountain in the city, they remained under the eye of the residents and the authorities, or at least had to fear being observed. Thus flight, aggression, and loitering in taverns could be hindered.

To restrict violent scenes, the white elites also tried to establish a certain functional and social segregation with respect to the fountains. Unlike the Carioca fountain, the first and main public fountain located at the periphery of the city, which was intended for the slaves,¹⁷ the second fountain had a much more representative function. A magnificent waterspout fountain, it was constructed in the very heart of the political center of Rio de Janeiro on the newly designed Carmo Square, which was open to the town's harbor and flanked by the most important buildings of the city, including the governor's palace and the town hall. In fact, it had been built where the pillory previously stood,

15 ANRJ, Secretaria de Estado do Brasil, cód. 952, vol. 33, f. 335; Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (AHU), ACL, CU, 017, cx. 34, doc. 3579; AHU, ACL, CU, 017-01, cx. 43, doc. 10397; cx. 44, doc. 10400.

16 Mauricio de Almeida Abreu, *Geografia Histórica do Rio de Janeiro (1502-1700)*, vol. 1 (Rio de Janeiro: Andrea Jakobsson 2010), 20.

17 AHU, Lisboa, ACL, CU, 017, cx. 34, doc. 3579; Luiz de Almeida Portugal / Marquês do Lavradio, *Cartas do Rio de Janeiro: 1769-1776* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1978), 126.

thus marking the transition to an advanced stage of colonization: after having successfully established the justice system, symbolized by the pillory, the Portuguese had now turned toward the subtleties of dominion, demonstrating the city's level of prosperity, symbolized by the new fountain.¹⁸

The slaves, however, did not respect this symbolism and seem to have used the Carmo fountain like any other in the city. As we know from the reports of the expedition under James Cook, who landed in Rio de Janeiro in 1768, it was difficult for the palace guard to preserve order among the slaves waiting at the Carmo fountain, even though the guard members pursued their task with exceptional severity. Thus, if the foreigners wished to fill the water storage casks for their ships, they had to request from the viceroy their own especially assigned sentinel: he would clear their path to the fountain so that they could fill their containers there.¹⁹ Later, the Carmo fountain was replaced by a new one situated directly at the dock, making it possible for foreign ship captains to refill their water stores by employing hosepipes from the fountain.

Nonetheless, the foreigners continued to perceive the slaves much more intensively than they did the grand architectonic staging based on European paradigms. As the slaves were of such great importance for the daily provisioning of the city's residents, they could hardly be banished from its public image. The omnipresent figure of the sentinel at the fountain, installed to ensure law and order, was ultimately nothing but the expression of an abiding sense of helplessness on the part of the authorities.

Conclusion

Returning to Lefebvre, it can be said that the maintenance of the difference between the space conceived by the white elites and the space actually lived by the slaves, instead of the absorption of the lived space by the conceived space, was an expression of the strength of the black population. However, due

18 Silvia Hunold Lara, *Fragmentos setecentistas. Escravidão, cultura e poder na América portuguesa* ([São Paulo]: Companhia das Letras, 2007), 47.

19 John Hawkesworth, *An Account Of The Voyages Undertaken By The Order Of His Present Majesty For Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere*, vol. 2 (London 1773), 27–28; *The voyage of the Endeavour, 1768–1771* (The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery), ed. John Cawte Beaglehole (Cambridge: Hakluyt Soc. at the Univ. Press, 1968), 29–34.

to their subjugated position, the slaves and freedmen never succeeded in conceiving an alternative conceived space that might have supplanted that of the white elite. This was because, unlike the whites, the blacks did not constitute a group with a shared past or common value system. Rather, their group included people who originally stemmed from a range of very different African nations with different languages and religions, as well as highly diverse social backgrounds. These differential features had, to be sure, partly been extinguished through the act of enslavement, which reduced the Africans to the status of subjugation and the external feature of their dark skin. But they encountered huge difficulties in constructing a new collective identity, one based on their role as slaves, though transcending it. This process took place under the watchful eyes of the whites, in the framework of religious fraternities, but also within locales of common socialization such as the fountains. Therefore, these spaces harbored a special meaning for the blacks and thus held the potential for a conceived space of their own. Yet at the same time, the slaves helped to consolidate the spaces conceived by the white elites, because it was they who built the aqueduct, the fountains, and the water supply channels, according to the instructions of the white engineers, and it was they who repaired these facilities when needed. What the blacks did succeed in doing was preventing the implementation of the conceived space of the white elites as perceived space (*espace perçu*), particularly in respect to foreign visitors, whose experience was deeply stamped by the image of the blacks.

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Tropical Opulence: Rio de Janeiro's Theater Competition of 1857

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In 1857, the Brazilian imperial government of Dom Pedro II opened a public competition for a *teatro lírico* in Rio de Janeiro. It was to be the first public architectural competition in Brazil, the result of an initiative by Manuel de Araújo Porto-Alegre and Guilherme Schuch de Capanema regarding the construction of a new official theater in Rio de Janeiro. In a petition to Dom Pedro II from August 12, 1851, they asked “His Imperial Majesty the favor to order a competition for the project of the new theater.”¹ The theater was to be built on the Campo de Santana, called the Praça da Acclamação since 1822, and today Praça da República. The program of the competition, established under the government of Pedro de Araújo Lima, marquês de Olinda, was published on November 13, 1857, in Rio de Janeiro’s *Jornal do Commercio*. The same journal published the jury’s verdict on the competition entries on March 23, 1859. The first prize was awarded to Gustav Waehneltdt (1830–73), a German architect established in Rio de Janeiro since 1852, known especially as the architect of Rio de Janeiro’s Palácio do Catete (1858–67) and for being involved in completing the Igreja da Candelária by designing the octagonal drum of the cupola as well as balustrades and sculptures of the drum’s façade (1863–68).² The second prize went to William John Green (1835–99) and Louis De Ville (d. 1906), British and French architects, respectively, who had established their firm in London. Samuel Sloan (1815–84) from Philadelphia ranked third.

Though this *teatro lírico* was never realized and the Campo de Santana was transformed into a park in the second half of the 1870s, the competition provides a very interesting example regarding to the relationship between the Brazilian imperial government’s expectations and exterior projections coming from international contributions explicitly requested by the competition program in addressing “concorrentes que residirem fóra

1 “... a Vossa Magestade Imperial a graça de mandar pôr a concurso o projeto do novo teatro” (Rio de Janeiro, Arquivo Nacional, IE 743). Quoted after Francisco Riopardense de Macedo, *Arquitetura no Brasil e Araújo Porto Alegre* (Porto Alegre: Editora da Universidade, UFRGS, 1984), 75. Cf. the quotation (with differences) in Donato Mello Junior, “O arquiteto Gustav Waehneltdt,” *Arquitetura Revista* 8 (1990): 54–62, here 55. Mello presented the findings of his article—the first on the competition of 1857 of some detail—initially at the *II Congresso de História da Arte of the Comitê Brasileiro de História da Arte* in 1984; see also the abstract of Mello’s talk before the Comissão de Estudos e Pesquisas Históricas in *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* 151, suplemento (1990): 110–11. On Porto-Alegre see Roberto Conduru, “A história da arte no Brasil, ‘de cá para lá,’” *Perspective. La revue de l’INHA* 2 (2013): 263–68.

2 See Mello, “O arquiteto Gustav Waehneltdt.”

do império.”³ I will focus on a comparison of Waehneltdt’s winning project and the project placed second by Green and De Ville, and will, in addition, discuss the project by the German architect Gottfried Semper (1803–79).⁴ It is of particular interest as a project by a major European theater architect renowned for his Dresden Opera (1838–41). However, it was excluded from the competition because it did not fulfill the requirements of the first article of the program, which defined the size and placement of the theater.⁵ As shown in one of the commission’s preparatory drawings of the site plan, in the Biblioteca Nacional, the theater should have occupied a space on the southern part of the Campo de Santana, with the main façade facing north toward the huge open square.⁶ Semper’s solution corresponds to this requirement in placing the theater south of the plan’s line A (the Rua da Conde, today the sector between Rua Visconde de Rio Branco and Rua Frei Caneca) that delimits the square.⁷ Thus, his exclusion might be related to the required size.

However, I will argue that Semper offered a project whose *form* might have caused problems for the jury. Semper’s competition entry reveals a particular degree of European projection about what it is that makes Rio de Janeiro a Brazilian city and its life one in an imperial context.

3 Ministério do Império, “Programma de concurso para construção de um theatro na cidade do Rio de Janeiro,” *Jornal do Commercio* 32, no. 312 (November 13, 1857): 1. Extracts of the program have been published after a document in the Biblioteca Nacional in Rio de Janeiro (maybe corresponding to one of the program variants in II-35,03,005) in Rogério D. Penido, “Os teatros no Rio de Janeiro (sécs XVIII e XIX),” *Cadernos de teatro* 109 (April–June 1986): 10–18, here 15–16.

4 I have not succeeded so far in localizing Samuel Sloan’s plans for the Rio de Janeiro theater competition. It is not mentioned in Harold N. Cooledge, JR., *Samuel Sloan: Architect of Philadelphia, 1815–1884* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986).

5 Ministério do Império, “Termo de Julgamento,” *Jornal do Commercio* 34, no. 82 (March 23, 1859): 1, where Semper is listed among the rejected projects under the motto “Ver non semper floret”. For the identification of this motto with Semper’s project and the project itself see Heidrun Laudel, “Kaiserliches Theater in Rio de Janeiro,” in *Gottfried Semper 1803–1879: Architektur und Wissenschaft*, ed. Winfried Nerdinger and Werner Oechslin (Munich: Prestel/Zurich: gta, 2003), 333–36.

6 Rio de Janeiro, Biblioteca Nacional, II-35,03,005:8A (general plan of the Campo de Santana); II-35,03,005:9 (required position of theater); II-35,03,005:10 (variant of theater position).

7 See the first article of the program in Ministério do Império, “Programma de concurso”: “O theatro será construido em um terreno rectangular de 435 palmos de frente e 600 de fundos, situado entre deus quarteirões de casas com frentes de um lado para a praça da Acclamação (linha A da planta), e de outro lado para uma rua paralela áquella linha. A fachada deitará para a Praça, ficando pelas faces lateraes duas ruas, e pelos fundos o espaço que mediar entre o mesmo theatro e a outra rua.”

Theatrical Politics

The program for Rio de Janeiro's 1857 competition asked for a theater that could house everything from operas and ballets to public festivities.⁸ In this role of serving public festivities, it took over functions fulfilled traditionally by the Campo de Santana. I briefly recapitulate this context of the intended construction site before discussing the theater projects more closely. In 1857, when the theater competition was announced, the square was called Praça da Acclamação, referring to the event in 1822 when Dom Pedro I was publicly acclaimed as constitutional emperor of Brazil, thus ensuring Brazil's independence from Portugal. The acclamation of Dom Pedro took place in front of a small *palacete* situated in the center of the Campo de Santana.⁹ The Campo de Santana's historical importance thus must have had its impact on the decision to build a new theater on it. This becomes intriguing insofar as a theater differs in its paramount function from the *palacete* formerly occupying the square.

Between the two events—the acclamation of Dom Pedro in 1822 and the start of the theater competition in 1857—there existed other plans to urbanize the Campo de Santana. In 1827, the French architect Auguste Grandjean de Montigny (1776–1850), a member of the French Artistic Mission that came to Brazil in 1816, proposed to transform the Campo de Santana into a “Forum Imperial da acclamação.” Under this plan, the *palacete* would have been enlarged and moved to the triangular eastern edge of the place, its center occupied by an equestrian statue of Dom Pedro, the whole encircled by ministerial and functionaries' houses. The square was given a processional direction through a triumphal arch on its northern end.¹⁰ The next step in remodeling the Campo de Santana

8 Ministério do Império, “Programma de concurso”: “O theatro terá dimensões próprias para que se possam executar grandes espectáculos, como sejam operas lyricas, bailados, pantomimas e festas publicas.”

9 See Félix Émile Taunay's etching “Acclamação de S.M.O Snr. D. Pedro I ... no dia 12 de Outubro 1822” (Rio de Janeiro, Biblioteca Nacional, E:g:II), and the rendering of the scene with corresponding text in Jean-Baptiste Debret, *Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil*, 3 vols. (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1834–39), vol. 3, 222–23 and pl. 47.

10 See Grandjean de Montigny's plan and “Nota explicativa do Projecto da Praça proposta no Campo de Santa Anna”, Rio de Janeiro, Museu Nacional de Belas Artes (inv. no. 6393), and the corresponding elevation in the Museu D. João VI (inv. no. 2978). For Grandjean de Montigny's urbanization project of the Campo de Santana see Adolfo Morales de los Rios Filho, *Grandjean de Montigny e a evolução da arte brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Empresa a Noite, 1941, after 128 (figs. of “Elevação” and “Nota explicativa”), and 287–88 (transliteration of “Nota explicativa”); Robert Coustet, “Grandjean de Montigny, urbanista,” in *Uma*

was the construction of a Teatro Provisório in November 1851 on the southern part of the square, between Rua dos Ciganos (today Rua da Constituição) and Rua do Hospício (today Rua Buenos Aires). This theater provisionally replaced Rio de Janeiro's first theater, the Real Teatro de São João (later renamed the Teatro São Pedro de Alcântara), built in 1813 on the Praça da Constituição (today's Praça Tiradentes) and destroyed by fire for the second time in August 9, 1851.¹¹

In establishing the Teatro Provisório on the Campo de Santana, the Brazilian government offered an alternative space for imperial representations formerly fulfilled by the *palacete* on the occasion of Pedro I's acclamation in 1822 on the one hand, and by the Real Teatro de São João on the other. In 1821, the Portuguese king Dom João VI provisionally accepted the constitution of Lisbon on its balcony.¹² Dom João VI was confirming Brazil's adherence to Portugal, yet he was thus also preparing his departure from Brazil and, unwittingly, the soon-to-come acclamation of his son, Dom Pedro I, as constitutional emperor of an independent Brazil. The Teatro Provisório, in substituting the Real Teatro de São João, transferred the latter's political implications to the Campo de Santana. It did so visibly by copying the outer appearance of the first theater, as can be seen from a watercolor by José dos Reis Carvalho from 1853.¹³ The provisional theater continued to be in use on the Campo de Santana until 1875; it was destroyed in the course of the construction of the new park.¹⁴

Whatever the precise reasons for planning a new theater on the Campo de Santana, it meant a change to former modes of impe-

cidade em questão: Grandjean de Montigny e o Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro: PUC/FUNARTE/Fundação Roberto Marinho, 1979), 65–72 and 162–63, figs. 29 and 30; Donato Mello Jr., "Fontes documentais para pesquisas sobre o arquiteto Grandjean de Montigny", *ibid.*, 107–24; Donato Mello Jr., "Presença de Grandjean de Montigny no Brasil," *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* 148, no. 357 (October/December 1990): 439–51, here 443.

11 Mello, "O arquiteto Gustav Waehneltdt," 55; José Dias, *Teatros do Rio do século XVIII ao século XX* (Rio de Janeiro: FUNARTE, 2012, 2nd ed. 2014), 68–100 and 109–112. Rosana Pereira de Freitas (Rio de Janeiro) has drawn my attention to the latter book.

12 For the Real Teatro de São João in 1821, see Debret, *Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil*, vol. 3, 219–20 and pl. 45.

13 Reproduced in Dias, *Teatros do Rio*, 111. See also a photograph by Rafael Castro y Ordóñez from 1862 showing the provisional theater on the Campo de Santana (Rio de Janeiro, Biblioteca Nacional, FOTOS-ARM.3.9.2[21]).

14 Dias, *Teatros do Rio*, 112.

rial representation.¹⁵ This change is implicitly present in that the new theater would have replaced the Teatro Provisório, and that this latter became a sort of substitute for the Campo de Santana's *palacete*. The projects of the competition of 1857 I will now discuss display a will to create a theater in the form of a palace, thus combining in reality the architectural type of the *palacete* of the 1822 acclamation with the architectural embodiment of the unsuccessful provisional acceptance of the Lisbon constitution in 1821. Thus, with the theater competition, Dom Pedro II created the possibility of delivering his imperial presentations to his subjects in more favorable circumstances than the ones committed to history's memory by his grandfather on the balcony of the Real Teatro de São João. In any case, it seems remarkable to me that the theater competition of 1857 refers, by the choice of its site and the awarded projects, more or less directly to crucial political events of Brazil's history in a way that closely associates politics and theater.

A Theater for the People and for the Emperor

The main reason why the planned theater was never built was apparently a question of money and a changing government that recommended in 1858 that it stop spending funds to acquire houses at the construction site, as it did not seem urgent to build a new theater.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the competition continued to arouse local polemics regarding the jury's award of the first prize to Waehnelde, as well as international comments focused particularly on the projects by Green and De Ville and Gottfried Semper, both of which were exhibited on different occasions in Europe. The only images known to date of Waehnelde's winning project—two photographs by Marc Ferrez (1843–1923) of a plaster model—make its discussion rather difficult. While the captions of the photographs explain that the project's plan was by Waehnelde, they state that the “project of the façades and the execution of the plaster model” was “by the engineer-architect Luiz Schreiner.”¹⁷ As Luiz (Ludwig) Schreiner (1838–92), another German expatriate born in Berlin, seems to have come

15 For representational aspects of the Brazilian imperial government in the field of anthropology and museums, see Jens Andermann, *The Optic of the State: Visuality and Power in Argentina and Brazil* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007).

16 Mello, “O arquiteto Gustav Waehnelde,” 56.

17 Marc Ferrez, “Modelo de novo teatro lyrico em Rio de Janeiro,” Rio de Janeiro, Biblioteca Nacional, FOTOS-ARC.1.5(19-20): “Autor da planta premiada, o Architecto, G. Waehnelde. Projecto das fachadas e execução do modelo em gesso pelo engheneiro architecto, Luiz Schreiner. Coadjuvado pelo escultor, F. Beaugrand.”

to Rio de Janeiro only in or after 1876,¹⁸ his model might have been made just when de Campo de Santana was being transformed into a park.

Hints about the original look of Waehneltd's project can be gathered from the jury's verdict and from contemporary critiques. The jury stated quite laconically that his project "is much superior to all other competition entries." It not only "satisfies all of the program's exigencies," but "is remarkable for the singularity of ornaments, especially the exterior ones."¹⁹ This praise of the ornaments was one of the jury's justifications that aroused harsh reactions by an anonymous critic signing as "Um concorrente." In the first of a series of articles published in Rio de Janeiro's *Correio Mercantil*, he observed that the ornaments were "even too singular, for they do not exist," with an exterior "not covered by a superposition of pilasters."²⁰ Beyond the lack of a common neo-Renaissance ornament, the critic also rejected a cylindrical feature of the façade the jury itself criticized: "The committee would have appreciated more if it had not a cylindrical façade; yet this small drawback is neither contrary to the clauses of the program nor does it modify the unanimous verdict of the commission's members with respect to its merit in question."²¹ The cylindrical exterior appearance of Waehneltd's project also provoked further ridicule. The anonymous critique called the project "a veritable pigeon loft," and likened it to the *barrière* Saint-Denis in Paris,²² probably meaning in-

18 "Todtenschau. Ludwig Schreiner", *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 26, no. 83 (October 15, 1892): 511–12; Sacramento Blake, *Diccionario Bibliographico Brasileiro*, vol. 5 (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1899), 464.

19 Ministerio do Imperio, "Termo de Julgamento": "Este plano satisfaz a todas as exigencias do programma; offerece todas as condições desejaveis de segurança e commodidade; faz-se notavel pela singelosa dos ornamentos, maxime os exteriores. [...] Segundo este juizo, o plano [...] é muito superior a todos os outros que entrãrão em concurso, e deve ser o preferido para a construcção."

20 Um concorrente, "Concurso para o theatro lyrico," *Correio Mercantil* 16, no. 85 (March 26/27, 1859): 1: "Com effeito, Srs. commissão, valha-nos a verdade são muito singelos os ornamentos, singelos demais até, pois que não existem! Não passa o exterior de uma superposição de pilastras".

21 Ministerio do Imperio, "Termo de Julgamento": "A commissão o estimaria mais se não tivesse a fachada cylindrica; mas este pequeno senão em nada contraria as clausulas do programma, nem modifica o juizo unanime dos membros da commissão, quanto ao merito relativo."

22 Um concorrente, "Concurso para o theatro lyrico": "O pequeno *senão* da commissão tem apenas por effeito tornar o plano ... um verdadeiro pombal: e se os Srs. commissarios forem a Paris recommendamos-lhes que vão ver perto da barreira de S. Diniz um corpo de guarda,

stead the *barrière* Saint-Martin by Jean-Nicolas Ledoux with its *rotonde de la Villette*.

While it might be that Waehneltd's project was influenced by Grandjean de Montigny, whose designs adopted features of French revolutionary architecture, the jury seems to have been opposed to such associations. Indeed, if Ludwig Schreiner's reinterpretation of Waehneltd's design reproduces the latter's volumes, the cylindrical feature of its exterior appearance with the semicircular façade of the auditorium is rather restrained, given its placement on the upper stories in front of the fly tower, amply distant from the main rectangular façade that opens toward the square. Even if the alleged lack of ornament in Waehneltd's façade design might have recalled features of some of Grandjean de Montigny's designs, it would have distinguished itself from one of the latter's theater projects. This project presents a plan in which the semicircular auditorium forms the main façade from bottom to top.²³ It is, in fact, a solution adapted from a theater design by Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand.²⁴ Durand's plan was also a reference for Semper's Dresden Opera,²⁵ which, in its turn, provided the starting point for his own Rio de Janeiro competition entry.

Under the assumption that Schreiner's plaster model reflects Waehneltd's project, the latter's outer rectangular appearance was that of a palace, with the exception of the cylindrical auditorium. It was joined in its palace-like appearance by Green and De Ville's second prize, which presented a sort of oblong box without any curves on the principal façade. Only the rear side of the theater bulges out slightly due to the concert hall placed there. But the main auditorium is embedded in a sort of classicizing neo-Renaissance block.²⁶ Maybe it was this particular blocky feature for which Green and De Ville were awarded.

cuja rotundidade nos parece ter servido de modelo ao autor desse exímio specimen!"

23 Grandjean de Montigny, *Planta baixa, corte e fachada de teatro* (Rio de Janeiro, Museu D. João VI).

24 Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, *Précis des leçons d'architecture données à l'École polytechnique*, vol. 2 (Paris: Bernard, 1805), pl. 16.

25 Heidrun Laudel, "Erstes Hoftheater Dresden," in *Gottfried Semper 1803–1879: Architektur und Wissenschaft*, 168–78, here 171.

26 See the engravings of Green and De Ville's project in "Design for Theater in Rio de Janeiro," *The Builder* 17, no. 871 (October 15, 1859): 680–81; "Concert-Room in Design for Theatre, Rio de Janeiro," *The Builder* 17, no. 872 (October 22, 1859): 695–96.



1. Gustav Waehnelde, Project for a new theater in Rio de Janeiro, plaster model by Luiz Schreiner, c. 1876. Rio de Janeiro, Biblioteca Nacional, FOTOS-ARC.

In contrast, Semper's project offers a main façade that is essentially a cylindrical one embracing all of its walls. Compared to Waehnelde's presumptive project, one also sees the difference that probably wouldn't have favored Semper: Waehnelde allowed the cylindrical parts of the façade only a shy presence above and behind a neo-Renaissance entrance featuring a temple pediment; Semper's proposition was exactly the opposite. Seen from the square, his own temple pediment covering the fly tower is hidden partially from view by the protruding cylindrical façade of the auditorium, with the main entrance in its center.

For Semper, the cylindrical façade was the quintessential architectural expression of a public assembling in circles around any event, be it in the street or, for that matter, in the theater. Thus, the preeminent feature of Semper's idea of a theater was the common public.²⁷ The state power or, as was the case in Dresden as well as in Rio de Janeiro, the constitutional monarch, were secondary in this respect – at least for the exterior architectural expression of his Dresden Opera that signaled, through the outward cylindrical feature, a certain democratic element. In his project for Rio de Janeiro, Semper repeated the

27 Michael Gnehm, "Im Konflikt zwischen Individuum und Gesellschaft: Gottfried Semper's theatraler Urbanismus," in *Metropolen 1850–1950: Mythen – Bilder – Entwürfe*, ed. Jean-Louis Cohen and Hartmut Frank (Berlin/Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2013), 61–86, here 70–71.

architectural importance of the semicircle, stating that “he did not want to hide the semi-cylindrical form of the auditorium” by “putting this characteristic form of a theater into a square cage as it happens with most modern theaters.”²⁸ However, Semper now transformed this element of a democratic theatricality into something more imperial. He added an exterior loge for the emperor in the apex of the cylindrical façade—a miniature adaptation of the staircases of Bramante’s Belvedere in the Vatican, including the *nicchione*, the niche on the upper end of the oblong square.²⁹

The projects by Waehnelde and Green and De Ville also offered opportunities for the emperor to present himself to his subjects assembling in the square. Both marked the theater entrance through loggias covered by temple pediments, emphasizing the imperial importance of this feature through their massiveness. Although Semper’s exterior imperial loge is also crowned by a pediment, it appears rather as a whimsical ornament compared to Waehnelde’s and Green and De Ville’s imposing pediments. In spite of this, Semper alluded explicitly to an imperial context with his exterior loge, as he explained in his notes accompanying the project. He called his design “a theater for double usage,” meaning, on the one hand, a theater that served for “scenic representations” in its interior, and on the other hand, a theater wherefrom festivities on the square could be watched.³⁰ Semper compared the Campo de Santana to an “arena” with the exterior loge corresponding to the imperial balcony of an antique Roman amphitheater. The emperor’s exterior loge thus functioned as a hinge between the halves—the interior and exterior parts—of Semper’s imaginary amphitheater for Rio de Janeiro. Furthermore, Semper saw his “theater for double usage” expressly as the place where the “spectacles for celebrating all happy or memorable events of the nation” would take place.³¹ In this sense, his project would have reassembled

28 Gottfried Semper, “Notes explicatives au projet de Théâtre pour la ville de Rio de Janeiro, avec l’Épigraphe: Ver non semper floret,” MS (1858), 3 (gta Archiv/ETH Zurich, 20-153-DOK-10): “Surtout il n’a pas voulu cacher la forme demicylindrique de la salle de spectacle [...]. Il n’a pas emboîtée dans une cage carrée cette forme éminemment caractéristique pour un théâtre, comme cela a lieu chez la plupart des Salles de spectacle modernes.”

29 Josef Bayer, *Das neue k. k. Hofburgtheater als Bauwerk mit seinem Sculpturen- und Bilderschmuck* (Wien: Gesellschaft für vervielfältigende Kunst, 1894), 18–19.

30 Semper, “Notes explicatives,” 1–2.

31 Ibid.: “C’est sur l’arène formée par cette place que devront s’exécuter les processions,

the moments of Brazil's history mentioned above, embracing political and theatrical moments simultaneously.

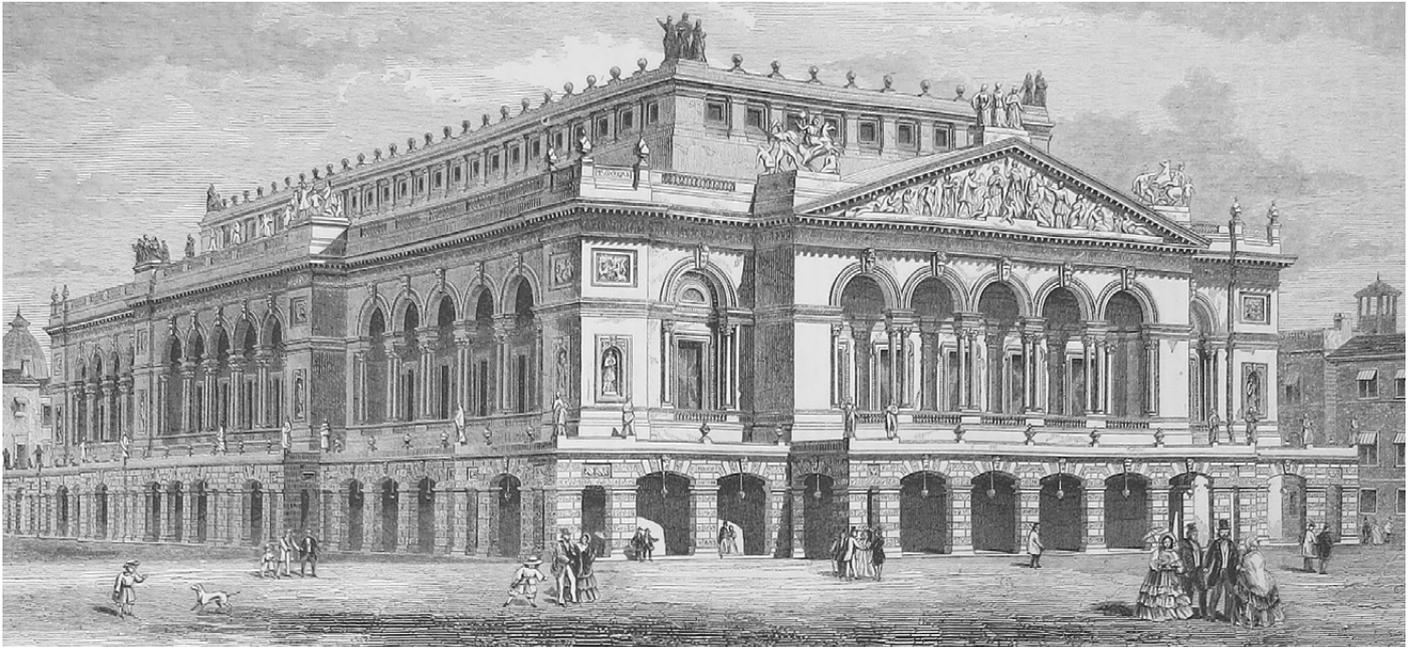
Bastards and Hybrids

Despite their obvious differences, all three of these projects share a certain degree of strangeness. All of them are vested with neo-Renaissance features, but all contain elements opposed to any pure Renaissance adaptation. This strangeness was actually commented on by contemporary reviews, starting with the anonymous critic in the *Correio Mercantil*. He insinuated that Waehneltdt acted only as a dummy, denouncing that “the father of that plan” was “a German head, yet grafted in fact onto a Brazilian trunk.”³² This attack, which united allegations of nepotism and xenophobic resentments, touches upon a major problem of the competition with respect to its international intentions. In reality, the issue of grafting resulting in hybrids is present in Waehneltdt's project itself, at least in its refurbishment by Schreiner. The strange idea of introducing a stepped gable as a closure to the stepped sequence from the temple pediment to the cylindrical auditorium façade surely represents such a hybrid. I consider this to be an homage to Waehneltdt's (and Schreiner's) home country, Germany. In any case, the stepped gable introduces a sign that announces the mainly neo-Renaissance opera to be built in a spirit of the so-called German Renaissance. If the Latinizing main façades can be considered as some sort of Brazilian architectural element, then the project indeed presents, as the critic in the *Correio Mercantil* called Waehneltdt himself, “a German head, yet grafted in fact onto a Brazilian trunk.”

Architectural grafting and the ensuing hybridity is a topic also present in the projects by Green and De Ville and by Semper. European responses to these two projects testify to this feature

les fêtes populaires, les feux d'artifice et autres spectacles pour célébrer tout événement heureux ou mémorable du pays. C'est ici que sans doute se feront les revues et les grandes parades militaires. En partant de cette supposition l'auteur du projet a conçu l'idée d'un théâtre à double usage; c'est à dire qui servirait intérieurement, pour les représentations scéniques et pour les fêtes qui auront lieu dans son enceinte, extérieurement, comme le Maenianum impérial qui dominera l'arène étendue devant lui, à l'instar d'une disposition tout à fait semblable, qui, sous l'Empire Romain, du versant du mont Palatin dominait le grand Cirque de la capitale de l'ancien monde.”

32 Um concurrente, “Concurso para o theatro lyrico”: “surgisse uma cabeça alemã, na verdade, porém, enxertada sobre um tronco brasileiro.”



2. William John Green and Louis De Ville, Project for a new theater in Rio de Janeiro, in *The Builder* 17 (1859). Zurich, ETH-Bibliothek.

so typical of an eclectic and historicist architecture that dominated the nineteenth century. When Green and De Ville's project was shown in a London exhibition in 1860, it was reviewed as "a handsome but not strikingly original building in the Palladian style."³³ One may think of Andrea Palladio's Palazzo della Ragione in Vicenza. Another critic was more severe on the occasion of Green and De Ville's presentation of their project at the International Exhibition in London in 1862, judging their "opera-house for Rio Janeiro [to be] designed in a very corrupt and bastard style."³⁴ Perhaps the critique addressed the theater's strange crest with its rows of stylized palmettes, which recall Michelangelo's Porta Pia in Rome with its castellation ending in ionic volutes crowned by spheres—a building associated with Mannerism in later times. Green and De Ville may have adopted this crowning ornamental strangeness precisely to express strangeness or exoticism. Despite its hybrid ornamental richness, which combines medieval and exotic features with classical ones (the roof parapet mixing castellation and palmettes), another critic praised the project, though "not elegant," for "the deep recessed arcades" that "employ those elements constructionally," while "modern classicists" made use of them only ornamentally.³⁵

33 "The Architectural Exhibition," *The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal* 23, no. 315 (June 1, 1860): 161–64, here 162.

34 "British Architecture in the International Exhibition," *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art* 14, no. 365 (October 25, 1862): 509–10, here 509.

35 "International Exhibition. English Architectural Design," *The Athenaeum* 1811 (July 12, 1862): 50–52, here 51.

Gottfried Semper's theater project presents major reflections on exactly this issue regarding the relation of ornament and construction. He did so by mixing medieval and Renaissance elements in a constitutive way, rather than only superficially, as in the ornamental treatment seen in the projects by Waehnelde and Green and De Ville. He prolonged the exterior pilaster strips of the auditorium as freestanding pillars that surmount the entablature and connect to flying buttresses serving as supports for the auditorium's iron roof structure. This remarkable form of hybridity had already led to assumptions on its relationship to the Brazilian context by the end of the nineteenth century, namely that the "exceptional and even strange forms" of Semper's theater had "doubtlessly" been provoked by the "foreign and exotic setting."³⁶ This evaluation had been spurred by reviews of Semper's project shown at an architectural exhibition taking place in Munich in 1863. One critic felt himself "transposed virtually to the opulent soil of South America ... at first sight through the unusual richness of the vitally arranged and peculiarly designed building volumes."³⁷ This imaginary projection even entered an academic handbook of architectural history in 1865, where Semper's theater for Rio de Janeiro was characterized as having an "architecture [...] breathing tropical opulence."³⁸

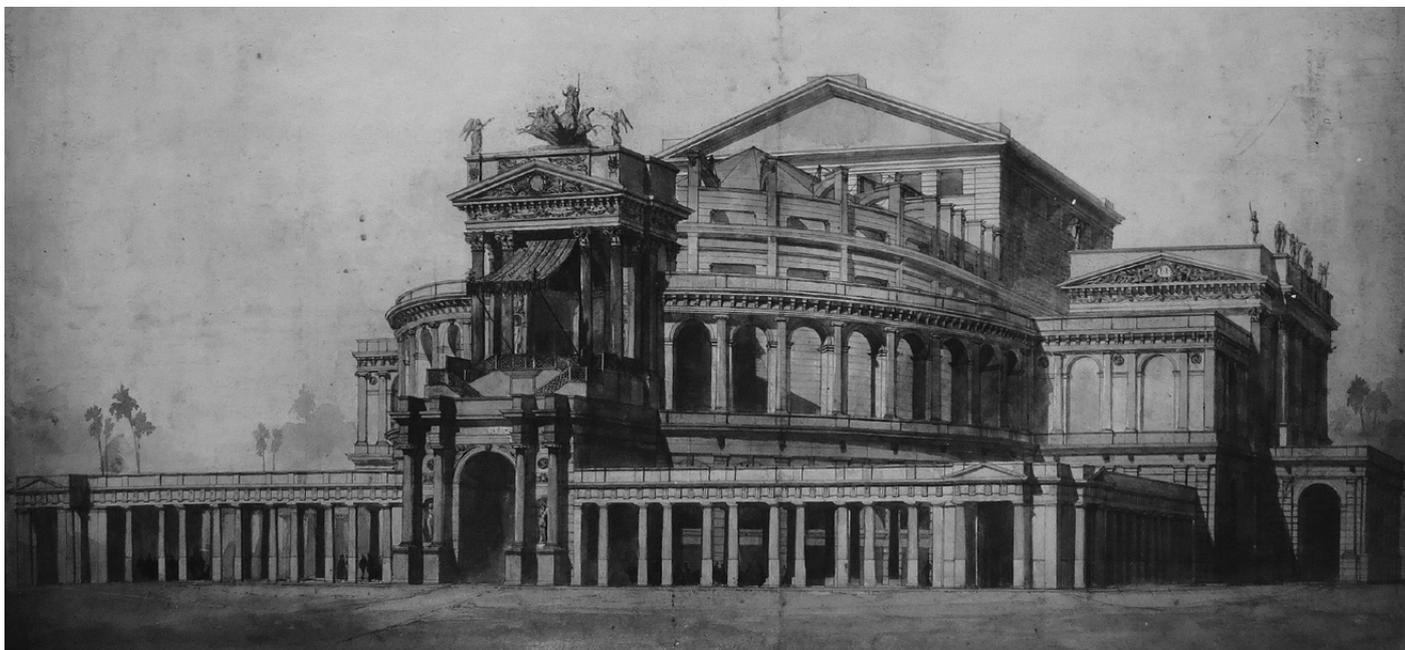
Actually, Semper's presentation drawings of his theater project reveal only minor "tropical opulence" at first sight, indicated via some palm trees flanking the building. Yet he was very anxious to contribute a theater design that took into account the characteristics of the location, that is, of Rio de Janeiro. He therein followed the instructions of the competition program that asked explicitly for constructions to be "adapted to the climate of Rio de Janeiro."³⁹ This was unmistakably a call for a site-specific design. Semper tried to fulfill this requirement insofar as he introduced the emperor's exterior loge on the one hand, and on the other hand wrapped rectangular colonnades (he called them "a double portico") around his cylindrical façade. In doing

36 Bayer, *Das neue k. k. Hofburgtheater als Bauwerk*, 18.

37 "Zwei Architektur-Ausstellungen," *Recensionen und Mittheilungen über bildende Kunst* 3, no. 40 (October 1, 1864): 314–316, here 314.

38 Wilhelm Lübke, *Geschichte der Architektur von den ältesten Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart*, 3rd, enlarged ed. (Leipzig: Seemann, 1865), 749.

39 Ministerio do Imperio, "Programma de concurso": "Será construido segundo o systema moderno, e adaptado ao clima do Rio de Janeiro".



3. Gottfried Semper, Project for a new theater in Rio de Janeiro, 1858. Munich, Deutsches Theatermuseum (Photo: Archiv/ETH Zurich).

so, he attempted to avoid the danger that his theater for Rio de Janeiro would be viewed as being a copy of his Dresden Opera. Indeed, the competition program included as a major criterion that the proposed theaters must not be “servile imitations” of existing theaters.⁴⁰ Thus, Semper wrote in his explanatory notes to the jury that the “exterior double portico was almost necessary for a climate like the one in Brazil.”⁴¹ He even introduced fountains under the colonnades apparently in order to respond to climate requirements.

Semper’s attempt at introducing site specificity also reveals itself in his conspicuous stressing of the difference between the Renaissance-like colonnades and the theatrical superstructure that ends in the gothicizing flying buttresses. Thus, his theater design points explicitly to some technical feature—that is, to a constructive element, the buttresses—that presents itself as distinct from the ornamental aspects of the Renaissance façade. This idea of representing a constructive element in all its visible functionality is extremely rare in Semper’s own projects; it forms a main argument in his critique of Gothic architecture. In his major theoretical work, *Style in the Technical*

40 Ibid.: “não sendo admittidas cópias ou imitações servis de outros theatros”. On Semper’s fear to be judged for plagiarism of his own work, see Dieter Weidmann, *Gottfried Semper «Polytechnikum» in Zürich. Ein Heiligtum der Wissenschaften und Künste*, 2 vols., Ph.D. dissertation ETH Zurich, MS (Zurich 2010), vol. 1, 361.

41 Semper, “Notes explicatives,” 5: “Le double portique extérieur, sous un climat comme celui du Brésil sera presque nécessaire, tout comme promenoir pendant les entreactes des représentations et scéniques; que pendant la journée pour le public et surtout pour ceux qui attendront l’ouverture des caisses.”

and Tectonic Arts (1860/63), he declares that Gothic architecture “wants to know nothing of dressing because its element is the naked apparition of its functional parts, as it has to display its skeleton in action like the armored crab.”⁴² This association of an architectural style with a “primitive” animal—the crab—renders the architecture in question into a “primitive” one. As a matter of fact, Gothic architecture presented for Semper a sort of primitive hut, observed in the way he described the model of a Caribbean hut he saw in London at the Great Exhibition of 1851.⁴³ In introducing a functional element in its “naked apparition” in his theater design for Rio de Janeiro, he thus evokes the idea of an “exotic” architectural primitivism like it was transmitted, for example, through Jean-Baptiste Debret’s *Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil* with a plate showing, as the caption says, “Different forms of huts of Brazilian savages.”⁴⁴ In this sense, Semper’s visible flying buttresses serve as a marker that indicates the presence of “savage” elements. An attentive reviewer of Semper’s design for Rio de Janeiro seems to have felt as much when he criticized that “the naked needs emerge too sharply in the superstructure.”⁴⁵

Semper’s solution of an architectural hybridity for Rio de Janeiro, however, does not stop here. He characterizes the colonnades on the ground floor in front of the auditorium as “a transparent curtain” from which the building would detach itself as being more “grandiose.”⁴⁶ The more hidden function of this “transparent curtain,” however, is provided through its relationship to Semper’s “principle of dressing”; that is, the idea that architecture is determined rather by its envelope than by

42 Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten, oder Praktische Aesthetik*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1860/Munich: Bruckmann, 1863), vol. 1, 320. See Michael Gnehm, “The Secondary Origin: Semper and Viollet-le-Duc and the Quest for a Cultural History of Architecture,” *eaV, revue de l'école d'architecture de Versailles* 12 (2006/07): 62–71, here 69.

43 Semper, *Der Stil*, vol. 2, 276.

44 Debret, *Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil*, vol. 1, pl. 26.

45 Julius Meyer, “Die münchener Kunstausstellung und die Gegensätze in der modernen Kunst,” *Die Grenzboten* 22, vol. 4 (1863): 340–349, here 348.

46 Semper, “Notes explicatives,” 6: “Mais ce qu’il s’agit surtout de faire ressortir par rapport à ces portiques c’est qu’ils seront non seulement utiles, mais qu’ils serviront d’échelle et de cadre pour mieux faire valoir les proportions de l’édifice qu’ils entourent. Celui-ci loin d’être caché derrière le rideau transparent de cette colonnade aréostyle, paraîtra plus distinctement par l’effet du contraste. Car il dépassera considérablement son entourage transparent [...] et se montrera plus grandiose.”

its material core.⁴⁷ The ground floor curtain of his Rio de Janeiro theater is, in fact, the first of a series of curtains to follow successively with the terraced and arcaded exterior wall of the auditorium. This succession of curtains is, in turn, a marker of the intention to show how a cultivated architecture has to wrap “primitive” residues still in place in a world perceived globally.

Thus, Semper's proposal perfectly responded to colonialist and imperialist expectations of the time. It would be extraordinary if the jury and the Brazilian government had excluded Semper's project from the competition on such grounds. However, they seem to have preferred the projects by Waehnelde and Green and De Ville to Semper's theoretically legitimized formal excesses for much more vague reasons. Their theater designs offer a somewhat simple sort of hybrid architecture that seems to correspond to quite general expectations of eclectic architecture in a way that was amply present in Rio de Janeiro's architecture in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.⁴⁸

47 Michael Gnehm, “Bekleidungstheorie,” *Arch+*, 48, no. 221 (December 2015): 33–39.

48 In 1905, Francisco de Oliveira Passos even chose the motto “Semper” for his project for the competition of a palace for the Congresso Nacional in Rio de Janeiro; Giovanna Rosso Del Brenna, “Ecletismo no Rio de Janeiro (séc. XIX–XX),” in *Ecletismo na Arquitetura Brasileira*, organização Annateresa Fabris (São Paulo: Nobel/Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1987): 28–67, here 58–59.

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Tropical Opulence:
Rio de Janeiro's
Theater Competition
of 1857

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New Worlds:
Frontiers,
Inclusion,
Utopias

—

New Classicism Between New York and Bogotá in the 1960s

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During the late 1950s and early 1960s, artists around the world redefined the concept of abstract painting and sculpture to accommodate new possibilities of abstraction. One aspect of this broader shift was a movement known at the time as New Classicism. Among the most visible figures of this group were Colombian artists Edgar Negret and Eduardo Ramírez-Villamizar, who between 1956 and 1964 lived in New York and established close connections with avant-garde circles.¹ Upon their return to Bogotá in 1964, both artists continued the artistic program they had initiated in New York, extending the concept of a “new classicism” beyond the boundaries of the U.S. metropolis.

This paper studies the migration of this concept from New York to Bogotá, examining how it developed in both art centers and how it was adopted, transformed, and translated to accommodate different contexts. To the extent that the New Classicists have primarily been studied as individual figures and not as a generation, this paper sheds light on the multiplicity of voices that shaped the history of postwar art, emphasizing its inherently transnational character. At the same time, by emphasizing the roles of figures from Latin America such as Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar in promoting new approaches to abstraction in the 1960s, this paper charts new directions for understanding postwar art on an international scale.

“New Classicism” in New York

Following the glory years of Abstract Expressionism in the late 1940s and early 1950s, a younger generation of artists sought to move away from the highly subjective and chaotic art of their predecessors. Whereas some of them embraced everyday and popular culture as sources for the so-called “new art,” others proposed approaches to abstraction that were premised on erasing the autographic gesture.² Artists such as Frank Stella or Ellsworth Kelly employed geometric and hard-edged shapes

1 For a more detailed study of Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar’s artistic trajectory in New York, see Ana M. Franco, “Geometric Abstraction: The New York/Bogotá Nexus,” *American Art Journal. Smithsonian American Art Museum* 26:2 (Summer 2012): 34-41. Some of the ideas discussed here were first explored in the aforementioned article. In this version, however, I discuss in detail the concept of “new classicism” and its development both in New York and Bogotá, focusing on a more historiographic approach.

2 See David Joselit, “Expanded Gestures: Painting of the 1950s,” in *American Art since 1945* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003), 33-34.

that lent their works a cool and seemingly depersonalized approach to artistic composition. During the early 1960s, several exhibitions held in museums throughout the U.S. signaled the advent of this new approach to abstraction.³ Importantly, as Lawrence Alloway observed in his 1966 text *Systemic Painting*, these exhibitions revealed “an increasing self-awareness among the artists which made possible group appearances and public recognition of the changed sensibility.”⁴ This sensibility was seen by some as an “antidote to the increasingly moribund paradigm of Action Painting.”⁵ Although the artists represented in these shows did not constitute a unified movement or style, they all shared a preference for lucid, clear design; hard-edged, typically geometric shapes; and a restricted color palette often limited to flat, uniform primary colors or monochromes.

Although critics and curators used different labels to define and characterize this new type of abstraction—including Hard-Edge (Jules Langsner and Lawrence Alloway), Post-Painterly Abstraction (Clement Greenberg), Geometric Abstraction (John Gordon), Concrete Expressionism (Irving Sandler), or Abstract/New/Modern Classicism (Langsner, Stuart Preston, Barbara Butler)—they all interpreted the work of the younger generation of abstractionists as belonging to a “classical” tradition.⁶ Geometric abstraction in the early sixties was thus construed in the critical discourse of the time as a “new classicism”: an art of order, balance, and repose that was diametrically opposed to the “romantic,” overheated approaches of the action painters.

3 The most notable of these shows included Jules Langsner’s *Four Abstract Classicists* at Los Angeles County Museum in 1959; H. H. Arnason’s *Abstract Expressionists and Imagists* at the Guggenheim Museum in 1961; John Gordon’s *Geometric Abstraction in America* at the Whitney Museum in 1962; Ben Heller’s *Toward a New Abstraction* at the Jewish Museum in 1963; and Clement Greenberg’s *Post Painterly Abstraction* in Los Angeles in 1964.

4 Lawrence Alloway, *Systemic Painting* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1966), 15.

5 James Meyer, “Introduction to the ‘minimal’ 1: ‘Black, White, and Gray,’” in *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 77. This new sensibility would be further developed with the emergence and definition of Minimalist art in the 1960s in exhibitions such as Alloway’s *Systemic Painting* at the Guggenheim Museum in 1966 and Kynaston McShine’s *Primary Structures* at the Jewish Museum the same year.

6 The restrained and ordered compositions of the “cool” abstractionists, with their clearly outlined and flat hard-edge shapes, was associated in the early 1960s with *le rappel à l’ordre* following World War I and with Amédée Ozenfant and Le Corbusier’s Purism. In this respect, critics suggested that 1960s abstraction was another postwar return to order and to the “classical” values previously revived by the French masters. See Frances Colpitt, “Hard-edge Cool,” in Elizabeth Armstrong ed., *Birth of the Cool: California Art, Design, and Culture at Midcentury* (Newport Beach: Orange County Museum of Art, 2007).

Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar's work of the late 1950s and early 1960s was understood by New York critics and curators in precisely these terms. During their time in the U.S., both artists developed an approach to abstraction based on geometric and hard-edged shapes, as well as a restricted color palette.⁷ Moreover, during the early 1960s, these Colombian artists participated in several group exhibitions in New York that articulated the new approach to abstraction as a “new classicism” and a reaction against Abstract Expressionist art.

The first of these exhibitions was *Modern Classicism*, launched in February 1960 at the David Herbert Gallery in New York. The show included Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar alongside U.S. artists such as Josef Albers, Alexander Calder, Ellsworth Kelly, Myron Stout, Louise Nevelson, and Leon Polk Smith.⁸ The exhibition was based on the opposition between “*Romanticism*” and “its historical counterpart of *Classicism*”—the former represented by the then-dominant style of Abstract Expressionism and the latter exemplified by the work included in the show. Its main goal was “to show how much vitality and variety there [was] in this minority viewpoint. And to quell at least the frequency of its exaggerated obituaries.”⁹ The David Herbert show was one of the earliest attempts to pinpoint the emergence of a different direction in American abstraction in terms of a “new classicism.” Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar's inclusion in the exhibition is especially significant because it defined them as integral members of the generation that was moving in this direction. In his review of the show for *The New York Times*, Stuart Preston emphasized the antagonism between a “classic” and a “romantic” attitude toward abstraction.¹⁰ It was accompanied

7 See Franco, “The New York/Bogotá Nexus.”

8 There is a discrepancy between the exhibition catalogue, the installation shots, and the reviews of the exhibition with regard to Ramírez-Villamizar's participation in this show. Though the catalogue does not include Ramírez-Villamizar among the artists exhibited, Preston's review in the *New York Times* lists him as one of the artists featured in the exhibition and is illustrated by a reproduction of his contribution, *White Relief* (1960). See Stuart Preston, “Classicism Challenges Romanticism,” *The New York Times*, February 14, 1960: 18X. Moreover, an installation photograph of the exhibition in the David Herbert Papers at the Archives of American Art confirms Ramírez-Villamizar's participation in the exhibition—his *White Relief* is clearly visible there. See David Herbert Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [box New Classicism]. Ramírez-Villamizar may have been a late addition to the show (perhaps after the catalogue went to press), or he may have failed to submit the requisite information for the catalogue on time.

9 Barbara Butler, *Modern Classicism* (New York: David Herbert Gallery, 1960), n.p.

10 Stuart Preston, “Classicism Challenges Romanticism,” *New York Times*, February 14, 1960, 18X.

by a reproduction of Ramírez-Villamizar's *White Relief* (1960) as a prime example of the "new classical" art, demonstrating the extent to which the Colombian artist was a key player in the definition of the new abstraction in postwar American art.

A second exhibition signaling the arrival of the new abstraction was *Purism*, which opened at the David Herbert Gallery in October of 1961. It involved a similar roster of artists, including Albers, Kelly, Negret, Ramírez-Villamizar, Stout, and Smith, among others. Although all of them represented the "classicist," "geometric," or "hard-edged" approach to abstraction, this time, the curators opted for the term "purist," which, according to them, allowed "for flexibility and variety in selecting the artists as well as the pictures."¹¹ According to Goergine Oeri, who wrote the catalogue essay, "[t]he exhibition as a whole wishes to emphasize the creative moment as of now: to show the variety and vitality of what American artists today are doing in their own right by means of a particular pictorial language—the 'purist'."¹²

Further confirmation of Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar's prominence within the new abstraction in American art was their inclusion in the show *Hard Edge and Geometric Painting and Sculpture*, which opened in January 1963 in the penthouse restaurant of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The show, selected by MoMA curator Campbell Wyly, was part of the Museum's Art Lending Service (ALS) program, which organized thematic exhibitions in an effort to present to the public the latest developments in postwar American art.¹³ Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar's inclusion in this show was especially significant for them because, though it was not part of MoMA's

11 Goergine Oeri, *Purism* (New York: David Herbert Gallery, 1961), n.p. The use of the term "purism" here illustrates the extent to which 1960s critics associated the new abstraction with Ozenfant and Le Corbusier's Purism and identified it as another postwar return to order and to the "classical" values advocated by the French masters.

12 Ibid.

13 The ALS was a program of The Museum of Modern Art's Junior Council, founded in 1951 as a public gallery and an art library. From the beginning, the ALS's main objectives were "to promote modern American artists, to cultivate collectors of modern art, [...] and, in so doing, to advance the greater cause of modern art." See, Michelle Elligot, "Modern Artifacts 10: Rent to Own," *Esopus* no. 17 (Fall 2011): 118. In order to do this, the ALS provided the public with the opportunity to rent a piece of art for a two-month period before deciding whether to purchase the work or return it. After 1955, the scope of the program expanded and the ALS began to organize exhibitions in the Museum's penthouse restaurant. In the early 1960s these shows became theme-oriented and were organized by MoMA curators Pierre Apraxine, Campbell Wyly, Alicia Legg, Grace Mayer, and John Szarkowski. See, *The Art Lending Service and Art Advisory Service Records, 1948-1996* in The Museum of Modern Art Archives <http://www.moma.org/learn/resources/archives/EAD/ArtLendingb.html> accessed on 2/13/2012

regular program, it was nonetheless sponsored by the museum and held within its premises. As such, the exhibition conferred upon the Colombian artists a sense of belonging to an emergent but vigorous and dynamic movement in postwar art that was sanctioned by the most prestigious international institution devoted to modern art.¹⁴

Ramírez-Villamizar's participation in *The Classic Spirit in Twentieth Century Art* at New York's Sidney Janis Gallery in the spring of 1964 further demonstrates that the Colombians were key proponents of the "new classical" trends in abstraction. The Janis exhibition had a broader scope than the previous shows, as it was conceived as an attempt to give historical dimension to the new art of the 1960s, connecting the latest developments in American abstraction with the early twentieth-century pioneers and the interwar generation of geometric artists in Europe and America. In this respect, the show aspired to demonstrate that the younger artists—including Ramírez-Villamizar—were the inheritors of a distinctive tradition of classical, geometric abstract art.

The retrospective character of the Sidney Janis show confirmed that there was indeed a "classical spirit" running through the history of modern art—a spirit that was manifesting itself forcefully in New York's art world in the 1960s. In his review of the show in *The New York Times*, Preston tried to define this spirit as "an absence of those personal, intrusive, self-indulgent elements which, in the view of a classicist, disfigure the

14 The enthusiasm both artists felt after being included in this exhibition might explain why critics in Bogotá wrote as if Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar were part of an important exhibition organized by New York's Museum of Modern Art. See for instance, "Edgar Negret (El Callejón)," *Magazine Dominical, El Espectador*, 1963. Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar most likely did not feel compelled to correct critics who confused the ALS show with a regular MoMA exhibition. It was, after all, a mistake that played in their favor. The confusion has been perpetuated in the literature on both artists. See, German Rubiano Caballero, "El recurso del método y el mundo es ancho y ajeno," in *Escultura colombiana del siglo XX* (Bogotá: Fondo de Cultura Cafetero, 1983), 88. (Rubiano's confusion goes even further as he dates the show in 1961.) In 1985, as part of the preparations for his show *Five Colombian Masters* at the OAS's museum, curator Félix Angel wrote a letter to MoMA enquiring about the exhibition "Geometrics and Hard Edge," in which Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar had supposedly participated. Vicki Kendall, then Administrative Assistant of the Exhibition Program at MoMA, replied to Angel explaining that, after considerable research, she was not able to locate any reference to such show on the museum records. Vicki Kendall, Letter to Félix Angel dated February 13, 1985, Archives of the Art Museum of the Americas, Organization of American States, Washington D.C. [Folder Colombian art]. I was able to confirm in my research that the alleged show had in fact been organized by ALS in MoMA's penthouse restaurant in 1963 and, as such, it was not part of the museum's regular exhibition program. See Art Lending Service and Art Advisory Service Records, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York [Series: Art Lending Service 1948-1982 . Folder: I.D.1.35].

work of art. At any rate, it's on the rebound, perhaps an inevitable reaction to the recent excesses of expressionism.”¹⁵ For art critic Dore Ashton, the “classical spirit” captured in the Janis show was a less clearly defined affair. Yet she acknowledged that common traits did exist among the artists exhibited in the show. In short, for Ashton, the Janis show was a reminder that “there is a big swing away from anything that could be characterized as an art of process.”¹⁶ Significantly, Ashton's review reproduced one of Negret's sculptures as a notable example of the “new classicism” of the 1960s.

By 1964, the term “classicism” had begun to lose validity as a description of the latest developments in abstract art, as the radical proposals of Minimalist artists started to gain increasing visibility in New York's art world.¹⁷ As a consequence, the term has rarely been mentioned in recent histories of postwar American art. Yet our understanding of these “new classical” currents is key to comprehending the multiplicity of positions and the range of experimentation that occurred in New York in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Moreover, the term “new classicism” also had significant implications for the history of Colombian art.

New Classicism in Bogotá

At the same time that Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar were taking part in the “new classicism” in New York, they became the leaders of the local contingent of this movement in Bogotá. Local art critics closely followed their activities in New York and quickly adopted the labels of “purism,” “hard-edge,” and “neo-classicism” to describe their works. As early as 1961, art critic Marta Traba described Ramírez-Villamizar's work as part of the latest trend in American abstraction, “neo-classicism,” which she interpreted as a reaction against Abstract Expressionism.¹⁸ A year later, in his review of Ramírez-Villamizar's

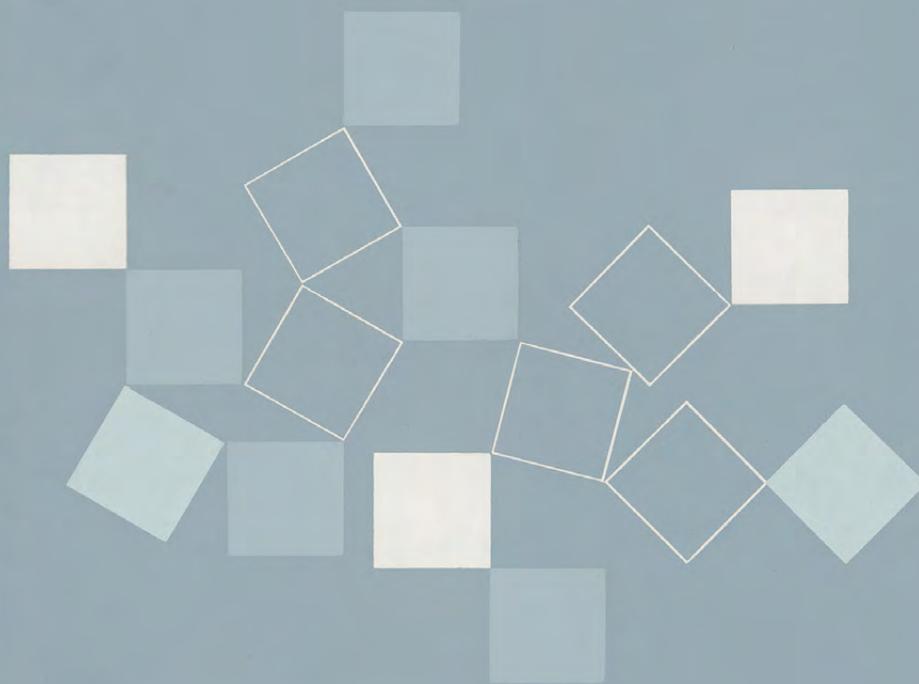
15 Stuart Preston, “Classicism on the Rebound,” *The New York Times*, February 9, 1964.

16 Ibid. 166.

17 In 1963 and 1964, the Green Gallery in New York presented a series of exhibitions that featured the seminal figures of Minimalist art: Robert Morris and Donald Judd presented their first minimalist plywood sculptures in 1963; and Dan Flavin presented his sculptures of fluorescent tubes for the first time in 1964. With these shows, the Green Gallery introduced a radically new approach to abstraction in American art that took the depersonalized approach of geometric abstract artists, and in particular of Frank Stella's art, to an extreme denial of the artist's hand and subjectivity.

18 It is interesting to note here that in the Colombian context, the “new classicism” was not

NEOCLASICOS
NEGRET RAMIREZ RAYO
AFICHES : CONSUEGRA



GALERIA 25

CALLE 25C N.4-27

MARZO 13 6:00 ABRIL 4



David Consuegra. *Neoclásicos* (cartel promocional para la Galería 25, 1964). Serigrafía sobre papel, 49,5 x 34,8 cm. Cortesía, Colección Familia Consuegra, Bogotá.

exhibition at the Galería El Callejón, critic Estanislao Gostautas also described these works as part of “modern classicism,” identifying it as an alternative to the dominant “barroquismo informalista” and “decadent expressionism.”¹⁹

Negret’s sculptures were also seen by Traba and other Bogotá critics as part of the “new classicism.” In her review of Negret’s solo exhibition at Bogotá’s Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango in 1962,

translated as “nuevo clasicismo” (which would be the literal translation), but rather as “neo-clasicismo” (“neo-classicism”).

¹⁹ Gostautas. “Eduardo Ramírez-Villamizar,” *Política* (Abril 7, 1962): n.p.

Traba qualified the sculptor's "clear and balanced" work as essentially "neo-classic."²⁰ Another review interpreted Negret's work as part of American *hard-edge* and, in this respect, as a reaction against Abstract Expressionism. The reviewer wrote:

There is evidence today that there is a renaissance of the nostalgia for pure form. Just like Impressionism was followed by Seurat, Cézanne, and Gauguin's reaction against it [...] a new search and appreciation for pure form, for construction and geometry follows today the unbridled movements of tachisme and abstract expressionism. In the present year of 1963, the Museum of Modern Art in New York organized the group show *Geometrics and Hard-Edge* [sic], where Negret was represented with his work. "Hard-Edge" is, thus, the English label for the "new" orientation. It is an art that Edgar Negret and Eduardo Ramírez have been cultivating for many years now; even if they were once a minority [...] Negret and Ramírez are now at the forefront of avant-garde movements.²¹

By 1964, it seemed evident that a local contingent of "new classicists," headed by Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar, had consolidated in Colombia. Several articles published in local and international magazines discussed geometric abstraction in the country as a well-established trend at the time, and they often used the terms "classicism" and "hard-edge" to describe it, revealing that the labels used in the United States had already migrated to Colombia.²²

Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar, however, did not simply depend on the critics to publicize their efforts in their home country. In March 1964, they organized the exhibition *Neo-clásicos* (Neo-Classicists) at the Galería 25 in Bogotá to present this movement on the local stage. With this show, they consciously

20 Marta Traba, "Negret, Solitario en Bogotá," *La Nueva Prensa*, 46 (Marzo 14-Marzo 20, 1962): 65.

21 "Edgar Negret (El Callejón)." *Magazine Dominical, El Espectador*, 1963.

22 See for instance "'Purismo' Colombiano: La reacción ante el caos," *Visión* (February 21, 1964) and Walter Engel, "Geométrico-Abstracto," *Magazine Dominical, El Espectador*, January 26, 1964.

asserted their leadership as the “group of two” who practiced New York’s “classical” abstraction, echoing the battle between classicists and romantics that had taken place in New York just a few years before. In the Colombian context, however, the neo-classicists were reacting not toward gestural, expressionist abstraction but against current developments in figurative painting within the nation. Specifically, *Neo-clásicos* was conceived as a response to the popularity of Fernando Botero’s most recent exhibition at the Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (MAMBo). Moreover, the show constituted the neo-classicists’ response to Botero’s attack on abstract art. Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar thus effectively co-opted New York’s recent abstract art discourses and repurposed them for the local context.

Botero’s Attack on Abstract Art

On the occasion of his upcoming exhibition (to open at the MAMBo on March 3 1964), Botero declared in the national press that abstract art had exhausted itself and was on the way to decadence. In an interview published in *El Tiempo* a week before his exhibition opened, Botero claimed, “We can’t confuse vanguard art with abstract art. The latter has already become unfashionable. [...] Every day I’m more convinced that abstract painting has been relegated to upholster furniture and decorate curtains [...]”²³

Over the next few weeks, Botero’s incendiary statement ignited a controversy within Bogotá’s art world. A notable illustration of this was the survey conducted by the editorial board of the newspaper *El Tiempo*, which asked artists and critics whether they agreed with Botero’s remarks about the decadence of abstract art.²⁴ For critics Traba, Casmiro Eiger, and gallery owner Hans Ungar, it was evident that abstraction was not in a state of decadence. In contrast, artists Alejandro Obregón and Ignacio Gómez Jaramillo stated that abstract art was indeed losing ground and becoming

23 Byron López, “La pintura abstracta se quedó para forrar muebles y decorar cortinas,” *El Tiempo*, Febrero 21, 1964. A few weeks later, on March 1, in an interview with Marta Traba, Botero confirmed his critique of abstract art. He claimed (perhaps more daringly) that because abstract art was the easiest form of art he practiced it on Sundays as a means to rest and, according to him, with excellent results. Marta Traba, “Yo Entrevisto a Botero,” *Magazine Dominical, El Espectador*, March 1, 1964.

24 The survey was circulated among critics Marta Traba, Casimiro Eiger, and gallerist Hans Ungar, and artists Ignacio Gómez Jaramillo, Alejandro Obregón, and Juan Antonio Roda and was published on the Sunday edition of *El Tiempo* on March 1, 1964.

unfashionable. Artist Juan Antonio Roda, who practiced a type of informalist or expressionist abstraction, refused to consider Botero's statement seriously, seeing it as a mere publicity stunt.

Art critic Walter Engel backed Roda's suspicion. In his review of Botero's show, he wrote: "In solos, duets, and chorus, the great hymn of egomania was sung as an introduction to the exhibition of Fernando Botero in Bogotá. [...] It was all very effective [...] we knew that Botero is [...] a genius of public relations."²⁵ Although Botero insisted that his statement was a profound conviction and not a mere publicity stunt,²⁶ his words certainly secured him an unprecedented commercial success in Bogotá—it was reported that more than 1,500 people attended the opening and all the works in the show were sold.²⁷

The Neo-Clásicos' Counteroffensive

The most eloquent response to Botero's attack, however, came in the form of the exhibition *Neo-clásicos*, which opened on March 13, 1964, at René Frey's Galería 25. Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar organized it in just a few days in an attempt to challenge Botero's view and demonstrate that their artistic approach was still very much alive in Colombia. To do this, they joined forces with artist Omar Rayo and graphic designer David Consuegra, whose simple, economical works shared the spirit of "new classicism" that defined their own artistic approach.

The show was immediately understood by critics as a response to the threat posed by Botero's works and words. In an article appropriately titled "Negret Launches the Anti-Botero Offensive," art commentator Juan Salas Castellanos explained,

Profoundly alarmed by the triumph of the figure,
the "Purists" urgently organized the counter-of-

25 Walter Engel, "La Marca Botero," *Magazine Dominical, El Espectador*, March 15, 1964.

26 In an interview with Marta Traba, Botero claimed: "I don't like publicity; on the contrary, I avoid it. [My statement against abstract art] is a conviction more and more profound. Abstract art is mere decoration, easy decoration; that's the reason there are so many abstract painters." Traba, "Yo Entrevisto a Botero."

27 Engel reported that "Fernando Botero's exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art opened last week with an unprecedented success in terms of critic and the number of visitors. During the afternoon of its opening, the show was visited by more than 1,500 people." Walter Engel, "El Fenómeno Cuevas," *Magazine Dominical, El Espectador*, Marzo 29, 1964. According to writer Gonzalo Arango, Botero sold all the paintings in the show. Gonzalo Arango, "Los Adorables Monstruos," *El Tiempo*, Marzo 15, 1964.

fensive. [...] They responded to the sordidness of form with the clarity of line; to the rudeness of the monsters with the elegance of profiles, wings, edges, spaces, void, and volumes; to the barbarity of Botero's smug pinks with the resurrection of white and shadow.²⁸

It is worth noting that Salas's description of the antagonism between Botero and the Neo-clásicos echoes the opposition between "classicism" and "romanticism" that New York critics had identified with geometric abstraction and Abstract Expressionism. In the local context, however, the "romantic" attitude was not identified with gestural abstraction, but rather with Botero's figurative art.²⁹

Despite Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar's efforts and the favorable reception of their show, their enterprise failed to stem the tide of Botero's incredibly fast-growing influence. During the mid- to late 1960s, a younger generation of avant-garde artists followed Botero's figurative model and produced works attuned to developments in Pop Art. Among them, the most notable case is Beatriz González (b. 1938), who is widely recognized as one of the leading figures in the development of pop and conceptual art in Colombia. In fact, González has frequently stated that Botero's influence was key in her early career, claiming that at some point she came to believe that he "had already done what she wanted to do."³⁰

Despite the fact that by the mid-1960s, abstract art had been displaced from the center of the Bogotá art scene, Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar's *Neo-clásicos* show marks an important point in the history of postwar art. An examination of this show, and of the origin and migration of the term New Classicism more broadly, reveals an important nexus between the New York and Bogotá art worlds in the 1960s, one that shaped ways of understanding postwar art in both locales. An awareness of

28 Juan Salas Castellanos, "Negret Inicia la Ofensiva Anti-Botero," *El Tiempo*, March 22, 1964.

29 Although by 1960 there was a significant development of informalist or expressionist abstraction in Colombia, evident in the works of Guillermo Wiedemann, Juan Antonio Roda, Judith Márquez, or Fanny Sanin's early works, this approach to abstraction coexisted peacefully with geometric and classical abstraction during the postwar year. These two styles were antagonistic in Colombia as was the case in the US, France, or Brazil.

30 Beatriz González quoted in Carolina Ponce de León, "Beatriz González in situ," in Marta Calderón et al. *Beatriz González, una pintora de provincia* (Bogotá: Carlos Valencia Editores, 1988).

the transnational processes underlying these efforts provides an alternative means of understanding the encounters and dialogues between art and artists in this period. They also propose a conceptual geography that emphasizes the mobility of artists and ideas, multidirectional communication patterns, and the notion of artistic communities that are not limited by national or continental boundaries.

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**Back and Forward: Considerations
about Artistic Relations between
Mexico and the United States
(1988–2014)**

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The United States–Mexico War is remembered differently in the two countries. In the United States, almost no one remembers the war that Americans fought against Mexico more than 150 years ago. In Mexico, almost no one has forgotten. For some residents, the Mexicanization of the United States borderland is simply a reoccupation of territories that once belonged to Mexico—a peaceful *reconquista*.

— *Tim Weiner*

The Flow as Starting Point

In 2014, *CeroCeroCero*, the second book by Roberto Sabiano, was published in Mexico. The book, which has a bold hypothesis, suggests that the drug business and its structure moves the entire global economic system: without the cocaine trade, the world's financial system, legal or illegal, might collapse. Regardless of whether this hypothesis is true, what interests me is the way Sabiano builds his argument in relation to the matter of drug trafficking. Sabiano begins his argument not with an emphasis on countries that produce cocaine (Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia) but with Mexico, as a country of transit for goods and money. He also asserts that the Mexican cartels have relieved the Colombians.

According to the author, the structure of that business is based on the privileges that globalization has produced, in which the organizations that make the de-territorialization and flow of goods and money possible today have power over territorialized producers. Mexico is a country of transit precisely because of its privileged geographical, political, economic, and social characteristics and because it has an active traffic that depends on the largest consumer of drugs in the world, the United States. Thus, Sabiano's narrative is based on the identification of forms of flow of these products, and the structure, legal and illegal, that supports it, rather than emphasizing how to produce such products.

A few years earlier, in 2011, Frédéric Martel published *Mainstream Culture*, a book describing how the globalized cultural trade works. He unequivocally identifies the U.S. as the leading producer in the global cultural industry. However, there is a section in the book dedicated to Mexico, described as a country where the culture flows in a double movement of localization and delocalization. Mexico is a major stop for many of Latin America's cultural products before entering Miami, the Latino capital of the United States: if the product is successful in Mexico, it could enter a global market via the United States. Martel exemplifies this situation with Shakira, the Colombian singer who, before entering the global market, had to succeed in Mexico and then in the United States.

Clearly, the relationship that I am trying to establish here is not casual, much less innocent. Mexico's position as a transit country since the late 1980s, particularly for transit to the United States, is significant because it allows us to consider its geopolitical status as a place for global delocalization and re-localization and, at the same time, think about the reciprocal effects that this situation has brought for these countries. Of course, I do not deny the historical power relations that have kept the United States aligned with Mexico (and this could be extended to all of Latin America) and I do not suggest that this situation has been one of equals.

However—and this is what I want to show—is that due to this traffic condition, the narrative possibilities of a historic speech to and from Mexico and the United States have changed significantly, allowing us to modify the ways of understanding the artistic production of these two countries. More than just considering the flow of drugs or pop culture, globalization makes it possible to rethink discursive relations (and also to consider how the subjectivities have been altered), considering new historical conditions, because this structure allows us to enunciate some phenomena in relation to certain forms of production. Likewise, it helps us to think about movements that site, literally, symbolic conditions that reformulate the condition of territory.

De-Nationalizing Mexico

On November 9, 2000, the First Symposium of Contemporary Art entitled *Insidioso gusto de lo global* took place at the Universidad de las Américas Puebla (UAP), coordinated by Cuauhtémoc Medina. According to Medina, the Symposium could take place because “there was a general interest of the community to examine what signifies the internationalization of recent Mexican art from the perspective of local practitioner and theorist.” He goes on to say, “It was a passionate and sometimes intense meeting that, to everyone’s surprise, focused on a historical comparison between the internationalization of the *Neomexicanismo* and the emergence of *Neo-conceptual* global scene.”

This debate is important because it was one of the first public discussions in the artistic field that occurred as a result of the paradigm shift in the national culture caused by globalization. This paradigm shift began in Mexico as trade liberalization in the 1980s and was consolidated with the signing of NAFTA by the United States, Mexico, and Canada in 1992 and its application in 1994. This economic aperture is significant to Mexican art for at least two reasons: first, its cultural administration changed from one that was absolutely public, as in France, to a public-private administration as in the United States. Second, the cultural administration began treating culture as cultural industry as in the United States, a situation that produced an unprecedented symbolic exchange between these countries.

However, by 2000, the consequences of the process linking culture and market were not very well known, hence the relevance of the Symposium’s purpose: to establish the historical difference between the international and global, characterized in this case by two types of art, *Neomexicanismo* and neo-conceptual. The tension can be identified with two different models of closure and opening: on the one hand, internationalization is still anchored in the national production model that depends on the notion of national identity as in *Neomexicanismo*; on the other, globalization is characterized as postnational form characterized by the production of cultural hybrids, identified with what Medina calls neo-conceptual art.

The intensity of the debate in Puebla has deep historical roots: since the second decade of the twentieth century, Mexico

has had a tradition linking education, art, culture, and identity. Institutionally, there is a relationship between culture and education that works as an ideological platform. This system was promoted by José Vasconcelos, secretary of public education during the government of President Alvaro Obregón in the post-revolutionary period. Indeed, the educational platform was configured to answer the question of what it means to be Mexican in the post-revolutionary period. This question not only permeated Mexican muralism but also guided the way in which Mexican culture was managed by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) from 1929 to 2000.

What has been promoted as international Mexican culture, particularly in its art, has always been subsumed by the affirmative tension created by the local official discourse that enunciates what should be Mexican and the expectations of the “Mexican-ness” from other countries. However, the logic that establishes that we are Mexicans as a nation due to identity is promoted by a culture that began cracking under the increasingly close link between economy and culture in the early 1980s, a slow breakage that continues through today. In that sense, *Neomexicanismo* is understood by Medina as the last feature of international Mexican art insofar as we still can see “some” of the Mexican identity that is embedded in the history of national art.

Similarly, so-called neo-conceptual art is linked to a global form of production that clearly puts in crisis the notion of a national art (one that is linked to national identity) and simultaneously brings movements of territorialization and de-territorialization into an aesthetic process that produces hybrids. Thus, culture and art have more to do with the economic processes that put in circulation capitals of all kinds (economic, symbolic, etc.) than with ways to manage culture by a national administration. Or, put another way, the public cultural administration is in a complex relationship with, and sometimes subsumed by, economic forms of capital flow.

Thus, there is a radical difference in the notion of identity seen in the 1980s and in the 1990s: if *Neomexicanismo* deconstructs and subverts national founding myths—the flag becomes a loincloth and the Virgin of Guadalupe becomes Marilyn Monroe—the art of the 1990s consciously denies these myths, excluding them and founding new ones, this time looking across the border to the United States.

Beyond the Appropriation: Remakes and Rewriting History

By the early 1990s, some remakes of American artworks were being created in Mexico. Luis Felipe Ortega and Daniel Guzman made *Remake* (1994), a video in which they literally remake works by Vito Aconcci, Bruce Nauman, and Paul McCarthy, works that they have never seen personally and reenact from documentary information. Damian Ortega remade the *Spiral Jetty* (Robert Smithson) with a work called *Do It Yourself, Spiral Jetty* (1993) and Eduardo Abaroa created a *Broken Obelisk for Street Markets* (1991–1993), making direct reference to Barnett Newman's *Broken Obelisk*.

Each of these works significantly alters the original artwork and plays with its meaning by subtraction and addition: at the same time, the artists withdraw the solemn character of each work and add a local understanding of it. In this context, we could ask, as Luis Felipe Ortega once did, what does it mean to study American art in Mexico? The result of this study is not a mere appropriation but rather the separation of local tradition and, at the same time, joining in a contemporary global culture.

Clearly, making art works for which the references are not from local art has fundamental cultural implications. First, these new works criticize the local tradition using the occidental art canon. Second, the canon is updated outside its borders, but in an irregular shape that no longer corresponds to its own genealogy. Finally, what emerges dialectically is the notion of contemporary art produced here, with outside references, that doesn't belong to any of those sides. In this way, the definition of contemporary has to be understood as that of exception.

Nevertheless, the double reference of these remakes is impossible to understand without taking into account the sign/symbol circulation caused by globalization. These works not only refer to their American relatives, but significantly alter their meaning. The sense of these new works is a dispersed one: the contemporary Mexican art overflows as repetition. This is not to say that the tradition is outside, but rather is here as a sign of elsewhere. Linking to a genealogy of foreign art produces a crisis of historical representation within Mexican art because it is no longer national. Instead, it is art of territory, the place from which one can understand that production.

Hence, there is a crisis in the narratives of the local art history because we cannot generate a discourse that allows a sequential genealogical link. Instead, you can only think of time in relation to a delocalized time. Of course, this idea can be generalized and applied to all the “neo-conceptual” art produced in the 1990s. Incidentally, this does not mean that the notion of “Mexican art” has ended as a category. Rather, I mean that the concept of “Mexican art” comes to play a specific role in a multi-discourse game.

In a pragmatic sense, we can say that if this crisis of representation was generated by the open economy policy implemented by the PRI in the 1990s, the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), the party of the democratic change in 2000, must have been the one to take advantage of that situation to promote culture. But neither the government of Vicente Fox, nor that of Felipe Calderon knew to manage this difference: if the PRI government promoted a form of national representation linked with the concept of identity, the PAN should be managing the transition from national culture to cultural industry in a globalized world. And of course, to enunciate culture in other terms, national culture seems to be one in a set of concepts—but not precisely the most important one. Of course, as we are experiencing with the return of the PRI to the government in 2012, after this transformation, it seems that no one knows how to manage culture in Mexico.

It is a curious phenomenon. In 2015, Mexico is a key place for global contemporary art. However, it seems that this condition was caused by forces related to the global art world and by economic and symbolic flows rather than local cultural policies. Or, put another way, the official cultural policy has to deal with the globalized art world, an unprecedented situation. The government’s inability to understand that circumstance has made it impossible to redefine not only the cultural policies but the role of culture in Mexico in a globalized context.

As we know, Mexico is experiencing a general crisis caused by multiple factors, one that seems to have no immediate solution. Rather, the situation has worsened in the last three years. In this scenario, the local debate about contemporary art inquires about the possibility of abandoning the public and private culture administration and trying to make change from the outside. If art in the 1980s and 1990s saw a possibility for change

through incorporating private funding and other foundational myths to overcome the affirmation of the nation, then many current discourses pretend that there is an “outside” of the system instead of assuming the present status quo and the conditions of production of cultural phenomena are immutable and inescapable. It seems that in Mexico there can be only utopias.

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Back and Forward:
Considerations about
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between Mexico and
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(1988–2014)

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New Worlds:
Frontiers,
Inclusion,
Utopias

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Historiographies of the Contemporary: Modes of Translating in and from Conceptual Art

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The title of this essay departs from two statements by the philosopher of art Peter Osborne: the first statement argues that the term contemporary should be understood as a “coming together of *different but equally ‘present’* temporalities,” the second that contemporary art is post-conceptual.

In the former, Osborne appears to be in agreement with other writers on the subject, such as Giorgio Agamben, when he claims that the term contemporary is inadequate when employed as a mere periodizing tool.¹ However, if for Agamben “contemporariness” is described as “that relationship with time that adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism,” Osborne, being interested in the contemporariness of art, argues that it is both a conjunction and disjunction within the “time of art history.” It relates to the fact of being together in time, in the present, and the anachronistic presence of different art historical temporalities. Intrinsic to this argument is not only the very praxis of but also the specific historical disjunction in conceptual art. It is specific for it relates to its very own genealogy, one that Osborne locates in conceptual art’s rupture with abstract expressionism and the disjunctive invocation of the early work of Marcel Duchamp. It is this relation that conceptual art has with its own art historical narrative that, enables Osborne to make the paradoxical claims that contemporary art is both defined by the “coming together of *different but equally ‘present’* temporalities” and that it is post-conceptual.

The liberating potential that Osborne’s proposition offers in terms of the validation of different temporalities in art is thus contradicted or, at the very least, retracted by the claim that “contemporary art is post-conceptual art.”² If Osborne seems to identify an important malaise within legitimizing discourses on contemporary art—through the critique of the periodizing transition between the modern and the contemporary—he also appears to fall victim of that very ailment himself. Duchamp thus stands as the historically disjunctive element within conceptual art just as conceptual art stands for the disjunction in con-

1 Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All* (London: Verso, 2013), 18; Giorgio Agamben, *What Is an Apparatus, and Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 39.

2 Peter Osborne, *Conceptual Art*. (London: Phaidon, 2002, reprinted 2005), 11.

temporary art. Yet although we can safely claim that Duchamp owes his historical significance to conceptual art, can we say the same about conceptual art? The negation of the contemporary as a periodizing term is thus contradicted by a teleological conception of the time of art history that this equation proposes. This time of art history appears in this way more conjunctive than disjunctive, more hegemonic than discrepant. Such an affirmation raises the question, in other words, as to the possibility of envisioning, within such an all-encompassing view of contemporary art, examples that do not relate to genealogies stemming from either the rupture with abstract expressionism or the legacies of Duchamp and conceptual art.

If “the first properly ‘conceptual’ artworks” are identified, as argued by Osborne, “in the transposition of the score from music and dance into the institutional context of the gallery and in the exhibition of the documentation of performance events,” then inherent to the very praxis of conceptual art lies a process of translation, an operation in transmedia in which the artist projects his or her work across the boundaries of disciplines. We find Henry Flynt, for instance, describing his own art in 1963 as conceptual—that is, as an art made of concepts and therefore language, while for Joseph Kosuth, “the event that made conceivable the realization that it is possible to ‘speak another language’ and still make sense in art was Marcel Duchamp’s first unassisted readymade.”³

The affiliation is established through the figure of the ancestor, who undermines the historical chronology and provokes the disjunction, and the specific praxis of art, which brings a shift from an emphasis on form and medium specificity to one generally understood as language.

I mention language with caution, as I would propose that conceptual art is not strictly concerned with art as language but as Kosuth himself put it, it relates to the possibility of speaking another language as art. That is to say, it is concerned with translation in the widest possible sense of the word.

3 Joseph Kosuth, “Art after Philosophy,” in *Studio International* (October, November, December 1969), 164. Reprinted in: Osborne, Peter. (2002). *Conceptual Art*, London: Phaidon, 2002), 232–234.

By way of analogy, let us think of these “different but present temporalities” of contemporary art as languages; let us think of their “coming together” as a process that requires translation. Such an analogy demands a short digression:

The Portuguese poet and writer Fernando Pessoa famously claimed through Bernardo Soares, one of his heteronyms or literary personas, that “minha patria é a lingua portuguesa.”⁴ The fact that the statement “the Portuguese language is my fatherland” does not translate into English in a satisfactory way is telling. The translated form distances the subject from its object, not quite contradicting what is claimed but stepping aside, like the author who steps aside from being, himself, the subject who claims such belonging by employing a character to make the enunciation on his behalf. In the Portuguese version, we may ask who is speaking about belonging: Fernando Pessoa or Bernardo Soares? This ambivalence is problematized in translation by Bernardo Soares’ fatherland: a place where he once belonged, where he still claims to belong, but no longer inhabits. The translation celebrates that which it brings forth, that which is considered worthy of being reiterated elsewhere, yet, at one and the same time, such an act of generosity toward the other perpetrates a betrayal. It is a betrayal that occurs through the separation that transforms the translated into an orphan of its own mother tongue and fatherland. The translated is thus ascribed another place which it must inhabit, only now in exile.

It is this condition of exile, this orphaned state, that so easily goes unnoticed, that is naturalized by and in translation, that I wish to suggest as a possible way in which to illustrate the similar condition in which artistic languages find themselves where by submitted to a so-called global art history—or, as exemplified here, when they are understood under the equation that equates contemporary art with post-conceptual art.

By denominating discourses of displacement as translations, I wish to emphasize their estrangement; I want to betray the naturalness with which they are enunciated, normalized in their uprooted, orphaned state. I refer to the particular use of

4 Fernando Pessoa [Bernardo Soares], *Livro do Desassossego* [first published posthumously in 1982]. (Brasiliense: Rio de Janeiro, 2011), 359.

the term conceptualism when applied as a description of those distinct yet equally present artistic languages that were translated into the mother tongue of conceptual art.

To consider translation as a viable means of describing the various forms of practice that constitute our understanding of conceptual art has implications for other conjunctions of different temporalities. Here, the tautology art-as-idea-as-idea that conceptual art claimed for itself or, more precisely, which was claimed on its behalf, becomes in conceptualism art-as-translation-of-translation.

The noun “translation” possesses a threefold significance: (1) the process of translating words or text from one language into another; (2) the conversion of something from one form or medium into another; and (3) the process of moving something from one place to another. As we will see, the transposition of diverse art practices into the art historical frame of conceptual art through the naming of the term conceptualism involves all three definitions: (1) the act of the researcher as the translator who enables one language group access to hitherto unknown artistic practices through the translation and interpretation (another form of translation) of archival, critical, and art historical writing from the source language (Spanish or Portuguese, for example) to the target language (predominantly English); (2) the very praxis of conceptual art as an art of and in transmedia; (3) the conjunction of these two forms of translations, historical and artistic, as a means of “moving” art practices from a peripheral condition into a “mainstream” cultural inhabitation.

Mari Carmen Ramírez’s 1993 essay “Blueprint Circuits: Conceptual Art and Politics in Latin America” is generally credited as the primary source for the descriptive relation that the term conceptualism holds with the diverse practices that originated in Latin America between the 1960s and 1970s.

The essay, however, begins by proposing another art historical origin for such an association, namely Simón Marchán Fiz, who, according to Ramirez, coined the expression “ideological conceptualism” in 1972 as a means of differentiation from what was considered the overtly tautological nature of North American conceptual art, exemplified by “the generalizing, reductive

posture of [Joseph] Kosuth's 'art-as-idea-as-idea.'"⁵ Ramírez expands Fiz's scope of comparison from the specific case of the Argentinean Grupo de los Trece and its relation to contemporaneous art practices in Spain, to the art produced in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and more generally in Latin America since the mid-1960s and their relation to art produced in the USA and, to a lesser extent, in Europe. For Ramírez:

As with any movement originating in the periphery, the work of Latin American political-conceptual artists—in its relationship with the mainstream source—engages in a pattern of mutual influence and response. It is both grounded in and distant from the legacy of North American Conceptualism in that it represents a transformation of it and also anticipated in many ways the forms of ideological conceptualism developed in the late 1970s and 1980s by feminist and other politically engaged artists in North America and Europe.⁶

Ramírez proposed a reciprocity between center and periphery that is cartographic in nature and evidenced through time, whereby the former translates the language of conceptual art, its "mainstream source," into an "ideological conceptualism" that anticipated subsequent developments within conceptual art itself. Her essay refers to practices that emerged in locations other than the art historical genealogy to which conceptual art is seen to belong and the geopolitical space it inhabits. Ramírez thus establishes a relation and separation between conceptual art and conceptualism, the former as predominantly North American, the latter defined by its Latin American specificity.

Conceptualism, as a term ascribed in retrospect, must therefore be understood as a form of translation, a term that unleashes a chain of re-translations from and then back into the canon. Within this process of translation, the "betrayal" inherent to

5 Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Blueprints Circuits: Conceptual Art and Politics in Latin America," in *Latin American Art of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Waldo Rasmussen, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1993) 156–167. Reprinted (from which it is referred to here) in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 551.

6 Ramírez, "Blueprints Circuits," 551.

the act is not considered as a form of loss but, on the contrary, as a positive means of differentiation. As such, conceptualism, with the benefit of historical hindsight, is defined as an art that transposed the self-reflexivity, tautology, passivity, and immediacy of North American conceptual art respectively as contextualization, referentiality, activism, and mediation.⁷ Ramírez transposes these distortions or betrayals committed by translation back into mainstream art history through the legitimizing anticipation of the historical progression of North American conceptual art itself.

Within this relation, conceptual art remains the live language (where translation operates as both praxis and poiesis), the one that is deemed to evolve, whilst conceptualism, with its specific characteristics, ideological and/or didactic, precedes that evolution while not being a part of it, unrecognized as a developing entity in and of itself, but condemned to this day to be reincarnated as the always-deferred affirmation of its difference through its innate subversive marginality. That is, it is condemned to always be an art historical translation, a hybrid product of the strategy of negotiation with the mainstream's pure artistic trends. Difference, as far as conceptualism is concerned, seems to be the key question here, whereby that which is deemed untranslatable becomes the distinguishing marker, the identifying trait, the underlying and unifying procedural strategy. This process is commonly associated with the term "hybridity," that sterile amalgam of central and peripheral elements condemned to forever defer the resolution of its internal conflict. However, if the translation from conceptual art into conceptualism betrays the poiesis of the former, the normalization of the praxis of conceptualism within the canon, as an art category in its own right, denies any relationship that the art languages of those who are carried across by the enunciation, by the translation, may possess with their own forbearers. The translation uproots, exiles, and orphans its subjects from their own genealogies (their mother-tongues and fatherlands) while paradoxically emphasizing their identities as orphaned others, outsiders who relate but do not belong.

Terry Smith, for example, recounts the significance of conceptualism as far as its origin, *raison d'être*, and, most revealingly, its purpose within the legitimizing economy of contemporary

practices, as a paradoxical category within the time of art history. For Smith, the paradoxical nature of conceptualism lies in the fact that it does not fit within a genealogy in its own time, that it is at one and the same time a term that refers to art that is precursory, contemporaneous, and derivative—in short, an art that, although its definition is based on the specificities of the historical moment and its geopolitical context, is celebrated as the bearer of a possible future differentiating significance of and for contemporary art practices.

It is a nice paradox that the term “conceptualism” came into art world existence after the advent of Conceptual art in major centers such as New York and London—most prominently and programmatically in the exhibition *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s* at the Queens Museum of Art in New York in 1999—mainly in order to highlight the fact that innovative, experimental art practices occurred in the Soviet Union, Japan, South America, and elsewhere prior to, at the same time as, and after the European and U.S. initiatives that had come to seem paradigmatic, and to claim that these practices were more socially and politically engaged—and thus more relevant to their present; better models for today’s art; and, in these senses, better art—than the well-known Euro-American exemplars.⁸

Conceptualism is translated into that specific, hegemonic affiliation while being ascribed a particular form of praxis, one that imposes representation as its artistic method—a language that is understood not as art, but first and foremost through the (representation of the) political/ideological sphere: an art exiled from the very language of art.

Analyzing the historiography of the consolidation of the term, Miguel A. Lopez has suggested that as it has become normalized and brought forward into the mainstream, conceptualism has come to deny the possibility of unearthing

8 Terry Smith. 2011. One and Three Ideas: Conceptualism Before, During, and After Conceptual Art, (E-Flux Journal n.11, 2011). <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/one-and-three-ideas-conceptualism-before-during-and-after-conceptual-art/>

a *multitude* of not-yet articulated and potential genealogies. Beyond mere naming, these words appear as proof of the fact that there is something irreducible—a discordant crossing of stories that point to divergent ways of living and constructing the contemporary—its capacity to unfold other times.⁹

Conceptualism, exiled from the context of its own art languages, thus presupposes that Latin American artists are disqualified from the reflexivity of their own specific genealogical relations. It is understood not in direct relation to Duchamp, nor through its relationship, either through affirmation or negation, with its own specific genealogies. Instead, it is mediated (translated) through conceptual art. However one desires to differentiate conceptualism from conceptual art, however one wishes to portray it as a mirror or an inversion, the relationship that is established, through its very (improper) name presupposes a fundamental hierarchy. Thinking of this relation as translation, we are reminded of Walter Benjamin's argument that in "translation the original grows into a linguistic sphere that is both higher and purer."¹⁰ Despite all the negations proposed by conceptual art, the ideal of purity remains like an umbilical cord connecting it to Greenbergian modernism. Kosuth would claim, for instance, that "the 'purest' definition of conceptual art would be that of an inquiry into the foundations of the concept of 'art!'"¹¹ Within the transition from an art of morphology to one of language, the ideal of purity not only remains, but is invested with the power of legitimacy. Conceptualism, as a translation of conceptual art, thus acts as the affirmation of conceptual art's purported purity.

Conceptualism is contaminated in its translated condition, its condition of exile from the language of art. It is this very fact that enables or, at the very least, makes credible the absurd comparison of the art of one artist (Kosuth), as representative of conceptual art in general, with that of a multitude of practices within a sub-continent. Conceptualism disguises both the heterogeneity of that which it defines as well as that of conceptual art itself.

9 Miguel A. López, "How Do We Know What Latin American Conceptualism Looks Like?" in *Afterall* 23 (Spring 2010), PAGE.

10 Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume I, 1913-1926*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), 157.

11 Kosuth, "Art after Philosophy," 171.

Benjamin argues that the purpose of translation is the “expression of the most intimate relationship between languages.” Such a relationship cannot be revealed by the translation but merely represented.¹² If, following the example of Kosuth, the translation of the chair across different media reveals not the ideal itself but that which is merely represented, conceptualism, within this understanding, becomes therefore a representation of its own relationship with conceptual art. This relationship is substantiated, as Smith would have it, in the contemporary, in the here and now. Such a coming together of temporalities may be understood more broadly than in Osborne’s terms by referring to Benjamin’s claim that:

The history of great works of art knows about their descent from their sources, their shaping in the age of the artists, and the periods of their basically eternal continuing life in the later generations. Where it appears, the latter is called fame.

Translations that are more than transmissions of a message are produced when a work, in its continuing life, has reached the age of its fame. Hence, they do not so much serve the work’s fame (as bad translators customary claim) as owe their existence to it. In them the original’s life achieves its constantly renewed, latest, most comprehensive unfolding.¹³

Conceptualism thus represents conceptual art’s “constantly renewed, latest, most comprehensive unfolding.” In this Benjaminian sense, conceptualism owes its very existence to conceptual art. In other words, those practices that the term conceptualism claims for itself exist in a state of exile from their own mother tongues, their own specific genealogies and/or creative languages, and as such, they are condemned to project the language of the other (that of conceptual art) onto the contexts that they claim for themselves but no longer inhabit. Again, we are reminded of Benjamin, who claimed that “translation indicates a higher language than its own, and thereby remains inappropriate, violent, and alien with respect to its content.”¹⁴

¹² Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, 154.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 157.

Translation is translated here into the field of art, and as it is carried across, I realize that I am perhaps speaking out of turn, speaking of betrayal while committing the same sin. I am betraying an art language whose identity is built upon the translated form itself, one that has grown to identify itself with its own (foreign) accent.

The translated, after all, does not give in without a struggle; it drags its heels as it is carried through, it holds onto the vestiges of its own (old) self, it pollutes and contaminates its new host. It does not speak the lingua franca with ease, with the naturalness with which it speaks its mother tongue; it carries with it an accent that is pronounced in speech and in writing through the awkwardness of its native figures of speech. This accent and the foreignness that it invokes, for those whose mother tongue and fatherland are the lingua franca, become the unifying characteristic of the multiple voices, polyphonic tongues of those who have been translated.

Benjamin himself affirms that it is necessity to translate despite the process's flaws, despite its inherent betrayal, or, as Maurice Blanchot put it, despite its treachery. For to suggest the absolute untranslatability of one to another is as absurd as suggesting the opposite, that one is the same as the other. Paul Ricoeur argued that the pure universal language that translation aspires to, but cannot attain, is at the crux of the necessity of translation, it is its ultimate justification:

The dream of the perfect translation would gain, gain without losing. It is this very same gain without loss that we must mourn until we reach the acceptance of the impassible difference of the peculiar and the foreign. Recaptured universality would try to abolish the memory of the foreign and maybe the love of one's own language, hating the mother tongue's provincialism. Erasing its own history, the same universality would turn all who are foreign to it into language's stateless persons, exiles who would have given up the search for the asylum afforded by a language of reception.¹⁵

For Ricoeur, like Benjamin, one must translate the untranslatable. Such an impossible task is made possible by the translator who, in the very act of translating, reveals both the grandeur of translation and the risk associated with it through the “creative betrayal of the original, [the] equally creative appropriation by the reception language, [and the] construction of the comparable.”¹⁶

Yet it seems that in the case of conceptualism, such constructions of comparison fail to consider the reception language, the hegemonic context into which these other practices are translated; through a tradition that is not their own, that of conceptual art, they become contemporary. Such a condition, that of contemporary art as post-conceptual art, seems natural only from within an art historical monolingualism, one that is deemed to possess a proper fatherland and mother tongue, one which we inhabit as translators and thus find natural, ordinary, legitimate, and perhaps even pure.

We must realize, it seems, that when we speak of Latin American art, that singular category that holds a heterogeneous world, we are speaking the lingua franca; we are inhabiting it whether we claim it as our own or not. It is perhaps the only language, the only art historical frame, that we possess, but we must beware that it is not the language of that which we claim for ourselves, that which we carry over through the act of translation.

This condition, this fatal predicament in which we find ourselves, seems to be one of “the monolingualism of the other,” one in which a prosthesis of origin becomes seemingly necessary (such as conceptual art as the prosthesis of origin for contemporary art). Similarly to how Jacques Derrida described his own condition as a French-speaking Algerian Jew, we are condemned to speak a language that is not our own. It may be our only language, but it does not belong to us. In this fatal realization resides the predicament and the very task of the historian of Latin American art.

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Landscape Painting in the Americas: An Inquiry

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Artistic representation of human interaction with the land has a long history in the Americas. It spans more than 30,000 years, from the earthworks and pictographs of ancient Indigenous cultures to the land art of the 1960s and 1970s to contemporary photographs of the terrible beauty of environmental destruction. It was during the early years of the nineteenth century, as emerging settler nations that were dispersed across the hemisphere gained and asserted their independence, that landscape painting began to forge a broader vision of the Americas. Artists seeking to respond to and depict distinctive topographies and natural wonders produced unique pictorial representations that nonetheless shared a common ideological and aesthetic orientation to the land, as well as artistic techniques for its depiction.

Picturing the Americas: Landscape Painting from Tierra del Fuego to the Arctic is the first exhibition and publication to examine the evolution of the genre from the early nineteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth century in an inclusive, hemispheric context. The goal has been to broaden the understanding of landscape painting across the Americas by setting aside the confines of national visual traditions and their art histories in order to extend scholarly investigation and discussion beyond territorial boundaries. Expanding the parameters of inquiry to encompass the hemisphere may appear, in retrospect, a simple and self-evident strategy, yet it has proven unprecedented—until now.

Placing artists, their paintings, and the visual cultures of disparate regions and countries in direct conversation, often for the first time, the exhibition's hemispheric perspective and thematic approach have enabled a consideration of the intricately intertwined geographies, cultures, and sociopolitical conditions of the peoples, nations, regions, and diasporas of North and South America. The process has revealed that the highly standardized model of landscape painting borrowed from European precedents produced diverse and singular modes of representation as a result of its necessary adaptation to the depiction of specific local and regional, as well as economic and political, realities. This realization, in turn, frames new questions regarding the nature of landscape painting in the Americas, as well as the status and stakes of its study when set in a broader context.

Traversing an arc of one hundred years of landscape painting in the Americas, our intent in examining such varied traditions in concert is not to claim a new kind of Pan-Americanism, which remains a colonizing undertaking. The project has, instead, deliberately avoided making generalizations and overarching statements. It has resisted the urge to draw simple conclusions from complicated realities. Rather, by bringing artistic traditions together within a hemispheric frame of reference, we have found that complexity and diversity—not simplicity and uniformity—come to the fore. Instead of attempting to provide an exhaustive compendium of various national schools and their dissidents, the project is, at its core, primarily concerned with creating a platform for cross-cultural dialogue that favors a multiplicity of voices and points of view. It is invested in the act of making a meaningful exchange possible, one in which the unique perspectives, cultural assumptions, and specialized knowledge that individuals contribute to the conversation are transformed. In this process, we begin to better understand what people in the Americas share, and what makes them distinct.

The project was conceived to result in three main public manifestations: a touring exhibition at three art museums in Canada, the United States of America, and Brazil with robust public programming at each venue; a publication with editions in English, Spanish, and Portuguese; and a website featuring images, text and audio, in these three languages, as well as French¹. The thematic sequence of the exhibition also informed the structure of both book and website. Thus, each aspect of the project develops these issues in interrelated yet distinct ways, addressing a range of audiences.

The exhibition's sequence of six thematic sections explores the instrumental role of landscape painting in the investigation and documentation of the natural world and in the articulation of symbolic yet proprietary conceptions of land and the exploitation of its resources, and envisions the land as a space of encounter, contest, and contemplation. The exhibition presents the material in what is primarily an aesthetic, temporal, and spatial experience. As such, the exhibition places the visitor's perspective, experience, and engagement at the center of its conception, offering a broad variety of points of en-

try and accommodating varying levels of interest and scholarly background. At each venue, curators worked with interpretative planners, exhibition designers, and education specialists to develop exhibition-specific interpretative strategies for the presentation of key ideas and primary content. These were tailored at each venue to address the needs and expectations of the exhibition's various audiences.

The period the exhibition considers was one of contentious colonization during which Indigenous peoples, who had thrived in the Americas for thousands of years, were subjected to intense violence and forced assimilation. Many of the landscape paintings featured in the exhibition are devoid of people, furthering the idea of *terra nullius*, which suggests that uncolonized land is an empty and untouched wilderness. Thus, the exhibition also considers landscape paintings as “one of the conceptual and visceral tools of colonization.”² To repopulate “empty” landscapes with the presence, and the voices, of the peoples who once inhabited them, the exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario featured video interviews with Indigenous scholars and artists and concluded with a presentation of the original Crown Treaties (1787 and 1805) that ceded the land that is now Toronto to the British Crown. At Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the voice of a scholar from the Cherokee nation was featured throughout the exhibition to provide an Indigenous counterpoint to the narratives conveyed by the paintings in several of the galleries.

While for centuries, landscape painting had functioned in Europe to express the ideological outlook of royalty and, gradually, the landed elite, the prospect of purportedly open and available land in the Americas shifted the demographics of who owned and worked the land, as well as who was displaced or evacuated from it. As a result, the nature of the imagery that came to represent the land evolved significantly. Beliefs and desires were projected onto singular topographies and ancient sites in an effort to order the external world and thus forge homegrown narratives freighted with communal values and nationalistic aspirations.

2 Jolene Rickard, “Arts of Dispossession,” in *Picturing the Americas: Landscape Painting from Tierra del Fuego to the Arctic* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press and co-publishers, 2015), 115.

By the mid-nineteenth century, landscape painting had become a primary medium for articulating largely proprietary conceptions of land in pictures of key topographical sites. Revered for their professed accuracy and aesthetic achievement, these images came to symbolize the evolving identities of emerging nations, as well as the bounty of the Americas. The first four sections of the exhibition address these ideas most explicitly. Over time, however, changing attitudes toward the land and the increasingly international artistic vocabulary of modernism animated and enabled very different ways of picturing the land. The exhibition's last two sections consider the ways in which landscape painting in the early twentieth century was transformed by a newly awakened search for authenticity and pictorial experimentation, and thus tended to articulate notions of cultural identity premised on belonging to a particular place. What once had been an artist's quest for accuracy in the 1800s had transformed into a search for authenticity, a search for self, in the early 1900s.

To articulate this arc, the first and last sections of the exhibition are conceived as a pair. The opening section, *Land Icon Nation*, assembles a careful selection of significant and iconic nineteenth-century paintings by major artists across the Americas, such as Juan Manuel Blanes, Félix-Émile Taunay, José María Velasco, Albert Bierstadt (Fig. 1), and Cornelius Krieghoff. These images depict topographical sites that, through the efforts of artists and writers, became symbolic or culturally indicative of the nations that contained them. Taken together, these works serve to frame the exhibition's hemispheric perspective. The concluding section, *Icon Nation Self*, echoes the first, gathering iconic paintings by artists working in the twentieth century, such as Pedro Figari (Fig. 2), Tarsila do Amaral, Gerardo Murillo (Dr. Atl), Georgia O'Keeffe, and Lawren Harris. These works reveal both the persistence of national icons in the cultural imaginary as well as the fundamental shift in landscape painting that radically altered the manner in which it was represented. The four middle sections investigate the role of landscape painting in the formation of national identities rooted in the natural beauty and symbolic meaning of the land, beginning with *Field to Studio*. This section brings together field sketches and completed paintings by traveler-artists who participated in scientific expeditions to the remotest regions of the Americas. The work of these artists demonstrates the critical influence



1. Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902). Yosemite Valley, 1868. Oil on canvas, 01.44 x 137.16 cm (36 x 54 in.). Collection of the Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, California, United States of America, gift of Miss Marguerite Laird in memory of Mr. and Mrs. P.W. Laird.

of Prussian naturalist Alexander von Humboldt in the development of landscape painting in the Americas. These artists created majestic views of America's unique ecosystems, from the dense interiors of the tropical rainforest to the icy peaks of the Arctic, forming bodies of work that also helped to lend shape to landscape painting traditions in a number of emerging nations. *Land Encounter Territory* positions the land of the Americas as an arena for encounters and conflicts between settlers and Indigenous peoples, and between settler nations eager to establish or expand their territories. Visualized in paintings purportedly concerned with delineating the land's features and attributes, the violent and contested history of territorial expansion is reimagined in many of these works as peaceful encounter, while in others the land itself figures prominently as a character in the development of national myths and symbols.

Land as Resource displays the land as a space of both conquest and contemplation. The Americas' abundant riches—fertile soil, timber, and minerals—are the object of paintings of plantations, harvests, and other forms of extraction that glorify the dominion of man over nature and erase the laborers involved in bringing the land under cultivation or the conflict



2. Tarsila do Amaral (1886- 1973). São Paulo, 1924. Oil on canvas, 57 x 90 cm (22.44 x 35.43 in Collection of Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil, purchased by the São Paulo State Government, 1929. Photo by Isabella Matheus.

necessary to wrest land from its Indigenous inhabitants. These often romanticized views are paired with iconic paintings that foreground the beautiful, picturesque, and sublime aspects of natural landscapes, presenting beauty as a significant natural and national resource. But whether for glorification or aesthetic appreciation, these pictures also begin to evince the impact of extraction and the advance of industry.

In the early 1900s, landscape painters searched for a new visual language with which to represent a rapidly changing world. The penultimate section, *Land Transformed*, examines how artists assimilated the simultaneous cultural embrace of both pre-industrial or vernacular practices and industrial forms as signs of their modernity. Artists utilized geometric forms to depict the forces of modernization that animated urban centers, power stations, factories, and busy seaports. Despite this change in style, many landscape paintings continued to emphasize beauty and direct experience of the sites they depicted, natural or otherwise. Forward-looking pictures of progress were counterbalanced by works in which artists reaffirmed the rural

and natural realities of their specific regions. Other painters, in the peripatetic manner of nineteenth-century traveler-artists, sought out the most remote locations for the kinds of solitary experiences that might enable them to achieve a deeper, more authentic or spiritual connection with nature.

Icon Nation Self, the exhibition's final section, revisits the iconic sites of the Americas—the ice of the Arctic, the pampas of the South, and the Cordilleras that connect them—but reimagines them in the new visual vocabulary of early twentieth-century modernism. While nature and the beauty of the land remained central for many as they sought to understand their place in the world, artists turned their attention inward, engaging their own subjective impressions, memories, and lived experiences. In so doing, their pictures transcended the immediately observable in the search for the essential truth of being. To know the world, as their paintings would suggest, was to be fully immersed in nature, to be one with it.

As landscape painting remains an animated field of academic inquiry, the exhibition and publication have drawn on an extensive scholarly literature. Studies of landscape painting, artists, patrons, and reception have, however, largely hewn to a nationalist model. Until recently, the study of landscape painting in the Americas has, despite a great diversity of artists and painting styles, remained most attentive to the role painting has played in the formation of national identities. Over the past two decades, however, the field has begun to challenge the ways in which painting participated in the formulation of ideas of the natural world and the representation of geographic spaces in relation to narratives such as those of nationalism, progress, and modernity. Often, though not exclusively, monographic, publications and exhibitions continue to single out artists, frequently placing these artists' work within contexts that tend to observe and maintain national borders. Such studies have also defined the boundaries of scholarly discourse.

Early in our research and discussions, we became aware that landscape painting has been studied unevenly across the Americas. Likewise, art historical methodologies and historiographic traditions vary from south to north, just as the activity of landscape painting itself has been quite varied from nation to nation and from region to region. In Canada and the United States of

America, certainly because of British colonial influence, landscape painting was at the core of artistic production. In countries that developed art academies early on, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Chile, landscape painting was a means through which to convey the elevated aims embodied by the fine art of painting. In the Andean region, as well as in Argentina, however, the practice of painting landscapes was slow to mature, as land was more often than not represented emblematically by a coat of arms or pragmatically as part of intensive and extensive scientific surveys until later in the nineteenth century.

Our inquiry has always been more than an exercise in comparison and contrast. Indeed, past comparative approaches have often been binary in orientation. Yet we have been able to build on important studies that have approached the question of landscape beyond the confines of “nation,” including comparative studies between the art of Brazil and Argentina, or Mexico and the United States (such as *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914–1947*), or Canada and the United States (such as the exhibition and catalogue *Expanding Horizons: Painting and Photography of American and Canadian Landscape, 1860–1918*). We have also drawn on more regional approaches, including but not limited to Dawn Ades’s landmark study, *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820–1980*, Katherine Manthorne’s *Tropical Renaissance: North American Artists Exploring Latin America, 1839–1879*, Ana Maria de Moraes Belluzzo’s *The Voyager’s Brazil*, and, more recently, *Caribbean: Art at the Crossroads of the World*, edited by Deborah Cullen and Elvis Fuentes. Multi-artist studies, such as Sharyn Rohlfson Udall’s *Carr, O’Keeffe, Kahlo: Places of Their Own* and thematic exhibitions focused on the pampas of the Southern Cone or the western United States during the nineteenth century have deepened our knowledge and opened up new lines of inquiry for the field at large.³

3 Thematic exhibitions and comparative studies include *The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820–1920* (Smithsonian American Art Museum, then the National Museum of American Art, 1991); Laura Malosetti Costa, “Politics, Desire and Memory in the Construction of Landscape in the Argentine Pampas,” *Journal of Visual Art Practice* 5, no. 1 (2006): 113–125; and Maria Isabel Baldassare, “Los estudios del arte del siglo XIX en América Latina,” in *Caiana: Revista de Historia del Arte y Cultura Visual del Centro Argentino de Investigadores de Arte (CAIA)* 3 (2013). Examples of monographic publications on artists working outside their own countries include Pablo Navas Sanz de Santamaría, *The Journey of Frederic Edwin Church through Colombia and Ecuador, April–October 1853* (Bogotá: Villegas Asociados/Universidad los Andes/Thomas Greg & Sons, 2008); Sigrid Achenbach, *Kunst um Humboldt: Reisenstudien aus Mittel- und Südamerika von Rugendas, Bellermann und Hilde* (Berlin: SMB Kupferstichkabinett/Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; Munich: Hirmer, 2009); and Pablo Diener, *Johann Moritz Rugendas, 1802–1856* (Augsburg: Wissner, 1998).

Unencumbered by the practical limitations and financial implications of borrowing, for an extended period of time, more than 100 works of art by more than 80 artists from over 60 public and private lenders in nearly 15 countries in Europe and the Americas, the exhibition's publication is in some ways a reflection of the "ideal" exhibition. The book offers in-depth analysis and consideration of the material through thematic overview essays, case studies, and focused analyses of major works and artists by 48 academics and curators from across the Americas. Each section of the book opens with an overview essay that frames key issues followed by two case studies, evenly divided between north and south. These examine the work of a particular artist or a specific group of paintings in greater depth. Each section concludes with a number of object-centered texts that address individual paintings. The combination of these texts offers readers a vast repertoire of images and diverse modes of interpretation while highlighting stylistic and methodological variations in the study of art history across the Americas. The website benefits from an interactive, non-linear, multi-platform, searchable, and free offering, thus making this material available and accessible globally. Collectively, these three offerings extend the reach of our project and inquiry to engage the widest possible audience at a multiplicity of levels.

These days, the notion of national identity is fractured, unrooted, and dispersed. It is also being challenged by a growing Indigenous resurgence across the hemisphere. The deep forests of the Pacific Coast and the Amazon region continue to generate pride and a sense of belonging at the same time as they rapidly and irrevocably disappear. And yet the land persists in being lodged, inextricably, at the core of our cultural identities, which are defined by a collective search to understand where and who we are. In our "taming" of nature, symbolically through painting and literally by harnessing and exploiting its riches, we construct a fantasy of the land as pure, primordial, and immutable, which contrasts sharply with the urban, industrial, and multicultural reality of our times. Landscape painting continues to speak to issues that are still very pertinent to our respective nations: land remains fundamentally about resources, ecology, Indigenous rights, and confrontation, as well as collaboration. These paintings have the capacity to bring us together around such issues, as, after all, we share the land mass that has generated so much wealth, conflict, and cultural meaning over the centuries. It is a place that we all call home.

As issues surrounding the construction of nations and sovereign relations continue to invite new thinking that now tends toward the transnational, the hemispheric, and the global, this project places such questions in a broader context. Importantly, we have benefited from advanced Indigenous studies in academia and museums, which have enriched our understanding of relationships with the land. With a widened scope and an emphasis on cultural dialogue—on the dialogue between paintings and traditions, and between scholars of them—this exhibition and publication offer a much-needed overview of landscape painting in the Americas. For the first time, the scholarly voices of academics and curators from across the hemisphere are presented together in a single volume, published in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. In a field that is trending in the direction of exchange and collaboration, we see great value in bringing these texts together.⁴ Nevertheless, much work remains to be done. We hope that our inquiry is the catalyst for many new and productive collaborations.

4 Technology continues to make new lines of inquiry possible and advance collaboration between scholars across the Americas by offering unprecedented access to information, easy communication, and new modes of connectivity. Widespread interest in cross-cultural dialogue and partnerships is supported by organizations such as the Getty Foundation, the Terra Foundation for American Art, and the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros.

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From Ethno-Aesthetic to Socialist Realism: Aesthetic Practices in Africa and New Territories of Art History: The Role of Institutions

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Introduction

Africa, a territory formerly marginalized from all intellectual currents because judged without writing and therefore, without tradition of thoughts was, nevertheless, the site of main big artistic and subsidiary cognitive experimentations for the last sixty years. Even if we still do not say it enough, it has participated in a decisive way in the construction of the new landscape of art history by becoming, despite itself, a privileged field. This state of affairs began at the time of the first contacts between Europeans and Africans along Africa's coast. Successive relationships developed from that moment which distributed not only Africans, but also their culture and artistic production throughout the world. This brought with it far-reaching consequences, of which we have only barely begun to study the implications. This is also one of the reasons, it seems to me, that motivated the choice of such an important theme for this conference. Regarding Africa itself, I will not rewrite its history here, but it is important to know that the various phases of the reception its artistic production were not favorable and held, for a brief moment, away from academic interests, including art history. That separation did not last long, because studies of any kind initiated by various fields of knowledge relatively contemporary with colonialism were deeply interested in different parts of the continent in order to try to understand its peoples, and the evolution of its aesthetic practices.

The end of World War II plunged the world into a new phase of its history with the formation of two power blocs: that of the West, led by the United States, and that of the East, presided over by the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The patterns of thought implemented after the war were obviously not the same in these two contexts, a disparity that extended to the theories of the arts that embodied each ideology. Most African countries at that time, whether still fighting for their independence or having gained independence after a bitter war, were open to this new dynamic, particularly a non-Eurocentric one that promised equality in relationships and, above all, considered the historic character of their evolution in opposition to that advocated by the competing Western theories.

Our approach to the topic avoids linear narratives, but a way to talk about simultaneous phenomena in a complex context characterized by three developments that, confusingly, occurred at the same time.

The purpose of this paper is to show the process of Africa's integration in the new geography of art history. It will also discuss the role of various institutions in different settings. But before that, I will introduce the three moments of aesthetic practice that will allow me to justify the moments of inclusion of the continent in different geographies of art history.

Three moments of African Aesthetic Practices

It is not easy to describe the three phases in the evolution of aesthetic practices in Africa because they took place at the same time, contrary to the apparent name given to each period. So when we talk about contemporary art in all its dimensions and diversity, exploration into so-called “traditional art” continued contemporaneously, taking as its basis the Euro-American practice of art history. Here, I will try to streamline the presentation of these different phases for a better understanding of what I want to elucidate.

So-Called Traditional Art

Strictly speaking, African art prior to the opening of relations with the West has not had any significant influence on the rest of the world beyond simply existing, except the last years of the fifteenth century, when we could spot a form of collaboration between early explorers and artists on the coast in the implementation of Afro-Portuguese ivories, which Suzanne Vogel (1989) has discussed at length. Thus, African art has been given the name of “traditional art” at the time of its encounter with other cultures of the world, including European culture. But it took several decades before African art was tolerated as “traditional” or “art premier”—that is to say, deemed worthy to enter in the intellectual logic of art history—and the process involved several steps. First, we can point to an attitude of curiosity that led to the creation of “cabinets of curiosities” in Europe. In the creation of these cabinets, though, Africa was already excluded from the field of art history, as these objects were nothing but exotic artifacts intended to serve

the glory of kings, princes, and rich merchants who invested in exploration. Next, the release phase was orchestrated by the institutions that had financed the collection of these objects and facilitated the creation of public museums, accepting African objects as donations from their first non-African owners. It will be useful here to recall that in this period, however, there were several theories that denied to Africa and Africans all faculties inherent in humans. One of the most famous, due to emanating from one of the most influential thinkers of his time, was reported by Ezio Bassani (1992), communicating a thought of Hegel from 1830:

Africa is not interesting from the point of view of its own history, but because we see people in a state of barbarism and savagery that still prevents them from forming an integral part of civilization¹.

For the second time, the continent was removed from the field of art history. Elitist societies elsewhere in the world considered Africa's history uninteresting and unworthy of consideration. By extension, the elitists thought of Africa's people as "barbarians" who would not be able to produce works comparable to the masterpieces they were accustomed to seeing. African works were repeatedly dramatized in the European imagination as "rough drafts and hideous."² Since the history of these people was not interesting, how could the "curiosities" that they produced and, therefore, embodied be of interest? Moreover, the role assigned to these objects was clear: they were to provide data on a way of life and illuminate the early stages of development of civilization that Western societies could not otherwise directly observe. Paradoxically, that is the manifestation of the first scientific interest in African objects, consigned to the realm of ethnology, and justifies, in my opinion, the organization of universal exhibitions by most European colonizing powers: London in 1862, Amsterdam in 1883, Paris in 1878 and 1889, etc. On these occasions, not only the objects, but also the people of Africa were the testimony to "backward" cultures that civilized Europe wished to examine or display. Thus, this basic

1 Ezio Bassani, *le Grand Héritage, sculpture de l'Afrique noire*, Paris, p. 89, 106.

2 Jean Louis Aka-Evy, "De l'art primitif à l'art premier," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 39 (1999): 563–582.

idea would encourage the creation, in the second half of the nineteenth century, of ethnographic museums. This led Jean Laude to point out that:

The foundation of the ethnology museum and the movement of ideas created in its favor meet economic and political needs as, progressively, defined an ideology aimed at interpreting the material evidence gathered in these museums in a previously defined meaning.³

Thus, without really meaning to, Europe drew a new geography of art history by engaging non-European civilizations, particularly Africans, in its concerns, despite not having a scientific consciousness of this at the time. Museums, according to the Western evolutionary scheme then in vogue,⁴ studied, compared, and ranked each object in a series according to its degree of technical and artistic evolution. This led Laude to write: “[African objects] are integrated into a system of thought already constituted within ready-made categories.”⁵

Schools Established by the Europeans’

Closer to today, in the 1950s, although non-Western and African sculpture in particular had greatly influenced the artistic renovation in Europe, Europeans still often attempted to prove, as was so well demonstrated by Castelnovo and Ginzburg (1981), that Africa remained the periphery. The continent was thought to be where backwardness was permanent and where Europeans still had to bring the “learning of creation” and, therefore, docility. The center of innovation is still, according to the Euro-American representation of the practice of art history, in Europe and North America. Therefore, the relationship between the global and the local is perfectly distorted. In Africa, there was no more properly local process of aesthetic practice, at least none that was not subtly imposed from the outside. Thus, European initiatives led to the construction of schools throughout the continent, intended to teach African talent how to make

3 Jean Laude, *La peinture Française (1905–1914) et “l’art Nègre”* (Paris : Klincksieck, 1968), cited by Ezio Bassani, *Le Grand Héritage, sculpture de l’Afrique noire*, Paris, 1992, p.95.

4 T. Ernest Hamy, *Les Origines du musée d’ethnographie. Histoire et document* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1890).

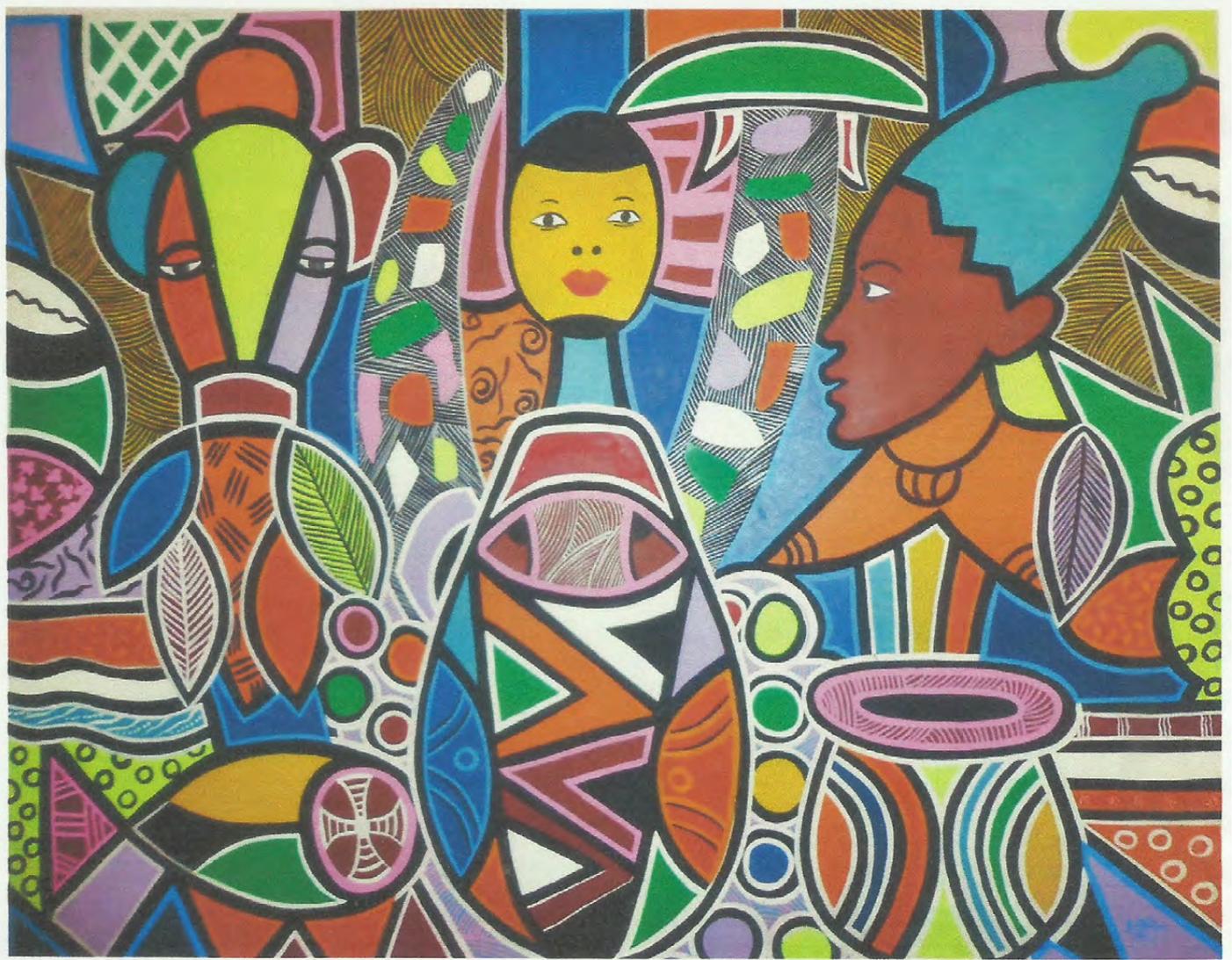
5 Jean Laude, *La peinture Française, op. cit.*, 44–50



1. Geledes Mask manufactured according to traditional principles. Ethnographic Museum of Porto-Novo. Photo by the author.

art in another way, as in the West, according to market logic. It should be noted that this was a great moment in the history of humanity, even viewed casually. This process inaugurated the globalization of cultures more than what happened during the fifteenth century with Afro-Portuguese Ivories, and later in early twentieth century with the European and North American phenomenon of internationalization of the canonical modernism⁶. Europe tried to impose its modernity as the norm and did not accept a possible plurality of alternative modernities. The most emblematic of these institutions were the school of Poto-Poto in Congo, the Osogbo School in Nigeria, the Dakar school, and the Margaret Trowell School in Tanzania. Since colonization contributed to weakening the foundation of sculptural practic-

6 See Christian Kravavagna, « Toward a postcolonial art history of contact », in *Texte zur Kunst, Globalismus, Globalism*, 91, September 2013, p. 114.



2. Khaema Ndweng, 2013.

es in Africa, taking what it could and demonizing the rest, the schools held that they must steer artistic production in another direction. That was the mission of such schools, which Busca (2000) frames in these terms:

The idea that underlies the encouragement of such behavior, particularly within the schools of fine arts, is that an autonomous artistic practice cannot exist in Africa that is not an 'Africanized' tracing of European art.

But these developments automatically included Africa in a new geography of art history in the sense that, scientific works were dedicated to African production and, on the other hand, the arts produced on the continent entered into the same logical framework as those made in the West. This rough assimilation had important theoretical implications. However, these were not the only influences that governed art production on the continent.

Development of Relations with the Socialist Countries

At almost the same time, in the early 1960s, another influence on artistic practices in Africa imposed itself – one that was very offensive, but subtler. The consequences of World War II created the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), which, to extend its international influence, got closer to Africa's freshly independent countries. Its strategy involved denouncing the abuses and methods of the old colonizing powers, and in doing so, making the people of the continent aware of the danger of believing in the good intentions of these countries, which, according to the GDR, would only continue to exploit them. To this end, the GDR entered into strong friendships with popular and cultural organizations throughout Africa and reinforced its economic relations with countries including Algeria, Uganda, Mali, Dahomey (Benin), Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, and Ivory Coast. Such diplomatic relations would allow the GDR to build an alternative strategy to support countries still in the process of independence, getting them acclimated to GDR culture, and thus art in this context became a weapon of liberation.

A report uncovered in the archives of the former GDR clearly stipulated the approach to be taken to strengthen cultural relations with African countries. It mentioned that diplomats must first impart information on cultural development using the GDR as a model. This could influence these young states, which would discard colonial cultural influence and work on developing their own national cultures and, most importantly, turn away from the harmful influence of modernism. An extensive program, it advocated the substitution of the Communist theoretical model for capitalism. This goal could not be achieved across all of Africa; instead, the GDR tempered its ambitions and exerted its influence on the neediest part of the continent. A handful of emerging states would now be the target of this shrewd cooperation, which also focused on exerting artistic influence. Alternative artistic production in Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and subsidiary Angola strongly reflects this influence. Proof of the importance of this relationship is seen in their regular participation in Inter-Grafik, the most important arts trade fair of the former Eastern Bloc, where the selection of artworks was based on adherence to socialist realism.

Africa: New Space of Art History?

If I take into account here the fairly restrictive definition of European art history in the nineteenth century as an institutionalized discourse on the arts, practiced within a set of facilities such as museums, galleries, and universities, it would not be easy to talk about Africa as a place of art history. However, if I should rather retain the broadest definition of the discipline as a field of reflection on artistic traditions, issues of value of works, studies of artistic canons, etc., it would be easy to conclude that everywhere there is artistic production, there is an equally organized discourse with a highly complex vocabulary.⁷ From this perspective, the continent has paradoxically become a new territory of art history coexisting vicariously with the so-called traditional arts. There is no assumed position originating directly within Africa; rather, narrative forms are introduced from outside the continent. This is sadly to be expected, for the continent had quickly been stripped of all its masterpieces, now preserved in ethnographic or universities museums around the world, which could have provided the basis for the creation of this discourse. Primitivism, now considered the history of relations between European modern artists and so-called “primitive arts”, was first the story of the invention of such arts. Without going into detail at this level of reflection, I could say that the first form of ethno-aesthetic, with all the epistemological implications it generates, includes the long transformative process dating from the nineteenth century related to the history of colonization, anthropology, and art history. This was followed by the adoption of socialist realism in art works that were not intended solely for African production, and is involved in the questioning of a dominant discourse.

During the development of these theories, African intellectuals who had not given up entirely on art history as a discipline of autonomous thought were busy fighting against long-standing *clichés* developed on the continent. They fostered intellectual works on Africa as a land of history and art, but these were grounded in traditional and prehistoric practices. These works, were subject to all of the controversy generated by these *clichés* and, therefore, it was once again the others who ensured

7 Matthew Rampley, “From Big Art Challenge to a Spiritual Vision: What ‘Global Art History’ Might Really Mean,” in *Is Art History Global?* ed. James Elkins (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2007).

the African position from which otherness was typical. The first writings in this vein were those of Ki-Zerbo, who wrote: “Where humans appear, there are tools, but also artistic production. Homo faber, homo artifex. This is true in African prehistory.”⁸

Is this concept dense enough to establish a position, creating a new relationship between the works and ideas in progress and giving birth to a new form of narration?

Ethno-Aesthetics

The epistemological battles between ethnology, anthropology, and the philosophy of art following the creation of ethnographic museums did not give a clear idea of what Europe thought about African artistic productions until 1915, when Carl Einstein published *Negerplastik*. This work revived the controversy until another key date, 1965, when the Musée de l’homme in Paris organized the exhibition *Masterpieces from the Musée de l’homme*. In the book of the same title that accompanied the exhibition, there are chapters on black Africa by Michel Leiris and Jacqueline Delange. The first indulged in real recognition of African art, emphasizing its qualities and particularly how it was useful for solving the artistic crisis in Europe. The second underlines its intrinsic qualities. It is Delange who outlined at the end of her article the conditions of admission of African art to the world stage, writing:

If an ethnological museum exhibits the most beautiful of its art works and exhibits them primarily as such, it can be said that the time has come when they can, similar to the masterpieces of historical civilizations, be admired for what they are beyond their direct scientific interest, the perfect expressions of aesthetic values specific to the cultures they come from.⁹

Here, two essential elements that deserve our attention appear. First, the institution (museum, university, etc.) is as an instrument of “legitimization of these arts.” Through the prac-

8 Joseph Ki-Zerbo, “L’art préhistorique africain,” in *Histoire Générale de l’Afrique* 1 (Paris: UNESCO, 1999), p. 693.

9 Jacqueline Delange, *Chefs-d’œuvre du Musée de l’Homme*. Paris : Musée de l’Homme, 1965, p. 45.

tice of exhibitions, the institution insinuates itself into the scientific debate and puts existing practices into perspective as Prod'hom (1999) emphasizes. Second, we see the formal recognition of the aesthetic expressions of non-European cultures and, thus, a confirmation of the extension of art history to other cultures that started with Einstein's *Negerplastik*. This suggested to Delange (1967) the ethno-aesthetic theme, which Lucien Stephan developed shortly thereafter for a better understanding of its implications.

For Stephan (2010), the term "ethno-aesthetic" is characteristic of a set of studies dedicated to non-European arts. It is designed to express the double ideas of collaboration between two disciplines, but is preferred to "aesthetics" and "ethnology of art," which refers to a specialization of ethnology. Until a better term can be coined, ethno-aesthetic could be defined as a discipline that focuses on the aesthetic of the arts and the production of objects among the groups studied by ethnology. It is this theory that has started to recover the evolution of aesthetic practices in Africa, although it denies any character of artistic movements as seen in the West, insisting instead on tribal studies. However, William Fagg, who organized the 1961 Munich exhibition *Nigeria, 2000 Jahre Plastik* and the exceptional *Africa, 100 tribes, 100 Masterpieces* (Berlin, Paris, 1964), proposed to apply the methods of art history to African art. Through these and other efforts, a few centuries of the art history of the Kingdom of Benin has been gradually restored. In addition, subsequent studies by Willett (1967; 1971) and Tchibozo (1995) have added a historical sequence by assembling Benin art as part of a sequence on the art of life and gone yet further by adding to it a current ethnic group, the art of the Yoruba. This theoretical evolution seems to correspond to what was said by Edgar Wind, a thinker close to Warburg, who defined the outline of iconology:

The artistic vision fulfils a necessary function in the whole of civilization. But he who wants to understand how vision works cannot isolate other functions of culture, and he has to ask how important for the visual imagination of culture are the functions such as religion and poetry, myth and science, society and the state? How important is the image to these functions? One of Warburg's essential theses is that every attempt to

separate the image from its links with religion,
poetry, worship, and drama dries up the source
of its life-giving sap.¹⁰

Is the study of traditional African art far from this conception?

Socialist Realism

As I have shown, the involvement of the former GDR in the cultural field in Africa would change the representation characteristic of known artistic production until that time. This change was imposed by the almost constant participation of artists from some African countries in the largest known arts fair from the Eastern Bloc, the InterGrafik. The theoretical basis of this aesthetic practice was socialist realism. I will not repeat here the history of this theory, but it is important to know that it was born in the aftermath of the revolutionary victory in Russia in 1918. The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party recommended the creation of a “realistic propaganda art of the revolutionary which must be understandable to the masses¹¹.” The aesthetic practice promoted by the Association of Revolutionary Artists had the task of presenting in both an artistic and a solemnly documentary way the major changes made since the revolution. The daily life of peasants and workers was staged, showing the happiness of the proletariat. The valor of the Red Army soldiers and party leaders’ portraits, designated as “heroic realism,” was highlighted, and subsequently, subjects prevailed over form. In 1933, the term “socialist realism” became official and artists were directed to “serve the ideals of the Communist party and contribute in this way to the construction of socialism¹².” Thus, socialist realism transformed from a freely adopted method into a compulsory official doctrine in the field of arts. In 1967, the Moscow philosophy dictionary defined socialist realism:

Its essence lies in fidelity to the truth of life, painful though it may be, expressed in artistic images considered through a communist perspective.

10 Edgar Wind, cited by Jan Bialostocky, *Le discours sur l'art, l'iconologie*, Encyclopedia Universalis, 2010.

11 Socialist realism as defined by John Berger, Howard Daniel, Antoine Carrigues, in *Encyclopedia Universalis*, 2016. Refer to <http://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/realisme-socialiste>

12 *Ibid.*

Artists must be devoted to the communist ideology. The fundamental ideological and aesthetic principles of socialist realism are: devotion to communist ideology; using its activity to serve the people and the spirit of the Party; binding tightly to the struggles of the working masses; socialist humanism and internationalism; historical optimism; and rejection of formalism, subjectivism, and the naturalistic primitivism¹³.

This last part of the definition confirms the contrast between this theory and those art theories of the West, and the manifestation of its rejection in Africa. It is useful here to ask what is the responsibility of institutions in this context.

Responsibility of Institutions

Although I cannot go into details in this paper, it is important to understand that in general, institutions within the colonial metropolis have had a great influence on the creation of the new history of art spaces, not as new centers, but rather integrating spaces into a governing center. It is also necessary to know that the process has been different in both cases I present here. In the West, theories were born after the secular accumulation of objects, while in the East, the birth of theories promoted accumulation. To elaborate, I will quickly mention the case of the Trocadero.

Musée de l'homme : Instrument of Diffusion and Influence

The *Musée de l'homme* at the Trocadero in Paris is a significant Western institution as regards Africa. This is the museum that triggered the confluence of specialized circles of study regarding the continent. Not only has it organized exhibitions of its most beautiful pieces from different scientific missions, it has set up an influential association of friends of the museum, among which could be counted, for example, a certain Picasso. Parties organized in this framework gave rise to important debates and brought specialists to write about these objects (Leiris, 1965). On the topic of the museum's influence on the acceptance of African art, Ladislav Segy wrote:

Picasso said, speaking of cubistic works, “when the form is realized, it is there to live its own life.” This plastic quality also makes African art able to live its own life in our civilization without any reference to its tribal origin. That means that having an affinity with the African carvings, we can appreciate them not because they come from Africa but because their artistic realization is of such high communicative quality. [...] Art history books and courses began to pay greater attention than before to the so-called primitive arts from all over the world and thus the African museum material became a valuable subject for the students of art history [...]¹⁴

So before the slow and long process that linked the universities to these objects took shape, the *Musée de l’homme* was one of the first institutions to engage art history on the African field. This was followed, as I mentioned above, by the birth of a narrative form regarding these productions. Later, the galleries would take over and publications on African art by Jacques Kerchache, Paudrat, Stephan, and Françoise Stoullig Marin would give a new dimension to this tacit integration of the continent in the new geography of art history. In particular, after the enormous work of Carl Einstein and Jean Laude, Jacques Kerchache contributed to bringing the comprehension of African art into the theoretical sphere, introducing the possibility of thinking about such art, not as motto, but as serious study. His influence in the creation of Musée du Quay Branly is well known.

Influential Position of the Leipzig Museum

To the East, as I also mentioned above, the Leipzig museum assumed the task of diffusing socialist realist theory in Africa, and of accumulating pieces from the continent. It is important to note that in this context, the institutions were centralized, and specifically, that after all exhibitions in conjunction with African countries, the pieces were systematically sent to the museum, as the institution bought on behalf of the state. Moreover, the museum organized its own thematic exhibitions throughout the former GDR, concentrating on symbolic cities and districts such as Karl-Marx-Stadt. In 1960, for example, there was a symptomatic great

14 Segy Ladislav, “Aspects of African Art for the Museums,” *Cahiers d’études africaines* 1 (1960): 126–127.

exhibition entitled *Anti-Kolonialismus-Ausstellung* (*Anti-colonialism Exhibition*), a traveling exhibition that stopped at the six greatest enterprises in Leipzig. In 1967, another exhibition organized by the museum clearly showed its position. *Karl Marx und die Völkerkunde* (*Karl Marx and the Peoples' Ethnology*) indicated the thinker's theories and ideologies, then elucidating the thoughts of the former GDR's state machine. Thus, well before it became an issue for ethnographic museums around the world to try to find places for all kinds of art work, Leipzig's museum was one of the first institutions to refrain from creating a marginal line between so-called traditional art and contemporary art in its collection policy, dating from the time it was part of the former GDR. This policy was crafted with the aim of combating the theories of static and ahistorical societies very much in vogue in European scholarship on Africa. Above all, it worked for the respect of the principle of socialist realism, which held that art has never belonged to a single class. Moreover, it upheld the political function of these institutions, demonstrated by an interview I uncovered about fifteen years ago with one of the leaders of a German institution, *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*, who affirmed that culture is a tool of diplomacy.

Conclusion

The inclusion of Africa in a new geographical map as a place of art history is older than we think. Archaeological discoveries in Nigeria between 1910 and 1912 by Frobenius aroused very early scientific analysis, including the works of Matvejs. This was the second major art historian after Carl Einstein who spoke in 1919 of these productions as artistic. According to Zoe Strother for Matvejs: "Frobenius, even despite his scientific controversiality, was the one who proved that Africans also had a history (and art history)."¹⁵ Finally, in 1961, Laude wrote that it was unacceptable to assimilate African sculpture and fetishes, and held that this mistake of some thinkers was the logical consequence of the ethnographic knowledge produced in this period.¹⁶

¹⁵ Markov, cited by Zoe S. Strother, (2011).

¹⁶ Jean Laude. *La peinture Française, op. cit.* p.88.

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Tonalá Ceramics in Seville

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When, starting in 1565, the gradual process of regulating the commercial relationship between the Viceroyalty of New Spain and the Philippines began, an economic circuit on a global dimension was organized. The establishment of the Manila Galleon—which linked the archipelago’s capital with Acapulco, then continued along a route that proceeded overland across Mexico, ending at Veracruz and from there sailing anew toward Seville—established a pathway of momentous human and cultural exchanges that operated until the early nineteenth century.¹ Manila was an active port through which Western relations with China, Japan, Siam, India, and the Pacific islands were maintained and was the place from which a varied assemblage of refined, sumptuous, and exotic Asian products arrived in Mexico and the metropole. The curiosity about and interest in works of ivory, lacquer, mother of pearl, silk, and porcelain, etc. spurred trade, making these, alongside raw materials and spices, the usual cargo of the Manila Galleon, also known as the China Galleon. Interest in these types of goods was widespread, as they were always considered extraordinary and prestigious objects. These precious commodities, with their undeniable capacity for seduction, for centuries exerted an obvious influence on the applied, sumptuary, and decorative arts practiced in the extensive territories of the Spanish monarchy. In fact, the rich and exotic materials, the exquisite designs and shapes, and the vibrant decorative repertoires originating from Asia modified and enriched many of the creations of Mexican and Spanish art. These hybrid artworks are proof of a unique capacity for admiration and adaptation and of the extraordinary versatility of their creators, as well as of the existence of a refined and exquisite aesthetic taste in which the vestiges of a typological and functional nature come together with an interest in the exotic and an eagerness for novelty, in a global cultural context.²

The famous Mexican ceramics produced in the potteries of Tonalá, a town near Guadalajara in the present-day state of Jalisco, are testament to all this. There, numerous pieces were made, among which the large ceramic vessels called *tibores*, which follow typically Asian models and whose height usually reaches

1 Albert Bernabeu, ed., *La Nao de China, 1565–1815. Navegación, comercio e intercambios culturales*. (Sevilla, 2013).

2 Alfredo J. Morales, “Introducción,” in *Filipinas Puerta de Oriente. De Legazpi a Malaspina*, exhibition catalog (Barcelona, 2003), 25.

almost a meter, stand out. They were fabricated with a grayish mud, called rigid or sticky mud, which was extracted from the San Andrés mines and which was mixed with a clay composed of quartz, feldspars, carbonates, and oxides, which acts as a degreasing agent. On the outside, the Tonalá pieces incorporate a layer of much-filtered clay or engobe, called Sayula varnish, over which the painted decoration was applied, employing different clays crushed and dissolved in water for this purpose. These pieces mostly display a smooth surface, in imitation of Asian models, although in the more expensive examples, small raised surfaces that become angel or animal heads when decoration is applied are not uncommon, artistically enriching the whole. Also in the pieces of greater sophistication and of higher value, representations of animals, primarily cats, can be found above the handles and flanking the neck. The decoration typically consists of zoomorphic and vegetable themes painted in dark red and brown hues with details reinforced with white brush strokes. Once finalized, the vessels were burnished to the utmost perfection, achieving the appearance of glazed vessels. A final baking provided the greatest luster and colorization to the Tonalá pieces.

Tibores were normally made to order for exportation and their function was both decorative and utilitarian, as they were employed to store or transport liquids, such as oil, or even solids, such as vanilla, chocolate, or spices, during trans-Atlantic voyages. Beginning in the middle of the seventeenth century, these pieces achieved a great prestige in Europe owing to their quality and to the peculiar ability of the mud from which they were shaped to perfume all that with which they were put in contact. Thus, the water stored in these containers was a product much sought after and appreciated by European nobility.³

In several Spanish cities, ceramic pieces from Tonalá are found, with the largest and most important collection of them being preserved in Madrid's Museo de América.⁴ The city of Seville and some towns in its province also preserve some beautiful examples of Tonalá *tibores*, which will be referred to here. Some have already been studied and presented in a few exhibitions,

3 Sonia Pérez Carrillo (SPC), "Tibor," in *Filipinas Puerta de Oriente. De Legazpi a Malaspina*, exhibition catalog (Barcelona, 2003): 292.

4 García Sáiz and Albert de León, "La cerámica de Tonalá en las colecciones europeas," in *Tonalá, sol de barro*, (México, 1991).

but others are only now coming to light. For the most part, they reside in private collections, although some are in the possession of religious institutions, where they arrived as donations from patrons. Their presence is easily explained by Seville having been the port of entry for American products since 1503 and in light of its status as headquarters of the Casa de la Contratación de las Indias, the organization charged with control of New World commerce until 1718, when it was moved to Cádiz.⁵ In some instances, these extraordinary objects could be included in the trousseau that nobles and other high functionaries who had occupied important positions in the American administration brought back to the Iberian Peninsula. Such is the unique case of viceroys and presidents of the Audiencia, although other lesser officers imitated their collecting interests and similarly acquired or commissioned pieces of this kind, which they could carry on their return voyage or send back to their hometowns. Clergy or ecclesiastical authorities may also be responsible for the *tibores'* presence in Seville. With the passage of time, the utilitarian character that many of these vessels may have had originally was largely forgotten, subsumed by their role as pretty decorative objects, completing the ornamentation of religious environments, adorning salons, and enriching the premises of nobles' homes, as they continue to do today.

Among the Tonalá ceramic pieces that are preserved in Seville, the one in the old Hospital de Venerables Sacerdotes is particularly worth mentioning.⁶ In one corner of the central courtyard is found a beautiful ovoid-shaped *tibor* with a slightly flared neck and a swollen lip, measuring 110 cm in height, with a diameter at the mouth of 43 cm. The base is pointed and, as a result, it is placed on a metallic support to ensure its stability. The *tibor* exhibits two small handles on its shoulders to facilitate transportation. Its surface features a red engobe on which a vegetal and zoomorphic decoration is painted with dark reds and brown hues, with small details carried out with white brush strokes. The primary motif is of two double-headed eagles with outspread wings, coupled with representations of rampant cats, possibly lions. At various times, both themes have been linked with symbols of royal power, double-headed eagles be-

5 Ramón María Serrera, "La Casa de la Contratación en Sevilla (1503–1717)," in *España y América. Un océano de negocios. Quinto centenario de la Casa de la Contratación 1503–2003*, exhibition catalog (Madrid, 2003): 47.

6 AA. VV., *Los Venerables* (Sevilla, 1991).



1. Tibor. Hospital of the Venerable Priests. Seville. Photo by the author.

ing connected with the monarchs of the House of Austria. The decoration is completed with vegetable and floral stems of different sizes and shapes, which nearly cover the vessel's entire surface, except its base, on which the engobe base is apparent. All motifs are painted with a clear schematic highlighting the animals' essential features. This piece can be dated to the end of the seventeenth century (Fig. 1).

In the Seville home of the Counts of Santa Coloma, descendants of Antonio María de Bucarelli y Ursúa, who was governor of Cuba and Viceroy of New Spain between 1766 and 1771,⁷

⁷ Teodoro Falcón, *Casas sevillanas desde la Edad Media hasta el Barroco* (Sevilla, 2012): 138.

several *tibores* from Tonalá are preserved. Two of them offer a certain resemblance in their shape and color to the one previously mentioned. They are very paunched pieces with a large flared mouth and a thickened edge. The larger measures 85 cm in height and its mouth has a diameter of 50 cm, while the other has a height of 80 cm and a mouth diameter of 46 cm. They have reddish engobe and their decoration has also been carried out with dark red and brown hues, in addition to a number of details carried out with white brushstrokes that give vivacity and a certain vibration to the surface. The *tibores'* bases have a reddish hue darker than the rest of the piece. Among the decorative motifs are crowned double-headed eagles and various vegetable themes exhibiting large flowers, stems, and some fruits. To this repertoire are added several types of birds in varied postures that are distributed among the phytomorphic motifs that cover the *tibor's* body. Figures of birds flanking some sort of cartouche or medallion appear in the lower area of the neck, with a motif of waves and flower occupying the upper part. A similar composition in the form of a border or band has been employed on the *tibor's* shoulders, where two small rounded handles are available. A stand of carved and gilded wood serves to adjust the pointed part of the base. Moreover, a lid of the same material and techniques covers the *tibor's* mouth, an element that helps reinforce the typological relationship of this piece with the Oriental models from which it derives.

A different typology corresponds to another *tibor* in the house. This is an ovoid-shaped piece which also exhibits small lateral handles, but whose similarly slightly flared neck is slimmer and is also flanked by figures of animals, which appear to be dogs or cats. In its decoration, application in relief and painting are combined. The piece's front presents a strip at the bottom occupied by flowers, while the main surface is organized by a triple arcade whose supports and arcs are decorated by flowers. In the central register, a crowned double-headed eagle over a figure of a lamb in relief is provided, while on the sides are found rampant lions whose heads are also in relief, under which large birds are arranged. Large circular flowers and leaves occupy the spandrels of the arches, these themes reaching the start of the neck, which is also decorated with similar themes. Other vegetable motifs, including stems, leaves, and flowers of various types, complete the decoration of the registers occupied by the eagle and the lions.

Very different is the treatment on the *tibor*'s rear. A profuse vegetable ornamentation, with moved stems of voluminous leaves, flowers, and some sort of fruit clusters occupies the entire surface. Such motifs are painted in a dark reddish color with some orange and white touches, standing out over the ochre engobe at the base, a detail that differentiates this *tibor* from the previous pieces. This light color emphasizes even more the decoration on the front, for which red, blue, gray, and brown were employed. Some touches of white and areas of golden ochre make this decoration more colorful and lively. The small figures of animals that flank the neck and that are situated together with the small circular handles could be related to the representations in clay of dogs that were produced in Colima, a place not very far from Tonalá. As in the previous cases, the vessel has been placed on a stand of carved and gilded wood to give the piece stability. The *tibor*'s mouth is covered by a lid of identical material and technique, which reinforces its relationship with the Oriental models from which it derives (Fig. 2).

Although the provenance of these *tibores* is not known, one option would be to link them to the trousseau of the return voyage of Antonio María de Bucarelli, who, as has been noted, was the Viceroy of New Spain in the last third of the eighteenth century, although they are pieces made well before his stay in Mexico, as they can be dated to the end of the seventeenth century. Not knowing the inventory of pieces comprising his trousseau makes it complicated to be able to confirm such a theory. Conversely, they could have been acquired by some other family member at a different time, with the objective of enlarging the house's art collection.

The final two examples of Tonalá *tibores* that will be emphasized are found in the church of Santa Cruz of the city of Écija and are the property of the Hermandad de Nuestra Señora del Valle, patron of the town.⁸ They came to this church from the defunct convent of San Jerónimo del Valle, forming part of the trousseau of the said Marian image. Both pieces were restored by the Instituto Andaluz del Patrimonio Histórico in 2001; they presented problems in conservation, with the state of one, which was incomplete and had been repaired crudely, being



2. Tibor. House of the Counts of Santa Coloma. Seville. Photo by the author.

especially worrisome.⁹ The *tibores* reach a height of 96 cm and a mouth diameter of 36 cm, featuring simple wooden supports and lids of the same material, but carved and gilded.¹⁰

These pieces bear a clear resemblance with the last one, which has been analyzed in the old Bucarelli house, as they offer an ovoid shape with a slim flared neck and they each display figures of animals on the sides, alongside small handles arranged on the shoulders. Lamentably, the more damaged *tibor* has lost these figures, while the other only preserves one complete fig-

9 Ana Bouzas Abad, "Tibores," *PH Boletín del Instituto Andaluz del Patrimonio Histórico*, 39 (2002), 189.

10 Gerardo García León (GGL), "Tibor," *Filipinas Puerta de Oriente. De Legazpi a Malaspina* exhibition catalog (Barcelona, 2003): 293.

ure. The fronts of the *tibores* are also organized in three registers by arcades in what appear to be Tuscan columns. Their shafts and the arches' orders are decorated by large flowers joined by stems, while in the spandrels and in relief, cherubs' heads appear. A crowned double-headed eagle occupies the central register and on the sides there are rampant lions with heads in relief. The lower area contains a row of large orange flowers among which a wavy plant stem with leaves is developed. The base lacks decoration. Identical flowers and stems are distributed on the neck, in whose center appears a cherub head in relief. The engobe is of ochre color and red, green, orange, and gray have been employed in its polychromous decoration. The orderly ornamentation and chromaticism of the front face contrasts with the simplicity of the rear, in which merely some large red flowers joined with moved green stems with leaves appear.

The large *tibores* analyzed here are proof of the wide diffusion that the products of Tonalá achieved. They also demonstrate the ability of their creators to transform and adapt typologies of Asian origin that enjoyed great prestige among the tastes of creole and European society, using local decorative techniques and repertoires. Moreover, these exceptional pieces are testimony to the process of hybridization produced in a context of cultural globalization.

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1492 in the Other Indies: Shifting Centers, Creating New Peripheries

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By 1492, when Columbus landed in Hispaniola, Europeans knew a fair amount about India. At least, they thought they did. They had gotten their information from Pliny and Marco Polo, from Munster and Mandeville. They knew Indian spices and other commodities, but what they knew of India was more intended to fulfill expectations than to conform to a scientific ethnology of the sort that post-Enlightenment enquiry might provide. Even those who had been there tended to repeat Pliny's fantasy observations of India because they were addressing an audience that had expectations of India, a sense of what it was like. Indian religious practice was a primary interest, as it had been to Marco Polo, who made ample disparaging comments about the idol-worshipping Hindus and about the Syrian Christian community in India, calling them heretics and referring to others he encountered as descendants of St. Thomas' murderers. But Columbus was committed to vastly expanding the Christian community in India, though that may have been a device to secure funding from the deeply religious Queen Isabella.

The fantasy image is probably best expressed by one of the earliest Europeans to visit India, the Franciscan monk Odoric of Pordenone, who was sent eastward from Venice in 1318. Landing in western India, on the outskirts of Mumbai, he traveled across the country, concluding his time in India at Puri, where the great Cart Festival of the god Jagannath was in progress. He reported that "the people put the idols [as he calls them] on chariots, and the King and Queen and all the people drew them from the temple with song and music and a great company of virgins."¹ He also observed that "many pilgrims also put themselves under the chariot wheels, to the end that their false god may go over them."² That is not entirely inaccurate, though he did report that at Quillon, a port city on India's southwest coast, a monstrous idol, half man, half ox, gave responses out of its mouth and demanded the blood of forty virgins.

Odoric's account served as a basis for the embellishments provided by John Mandeville, probably a Frenchman, though his identity remains as mysterious as the observations he

1 John Mandeville. *Three Travels of Sir John Mandeville; with three narratives, in illustration of it, from Hakluyt's "Navigations, Voyages & Discoveries"* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1905), p. 333.

2 Ibid.

recorded about his travels, which began in 1322. They were widely consumed, including by Columbus, whose notions about India were significantly shaped by the exotic sense that Mandeville provided. Mandeville's imagery, both verbal and visual, is vivid, though many today, probably correctly, doubt that he ever left Europe. Nonetheless, his writing shaped a European vision of India.

By the late fifteenth century, however, travelers seem to have had a different vision of India, one far more practical and less exotic. The Arabs and Jews who settled in Spain and Portugal probably played an important role in this change because their co-religionists had extensive contact with India. Muslims rose to positions of considerable prominence on India's west coast, that is, the Malabar Coast, and Jews had been living there for several centuries, engaged in trade, as letters from the Cairo Geniza show. But what, in fact, would Columbus have seen if he had actually landed in India? He probably would have found himself on the west coast. There, at ports such as Calicut, Cochin, and Quilon, he would have seen ships from Arabian ports and from China and Southeast Asia, long part of a trading network, a proto-world system that was very much in place long before the age of European capitalism and the world system that Wallerstein proposes. He would have seen an India that was intimately connected with the world that, to India, mattered—that is, the realms that border the Indian Ocean. He would have seen a racially and religiously diverse India. In fact, religion and race were more categories imposed on India by Europeans than they were indigenous modes of thought.

From even before the common era, we have ample evidence of trade across the Indian Ocean, a network that extended from the eastern African coast to the South China sea, trading spices, textiles, ceramics, and gold, among many other commodities. The connection with Europe was considerably more limited, and had been since late Hellenistic and Roman times, when trade was documented both by means of Roman goods, for example, at the Indian port of Arikamedu, and by the Greek sea captain's record known as the *Periplus of the Erythrian Sea*. But after the second century or so, Indian goods reached European markets largely overland or through intermediary Arab traders. While India was engaged in a network of trade, the Eu-

ropean engagement with the east was much more focused, as in the case of Venetian trade with the western part of the Ottoman Empire, and that relatively late in the period.

India, on the other hand, served as a fulcrum in the vast trade network not only because it is approximately the halfway point between China and East Africa but also because it has an enormous coastline, some 7,200 kilometers, and still more if we think of an integral India prior to partition in 1947. India's special advantage was that its coastlines faced both east and west. In other words, there were ports facing China and Southeast Asia on one side and other ports facing the Arab world and East Africa on the other side, all facilitating a systemic exchange of goods. There is ample evidence for extensive trade across the Indian Ocean, such as shipwrecks dating as early as the ninth century that carried magnificent ceramics from Tang Dynasty China; Indian textiles found across Southeast Asia; and written records of expeditions, some hostile, as was the eleventh-century Indian Chola Dynasty attack on Sumatra intended to gain better trading conditions, and the voyages of the late fourteenth/early fifteenth-century Chinese mariner Zheng He, who traveled in fleets that were enormous by any standard and in ships that would have accommodated all three of the ones Columbus used for his initial voyage.

But it was more than goods that were exchanged. India exported religious traditions, at least to large parts of the Indian Ocean: Buddhism to the whole region to the north and east—that is, to China, Korea, Japan, and across Southeast Asia; and Hinduism—essentially the worship of Vishnu and Shiva—to parts of Southeast Asia. India's religious traditions were not, however, exported westward, probably because there were well-established religions in West Asia, namely Judaism and Christianity and, after the seventh century, Islam. To Southeast Asia, India exported a script, often used in inscriptions for Sanskrit, an Indian religious and legal language, and occasionally for writing indigenous languages, such as Malay. In the West, neither Sanskrit nor Indian scripts were adopted, doubtless because already there were scripts and the necessary legal and accounting tools for writing in place. When I say “exported,” I should note that these were willingly adopted, at least by the elite, who had lacked the power associated with a written language.

Is all that sufficient to suggest that India functioned as a center, and the rest of the Indian Ocean as a periphery? Most definitely not. Competing powers formed the Indian Ocean system. China was certainly a major exporter of luxury items, particularly ceramics; Suvarnavipa, almost surely the huge Indonesian island of Sumatra, exported spices nowhere else then available; and from ports in the Arabian Sea came aromatics such as frankincense and myrrh. I thus wonder if we might think not of a system dominated by a single power or region, as Wallerstein's world system required, but might rather find a more useful model in Christaller's Central Place Theory, which sees multiple centers interacting with surrounding areas. That is certainly what Columbus would have observed if he had gotten to India.

In turn, what did India know about Europe? Very little, because India's attention was largely turned eastward, across the Indian Ocean. To India, Europe was a peripheral region that mattered little. There were few commodities and almost nothing in the way of visual material that Indians wanted to import from that area. So can we understand the relationship between India and Europe in the terms that Castelnovo and Ginzburg present? Not really, because they focus on very limited geographic regions. When thinking about India and Europe, the vast system that Wallerstein proposes seems a better model, although in terms of world systems, Europe is largely excluded from the system in which India played a central role. That system was focused almost exclusively on the Indian Ocean. In other words, from the perspective of India, the Italian Renaissance mattered little, if at all, although intellectually attuned Indians, like intellectually attuned Europeans, were driven at about the same time by a strong curiosity, testing the environment in which they lived in order to gain control over it, making it one that was human-centered, not god-centered, a present not controlled by a mythical religious past. That is certainly what Columbus would have observed if he had gotten to India.

If Columbus had reached India and landed at the port of Calicut, he likely would have encountered other Europeans, as Michael Pearson suggests. And soon thereafter, certainly by 1498, when Vasco da Gama reached the port of Calicut, the Portuguese began continuous contact with India. We know something about the Portuguese there both from Portuguese accounts and also from the account of Ludovico di Varthema, a Bolognese adven-

turer who is probably best known as the first non-Muslim to enter Islam's holiest city, Mecca. While in Mecca in 1503, he offered his services to the Muslim King of the Deccan, as he described the Sultan of Bijapur, to cast artillery to fight the Portuguese—a ruse, since he had no experience casting cannons. The Portuguese were mightily feared and strongly detested because in the previous year, 1502, Magellan had managed to massacre a whole shipload of pilgrims either going to or coming from Mecca. And in retribution for the 1500 killing of Portuguese in Calicut, the Portuguese attacked the city, inflicting devastating casualties, all because the Portuguese had demanded exclusive trading rights with the ruler of Calicut, rights that were more or less granted but circumvented by Arab and other traders who had engaged with India for vastly longer than the Portuguese.

Beyond the coastal city-states such as Calicut, Goa, and Cochin, Columbus, if he had reached India, almost surely would have ventured inland to the much larger kingdoms, specifically to Bijapur, Vijayanagara, and Mandu. Likely he would have started with Bijapur, the kingdom whose sultan Ludovico di Varthema sought to aid just eleven years after Columbus first reached the New World. As an independent kingdom, Bijapur was only recently established, founded in 1490 by the Muslim Yusuf Adil Shah. Almost immediately, Yusuf Adil Shah would have needed several things. First he would have required a fort in which his palace could be located. Even in its present ruined state, it is clear that the Bijapur fort rivals the structures of Sintra or Seville. He also would have needed a mosque, because in an Islamic kingdom, the ruler's name must be read aloud during the Friday noontime prayer, a legitimizing gesture. And he probably would have begun to put together an atelier of painters, not so much because he was a connoisseur of fine art but rather to document his rule. Nonetheless, Yusuf was in fact something of a connoisseur, for it is often stated, though without any evidence I know, that he invited artists, as well as poets, from Turkey, Persia, and even Rome, part of a longstanding tradition that extends back to the time of Darius and Xerxes, who imported leading artists to demonstrate their ability to attract the very best available. Columbus, had he reached Bijapur, also would have found considerable religious harmony, quite distinct from the Spain he left behind. Yusuf, for instance, had a Hindu wife, the mother of his successor



1. Mosque at Vijayanagar, 1439. Photo by the author.

When Vasco da Gama set out for India, he claimed that conversion was one of his two goals. As a member of his crew said, when asked what brought them to India: “We seek Christians and spices.” Or, in the words of Portuguese kings, the voyages they sponsored were intended to “serve God and make a profit for ourselves.” Portuguese intervention in conversion, however, was little needed in India. Long before the time of Columbus and Vasco da Gama, a Christian community flourished in India, one said to have been established by St. Thomas the Apostle. In other words, unlike in Portugal and Spain, Indians of diverse religious communities lived in relative harmony.

That is attested by the Kingdom of Vijayanagar, which Columbus almost surely would have visited after spending time in Bijapur. He would not have been the first European to spend time in Vijayanagar; the Venetian Niccolò de’ Conti had been there in 1420 or 1421. Niccolò, whose observations were recorded by the pope’s secretary, presents Vijayanagar as a Hindu city, but a mosque at Vijayanagar (Fig. 1) shows that there were Muslims there, too. That mosque, which bears a dedicatory inscription dated 1439, had been provided by the Vijayanagar king Deva Raya, who also provided a slaughterhouse for his Muslim sub-

jects. Most of the spectacular remaining religious monuments of Vijayanagar are Hindu temples, provided by the king and potentially considered royal structures, while the structures of other religions would have been more modest. As Philip Wagoner argues, however, Vijayanagar was deeply transformed by its interaction with Islamic culture.

From Vijayanagar, Columbus almost surely would have gone to Mandu before returning to his ships at Calicut, or wherever he docked on the Malabar coast. There, Ghiyas-ud-Din of the Khilji dynasty was ruling, although he was succeeded in 1500 by his son Nasir-ud-Din. If he had been properly hosted, as surely he would have been, Columbus would have stayed in a beautifully constructed stone residence, among the earliest surviving residential structures remaining in India. Among these is the Jahaz Mahal, probably built by Ghiyas-ud-Din Khalji, and the building commonly called Baz Bahadur's Palace, which contains an inscription indicating its construction by Ghiyas-un-Din.

By 1500, when Nasir-ud-Din succeeded his father, the kingdom was stable, and the sultan could pursue the support of painting, a luxury art, rather than architecture. The luxury proclaimed in the single surviving manuscript from Mandu at this time was, remarkably, food. That manuscript, the *Nimat Nama*, written and illustrated between 1500 and 1510, is essentially a recipe book, a listing of ingredients—without measure, however—for preparing the sultan's favorite dishes (Fig. 2). I am struck by two things. First, although many imported spices are used in the preparations, imported from parts of Southeast Asia, not a single food from the New World is included. There are no potatoes, no tomatoes, no chili peppers—all things we would today consider essential to Indian cuisine. Was the sultan here resisting these imported goods, which by this time were almost surely known in India? Or was he breaking from tradition by commissioning a manuscript that documented the present, the everyday? For this is the earliest secular manuscript in India of which I am aware. Second, it is hard to avoid recognizing the diverse appearance of the sultan's attendants in the manuscript. The range of skin colors in this painting from the manuscript (Fig. 2) and from just about every other painting in it underscores the diversity of those who are highly placed, to say nothing of the population at large, probably a predominantly Hindu population under this Muslim sultan. How different that state of affairs



2. Folio from the *Nimat Nama*. Painted in Mandu, c. 1500-1510. © The British Library Board. *IO Islamic* 149, f.100v.

was from Spain and Portugal, something that probably would have intrigued Columbus, who sailed from Palos de la Frontera the very year Jews and Muslims were expelled from Spain and just four years before Portugal expelled Jews and Muslims, in both cases creating a homogeneous Catholic population.

But at least Columbus would have found manuscripts on paper to be familiar. Paper came to Europe and India at just about the same time. In Europe, paper had been around since at least the late eleventh century, when it was known in Spain, probably imported and used by Muslims and Jews who knew it from Arabia, where it had been introduced by the Mongols. In India, too, evidence of paper also dates to the eleventh century, when Jewish merchants on India's west coast imported it from Egypt and Arabia. And, of course, Columbus maintained his journals on paper, journals that probably would not have been economically feasible if he had had to use parchment.

The *Nimat Nama*, that paper manuscript from Mandu, represents a major change in India's written tradition. Until this

work, every surviving illustrated manuscript in India was religious in nature. In the *Nimat Nama*, we have for the first time around 1500 a secular work, one that records the here and now, not the world of gods and heroes. If this does not mark a renaissance—a term that is perhaps too geographically specific—it does, like Columbus, represent a concern with the present.

Thus, one way to think about the global changes that took place about 1500 is as a rise in curiosity, one that challenged established tradition. For India, I see that sense of curiosity most clearly manifest in the products of the Mughal Dynasty, whose rule was largely centered in north India beginning in 1526. Babur, the first Mughal ruler, maintained a record of his response to things he observed, the *Babur Nama*. His grandson, Akbar, who ruled from 1556 to 1605, commissioned a court chronicler, Abul Fazl, to maintain a record of his reign, a work known as the *Akbar Nama*. A magnificent illustrated version, probably the royal copy, is today in the Victoria and Albert Museum; it was illustrated by leading artists in Akbar's court atelier and serves as more than a record; it satisfies the sultan's curiosity, one manifest even more apparently in the realm of religion, where he invited leaders of India's diverse religions, including Jesuit priests, to meet with him, and whom he interrogated with an intense curiosity. He also had Persian translations rendered of important Hindu texts, some of these illustrated, so he could better understand the religion of the Hindu majority he ruled.

Jahangir, Akbar's successor who ruled from 1605 to 1627, inherited a well-established kingdom, and so had even more time to pursue his curiosity. He was a master connoisseur and even claimed in his memoir:

As regards myself, my liking for painting and my practice in judging it have arrived at such a point that when any work is brought to me, either of deceased artists or those of the present day, without the names being told me, I say on the spur of the moment that it is the work of such and such man. And if there be a picture containing many portraits, and each face be the work of a different master, I can discover which face is the work of each of them. If any other person has put in the eye and eyebrow of a face, I can

perceive whose work the original face is, and
who has painted the eye and eyebrow.³

Though a bold claim, it certainly indicates Jahangir's sense of connoisseurship. His curiosity is manifest in the paintings he commissioned, such as one of the dying Inayat Khan. Even though Jahangir describes him as one of his closest subjects, the dying man's appearance was so strange to Jahangir that he dispatched artists, as he says, to draw his likeness. And when exotic animals were brought to court, such as a zebra, Jahangir tested the stripes to be sure they were not painted, and had Mansur, the artist in his atelier who specialized in animal paintings, record the zebra's appearance. Similarly, he documented a turkey that had been brought from the New World. And when he was depicted imagining a world that extended far beyond his own realm, the painter showed him attended by various figures, including James I of England even if Jahangir's gaze is focused on a Sufi saint, not the king of England.

I see this sense of curiosity, of imagination, as essential to an awareness of a world that goes beyond the commodities of trade. It is a marker of liberation from a present rooted entirely in the past; it is an individual's assumption of power over the present, even over the future. More embracing than the term renaissance, curiosity, I think, stands at the threshold of modernism and, in many ways, shapes it.

3 Alexander Rogers, trans, Henry Beveridge, ed., *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri or Memoirs of Jahangir* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1909), vol. II, p. 20

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European Architecture in Southeast Asia during the 18th Century: Between Tradition and Hybridization

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European architecture in Africa, America, and Asia during the eighteenth century is a field that has been addressed from different perspectives in the last decades.¹ The traditional starting point is the national perspective.² Therefore, the building history of the Philippines is to be understood as part of its Spanish heritage, for example.³ More recently, some scholars, especially in the Asian field, have considered this phenomenon as part of the study of cultural encounter.⁴ A good example of this is the Tamil-French architecture in Pondicherry,⁵ or even the alleyway houses of Shanghai.⁶ In the last decades, the transnational approach has created a new scenario that has not yet been applied to building history in the colonies. Only one old contribution can be considered as a first attempt in this vein.⁷ This paper tries to identify some social contexts in Maritime Asia during the eighteenth century.⁸ From this point in time, the consequent building phenomenon will be demonstrated. Lastly, the paper will link this perspective with the current postcolonial discourse, underlining both the problem of heritage enhancement and new buildings.

Unlike the American context, European expansion in Asia is linked with many national factors. Apart from the Portuguese, Dutch, and Spanish presences, the eighteenth century in Asia is characterized by the arrivals of the English, French, Swedish, and Danish contingents. These aside, the Asian powers,

- 1 Leonard Blussé and Kees Zandvliet, *The Dutch Encounter with Asia. 1600–1950* (Amsterdam, Rijkmuseum: 2002); Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America* (London: Phaidon, 2005); and Leonard Blussé, *Visible cities. Canton, Nagasaki, and Batavia and the Coming of the Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
- 2 Elder Carita, *Palaces of Goa: Models and Types of Indo-Portuguese Civil Architecture* (London: Cartago, 1999).
- 3 María Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo Spínola, *Arquitectura española en Filipinas, 1565–1800* (Seville: EEHA, 1959).
- 4 Ulbe Bosma and Remco Raben, *Being “Dutch” in the Indies. A history of Creolisation and Empire. 1500–1920* (Singapore, NUS Press, 2008).
- 5 Jean Marie Lafont, *Chita: Cities and Monuments of Eighteenth-Century India from French Archives* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001).
- 6 Gregory Bracken, *The Shanghai Alleyway House* (New York: Routledge, 2013).
- 7 Sten Nilsson, *European Architecture in India 1750–1850* (London, Faber and Faber: 1968).
- 8 François Gipouloux, *La Méditerranée asiatique. Villes portuaires et réseaux marchands en Chine, au Japon et en Asie du Sud-Est, XVIe–XXIe siècle* (Paris: CNRS, 2009); J. E. Wills Jr., ed., *China and Maritime Europe, 1500–1800. Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy, and Missions* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011).

such as the Chinese, Japanese, Mughal, and other sultanates, remained active in the region. Even Armenians maintained a key role in the time. Apart from this complexity, the continuous wars and commercial struggles constantly changed the Maritime Asian context. For these reasons, the cultural milieu of the period is hardly clear to define, let alone its consequences in architecture.

Contexts in Maritime Asia

The most common social context in Maritime Asia is the long coexistence within cities. In them, we can often find several cultures living together during some centuries. Typically, a European power held the government over an Asian territory thanks to a limited population in that place. Although control of the various cities changed throughout the century, the Western leadership rarely passed to Asian hands. In this case, the two cultures kept their own cities but had a constant relationship. A good example of this was Macao, a Portuguese settlement surrounded by the Chinese empire for centuries. Although the connection between them was clear, both tried to keep their own image. Another type of coexistence was that of neighborhoods. One example of this situation was Manila, governed by Spaniards from 1571 but inhabited mainly by Filipino and Chinese populations. The former, as they did in Spanish and Portuguese America, tended to accept Western customs. The Chinese population, often changing their residence every year, seemed to preserve a particular culture.⁹ Perhaps this was why the city created a particular quarter for the Chinese community, allowing a long coexistence that led to a fruitful cultural exchange. A third possibility was the short, yet fruitful, coexistence of traditions. The best example of this was Beijing, where Europeans had a difficult history during the seventeenth century.¹⁰ Throughout the eighteenth century, Western missionaries were able to work in the Chinese court as builders and scientists. This short and belated experience, compared with the previously situation already pointed out, resulted in different expressions of culture and architecture.

9 Leonard Blussé, *Strange Companies. Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Dordrecht, Foris, 1986).

10 Elisabetta Corsi, *La fábrica de las ilusiones: los jesuitas y la difusión de la perspectiva lineal en China (1698–1766)* (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 2004).

Building Encounters: Patterns and Their Contexts

The study of architecture in this Maritime Asia context shows a limited number of patterns related to building encounters. Although the development of each is different, the basis is common, allowing us to make comparisons. This paper tries to place such architectural observations into six categories.

“Pure” European Architecture in Asia

The most obvious category is the direct construction of European architectural models in these territories. In this case, there is no adaptation to local needs, and regional particularities are not taken into account. In these cases, the governments try to maintain original traditions without the influence of local “barbarism” or technological backwardness.¹¹ They are examples of the power *representatio* of the empire and, thus, this category of architecture is apparent in representative buildings such as government palaces and fortifications. Any of these projects can be easily identified in the archival sources because of their inherent obstacles: the construction of European structures in Asia usually encountered problems of material supply, specialized manpower, and, later, of livability. Rarely was any adaptation made to these showcase buildings, which shows a deep effort to retain the original European “perfection.” As part of this group, two different examples may be differentiated. On the one hand, we see fortifications and other engineering work.¹² For European military engineers, local custom had nothing to contribute to the Western tradition. For this reason, these building processes show the training of local populations and the search for adequate local materials to directly transfer the European models to Asian settlements. Something similar can be said about hydraulic works. On the other hand, the representative buildings tried to retain the original models as part of a superiority discourse: the image of the empire should be the same in all its territories, just like its law or religion.

Examples of this phenomenon can be easily found in many of the cities of Maritime Asia. Perhaps Batavia, the former name

11 Borma and Raben, *Being “Dutch.”*

12 M. Lobato, *Fortificações Portuguesas e Espanholas na Indonésia Oriental*, (Lisbon, Prefácio: 2009).

for what is currently Jakarta, is one of the clearest examples. An analysis of the images of this city in 1740 during the Chinese massacre unveils a Dutch city. The civil architecture features high gabled roofs, typical of the Northern Europe context, and without any function in Indonesia. Something similar can be said about canals. These form part of Dutch self-awareness, yet were ill-advised in the Philippines; they became the main reason for the unhealthiness of Batavia and its frequent malaria epidemics during the eighteenth century. The Dutch image was maintained even when it affected the local livability. When it comes to fortification, the examples are clearer. The eighteenth century in Asia was characterized by continuous wars, particularly during the Seven Years War. This necessitated the repeated building and rebuilding of fortification systems.¹³ For example, Pondicherry, currently Puducherry, was attacked by the British in 1748, 1754, 1760–1761, 1778, and 1793, forcing numerous reconstructions.¹⁴ Fortunately, Lafont studied these works from archival sources. All of them show the efforts of the military engineers to follow the French tradition controlled from Paris, through which adaptations were minimized.

Adaptation of European Models to Local Contexts

As has been shown, the direct transfer of European models to Asia was extremely difficult; thus, adaptation was more usual. In these cases, the architects tried “to build a Western project that avoided the aforementioned obstacles. This is clearly different from an architecture created from two different traditions blending. In the cities with a long-time history of coexistence, this kind of project was more common in the seventeenth century, a moment when the Eastern and Western traditions had not yet been deeply interrelated. These adaptations can be found in civil architecture, mainly houses. For example, the housing model that arrived in the Philippines in the sixteenth century was closely linked with the Caribbean and Mexican experience, due to the Manila Galleon. Manila, though not the rest of the archipelago, offered a climatological context close to these territories. Nonetheless, some particularities such as the area’s earthquakes, rare in Cuba, promoted the adaptation of housing designs.

13 Pedro Luengo, “Military Engineering in Eighteenth-Century Havana and Manila: The Experience of the Seven Years history.” *War in History*, 24(1), 2017, pp. 4-27.

14 Lafont, *Chita*.

Something similar happened with convents. The organization of these structures was fixed by the religious order and allowed little space for adaptation. In addition, these orders tried to maintain their image throughout their construction projects all over the world, in a similar way to the image control of the empires. This preference could have easily led the orders to build European models without remarkable adaptation. However, on the contrary, the missionaries—especially the Jesuits—usually kept their overall image while still incorporating local contributions. This scenario can be easily found in America and Asia during the seventeenth century, but it is even clearer during the next century. Examples include the Nantang Church in Beijing (南堂) and the San José Church of Macao.¹⁵ European models are clearly used, and in some cases are explicitly pointed out in the archival sources, but they are adapted to the local needs.

It is true that this phenomenon shows the open-mindedness of local architects and engineers, taking into account the Asian role in such building projects. Thus, these examples can be analyzed as part of the global cultural transfer between West and East. However, they also insist on the importance of the European context over the local traditions. In the end, the adaptation of a Western model does not show a dialogue between cultures, but the imposition of one of them upon the rest in a slightly more subtle way. Perhaps for this reason, these kinds of solutions tended to disappear in cities with a long coexistence experience.

Adaptation of Local Models to European Needs

A good solution for the local obstacles to building would be the adaptation of local architecture to European needs. This, however, requires a wide building tradition that was not common in many countries in Southeast Asia at that time. Only Japan and China could offer such prospects, since the Filipino and Malay cultures had no structures that could be used as palaces or churches without significant transformations.¹⁶ Nonetheless,

15 Pedro Luengo, "Identidad y globalización en las fachadas jesuitas de Pekín en el siglo XVIII," in M. Isabel Alvaro and Javier Ibañez (coord.), *La Compañía de Jesús y las artes. Nuevas perspectivas de investigación* (Zaragoza, MINECO-Universidad de Zaragoza: 2014).

16 Fernando Zialcita, *Authentic though Not Exotic: Essays on Filipino Identity* (Quezon City, Ateneo University Press, 2005).



1. Philippines. Manila. Intramuros. Puerta Real (Royal Gate), 2009. Photo by the author.

during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Western missionaries made efforts to adapt local structures to their needs. The best example is the Beijing Jesuit College, founded in an urban Chinese palace. Although the traditional functions of some spaces were changed, the building kept its original features. This kind of adaptation has been described in the Jesuit presence in Japan before de Sakoku, known thanks to some *namban* screens.¹⁷ Unfortunately no plans or long reports on the topic have survived. During the eighteenth century, this kind of adaptation was not common.

Adaptation of Foreign Models Thanks to Coexistence

The previous example could lead us to think that the European presence in Maritime Asia was too concerned with maintaining its own culture to reuse local structures. Although this can be said reasonably about the European presence, something similar can be pointed out regarding local nations. In contrast with the Americas, in Southeast Asia, many countries resisted European control. From the Bulungan or Johor Sultanates to

17 Sophia Diniz, "Jesuit Buildings in China and Japan: A Comparative Study," *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies*, 3 (2001): 107–128.

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2. Philippines. Vigan.
Archbishop's Palace, 2009.
Photo by the author.

the Chinese empire, none of the local countries showed a consistent interest in adapting Western models, although there were some exceptions.¹⁸ This can be easily explained through the building of houses or palaces. The European models did not offer any advantage to these societies. The only possibility of cross-pollination would be the intention of overseas Chinese of the eighteenth century to build a structure drawing from both traditions. This would be a theoretical prelude

18 Pedro Luengo, "Villas de recreo en los puertos europeos de Asia a mediados del siglo XVIII," *Laboratorio de Arte*, 24 (2012): 377–391.

to the Kaiping Diaolou (开平碉楼) phenomenon, more common during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In contrast, the traditional fortifications of Southeast Asia were clearly a step backward when compared with Western fortifications. This would explain the quick expansion of these new techniques in the Asian world, especially in those territories not under European control. Surprisingly, none of these cities were fortified in the eighteenth century following the Vauban system. Only in late nineteenth-century Japan was a star fortification built in Goryokaku (Hakodate, Hokkaido). Even when European gunnery was common in Maritime Asia, the local kingdoms renounced these fortification systems, relying instead on their traditional walled cities.

Creation of Hybrids from Long Experience Processes

The cases previously shown point out some of the possibilities of cultural encounters that retained the original traditions to varying degrees. However, neither in Asia nor in the Americas were these the most frequent cases. The coexistence of two or more cultures, even when one is hegemonic, usually generated new solutions. Obviously, such solutions are based on different aspects of the previous traditions, but the resulting formula is original. From this perspective, most structures cannot be explained as marginal in a global empire, but as part of the building history of a community. This process was developed during the seventeenth century, and then the solutions were spread all over Maritime Asia throughout the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, many of these new traditions were no longer part of a singular community, but part of a common basis that could be found along the Indian and Pacific oceans. This was the usual situation in Southeast Asia during the eighteenth century. Thus, the building history of Goa, Manila, Batavia, or even Beijing seems today to be fragmented. Due to the complexity of the proposal, several examples will be given.

Octagonal Shape in Maritime Asia

Recent studies have tried to explain the Filipino interest in octagonally shaped buildings in the eighteenth century.¹⁹ Sur-

19 Javier Galván Guijo, "The Octagonal Shape in Fil-Hispanic Architecture," in Javier Galván Guijo, ed., *Endangered. Fil-hispanic architecture*, 13–28 (Manila, Instituto Cervantes: 2005); Pedro Luengo, *Intramuros. Arquitectura en Manila, 1739–1762*, (Madrid, FUESP:

prisingly, such shapes were not to be found in large quantities in the previous centuries. Different scholars have considered this to be a Chinese contribution to the archipelago, clearly visible in the relationship between pagodas and Christian bell towers in the Philippines. From this perspective, we may observe that Macao had the same circumstances but did not develop such a solution. Recent studies have pointed out the New Mexican role, linking this phenomenon with the towers of the Basilica of Guadalupe.²⁰ However, this would explain the problem with towers alone, and not with entire buildings. When the Chinese architect Antonio Mazo and the Spanish architect Lucas de Jesús María projected Manila's *Alcaicería de San Fernando*, they had just arrived in the city. They had to plan a structure with two functions: it had to act as both housing and a market for the Chinese community of Manila. On the one hand, Jesús María was thinking in terms of a Spanish *plaza* with houses around it, adapted to Chinese needs. On the other hand, Mazo planned a building similar to a *Fujian Tulou*, a community house with a big open space in the middle, adapted to Spanish needs. The archival sources show the discussions between them throughout the process. The final result was a hybrid, one that did not completely fulfill the needs of either the Westerners or the Easterners. It should be noted, however, that in contrast with other contemporary building attempts, this was a private initiative that depended on the acceptance of its users. About a decade later, the *Alcaicería* was burned and a new project had to be built.

The Bahay-na-bato

The *Alcaicería* cannot be considered as a project resulting from a long history of coexistence. Although the Chinese and Spaniards shared Manila with the Filipino population, neither Mazo nor Jesús María had any experience of building houses with these particularities. A good example of a result of a long cultural encounter can be found in what are currently known as *bahay-na-bato*. Today, these structures are considered to be “traditional Filipino houses.”²¹ The term *bahay-na-bato* refers

2012); Pedro Luengo, *Manila, Plaza fuerte (1762–1788). Ingenieros militares entre Asia, América y Europa*. (Madrid, CSIC, 2013).

20 Luengo, *Manila, Plaza fuerte*.

21 Fernando Zialcita, *Philippine Ancestral Houses (1810–1930)* (Quezon City: 1980).

to certain large houses built of wood and stone. The façades are reminiscent of the solutions of Spanish houses in the Caribbean and the oldest examples in the South of Spain and the Canary Islands. As such, the *bahay-na-bato* usually has a flown balcony closed by a continuous wooden and shell jalousie. Although other Spanish sources can be found for this solution, it is clear that the use of shell is part of an Asian tradition that will be addressed later. Apart from the façade, the inner structure of the house is an evolution of the pre-Hispanic *bahay-na-ku-bo*. The *nipa* palm gable roof is supported by large wood pillars. This solution, a Filipino practice adapted to Spanish needs, can be also found in churches and other buildings.

Shell windows

One of the most remarkable features of the *bahay-na-bato* is the use of shell windows. It is true that the concrete use of this solution in such balconies is originally from the Philippines, where it is known as *capiz*, but the origin is again far from the archipelago. The use of shells in windows has been found in Portuguese Goa in the late sixteenth century, when the Spaniards had just arrived on the islands.²² When considering the feature as an Indian particularity, especially with its name of *carepa*, it has to be said that this element did not exist before the European arrival. Thus, it is the result of a first cultural encounter, in this case between Portuguese and Hindu traditions. Its arrival in Manila could be explained by the Union of the Iberian Crowns (1580–1640), but this cannot be the reason for its diffusion in China and even in Japan in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thus, the use of shell windows is not the adaptation of a culture to the local context, but the result of a long coexistence of two or more cultures. Their quality promoted the diffusion of the technique throughout the Maritime China, with some exceptions such as Dutch Indonesia.

Houses for Overseas Chinese in Manila and Their Consequences

The concrete example of the shell windows can be used in other, more complex cases. One such case is that of the houses built by local governments for the overseas Chinese population. I

have previously mentioned the *Alcaicería* of Manila, but it is not the only example. A second project was built in this city during the eighteenth century, called the *Alcaicería de San José*. Apart from these examples, other cities such as Batavia and Malacca also developed remarkable Chinese quarters in this period.²³ The region's Chinese population used to move their residences between all these cities, because a sense of familiarity could be found amongst them. Unfortunately, however, it is only the Manila case that is widely known, thanks to recent studies.

San José de Mabolo was another private initiative that received public support. In contrast to San Fernando, it was built inside the walled city. In the center of the quarter a fountain was set, organizing the elongated plots of houses. Every house had a small façade to the street, where there was a shop, and a little backyard to be used as store. Upstairs was the house. This plan, which was significantly different from the first *Alcaicería*, was designed by the Spanish governor to demonstrate the advantages of a new utopian city. The Chinese population preferred living in this new quarter and abandoned the suburbs. The model of San José cannot be found in later initiatives in the Philippines, but is clearly linked with future solutions in Singapore, where these houses are known as *shop houses*. The early shop houses in Southeast Asia were built in the late eighteenth century, but unfortunately, few studies have gone into detail on the topic.

Although the similarities between these structures in various locales are clear, the urban development of the quarter in each is absolutely different. The shop houses in Maritime Asia were usually organized along long five-foot ways. In Manila, they generate a more complex space where the gradation between the public and the private space can be found. The church and the public fountain were planned for the main axes. From here, secondary blind alleys started. It is clear that privacy was organized in a similar way to that found in the nineteenth-century alleyway houses in Shanghai.²⁴

From this data, the consideration of these buildings, both shop houses and alleyway houses, as vernacular should be revised. Although their development in the nineteenth century can be

²³ Blussé, *Strange Companies*.

²⁴ Bracken, *Shanghai Alleyway House*.

understood as a local phenomenon, the basis is part of the globalization process of the Maritime Asia during the eighteenth century. In this same line, we can consider the possibility that Manila was the origin of these hybrids. It is true that the long coexistence experience of Spaniards in the Philippines was a promising context for the progress of hybrids. In contrast, these hybrids were developed as a common result of all these territories and not as a local consequence.

Creation of Hybrids from Short Experience Processes

It has been shown how the long coexistence of several cultures can lead to the development of new building models, here considered as hybrids. In these cases, the creation process can be found over the span of decades in several territories. It is not the result of the cooperation between two architects, as in the *Alcaicería de San Fernando*, but the evolution of several generations of builders. For these reasons, those territories where the coexistence between East and West offers a different and shorter experience produced other kinds of hybrids. In the last few decades, the European structures built in Beijing during the eighteenth century have received much attention. In addition to the Jesuit churches, mainly Beitang (北堂) and Nantang (南堂), the most remarkable works are the Xiyanglou (西洋楼) in the Yuanming Yuan (圆明园). All these projects were developed in half a century by a small number of European builders. Due to continuous persecution, the missionaries had to overcome many obstacles during the seventeenth century in China.²⁵ Under Chinese Imperial control, in fact, their presence was merely anecdotal. Thus, the coexistence of West and East could not be as fruitful in China as it was in Indonesia or the Philippines at the same moment in time.

Thus, some of the hybrid solutions that are being studied in Beijing should be considered in light of the studies in other neighboring territories. Apart from the direct connections between the imperial circles in Beijing and the European courts, it is possible that solutions developed in works in Goa, Pondicherry, Batavia, or Manila could be known in China. An example of this might be the garden designs. Some parts of the Yuanming Yuan (圆明园) are based in European treatises that were sent directly

from Rome. But the same solutions were being implemented in the villas built in Maritime Asia by local merchants and bureaucrats.²⁶ Although the Jesuits of Beijing were likely to have used their experience in Maritime Asia when building, they also contributed to hybrid projects. In these cases, they simply tried to adapt West traditions to China. The solutions are not the result of long hybridization processes, but of a single project. Thanks to the letters of Moggi, explaining the building plans of Nantang, it is clear how they tried to preserve the European image with selected adaptations to local taste.²⁷ In sum, although the Jesuit buildings in Beijing can be considered remarkable examples of globalization, they are not as illustrative as other structures built in cities such as Manila or Batavia.

Consequences for This Heritage Today

As has been shown, the sparse research conducted heretofore on the topic has led to incorrect interpretations of built heritage in Southeast Asia, hindering the field's enhancement. Some of the best examples of globalized heritage are considered as vernacular solutions. One of these cases is the shop houses, or even the alleyway houses. In some countries, these same examples are easily incorporated into a nationalist discourse. The *bahay-na-bato* is underlined as the Filipino contribution to the history of architecture, ignoring the diverse origins of many of the structure's elements. At the same time, other kinds of heritage are understood as part of the postcolonial discourse, in which the colonial powers imposed their traditions on local societies. Churches, as part of an outer religion, are not explained as key points within adaptation processes or even examples of cultural dialogue, but as examples of oppression and exploitation. Meanwhile, some countries in Southeast Asia follow these erroneous interpretations of their own heritage; Yuanming Yuan is being considered as the key to a globalization process, when in fact, it is merely a part of it.

Apart from problems with heritage enhancement and its consequences for tourism and social self-awareness, these problems must also be considered in relation to contemporary architecture. The Chinese world is interested in Western

²⁶ Luengo, "Villas de recreo."

²⁷ Corsi, *La fábrica de las ilusiones*.

architecture—perhaps globalized or international architecture—and continues to try to incorporate the Eastern taste into it. Again, the traditional source is not the long coexistence experiences that have been underlined by historians, but the juxtaposition of East and West. It seems that architecture has to show that both traditions are there, instead of creating a new solution from them. Thus, a deeper knowledge of historical processes will help us to improve the consideration of heritage and to promote new, globalized solutions.

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New Worlds:
Frontiers,
Inclusion,
Utopias

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Crafting Relational Activism: Political Potentials of Communal Making in Contemporary Australia

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Introduction

In this essay, I will discuss three community art projects run by Australian contemporary artists. These case studies showcase a variety of techniques and methods of communality, ranging from demonstrating with crocheted banners to Indigenous basket-weaving and further, to the communal knitting of a big welcome mat. In their respective ways, all the case studies focus on the material and bodily ways in which the projects bring together people of different social and ethnic backgrounds. I'm interested in how these projects may enhance multicultural collaborations and might even help, in their own humble way, to build more sustainable futures for communities struggling with deep inequalities. I've personally participated in all of the projects. Importantly, my experiences in participating in these craft activities have led me to reconsider what can be thought of as activism.

When understood conventionally, activism is regularly associated with loud and ardent messages, outspoken charismatic leaders, and forms of protest such as mass demonstrations, processions, rallies, strikes, and sit-ins. My experience in communal craft-making has, however, made me look for different, more subtle conceptualizations of activism. "Craftivism" as a contemporary form of activism that makes use of the medium and techniques of craft has been seen as an alternative to more conventional forms of activism.¹ According to Sarah Corbett,² the attractiveness of craftivism lies in its quiet and unthreatening mode of expression, which is as slow and delicate as its process of making. Yet politics is readily there: although political messages and opinions might be soft or quotidian in form and often filled with humor, they are, in any case, clear and explicit. If craftivism is something that is explicitly political, then some of my cases might extend current limits and understanding of craftivism.

This essay considers craftivism from the theoretical perspective of new materialism as an approach that embraces subtle and volatile relational materialities, micromovements, and agential capacities of matter.³ In a new materialist vein, this

1 Betsy Greer, ed., *Craftivism: The Art of Craft and Activism* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2014).

2 Sarah Corbett. *A Little Book of Craftivism* (London: Cicada, 2013), 3–7.

3 Milla Tiainen, Katve-Kaisa Kontturi, and Ilona Hongisto, "Framing, Following, Middling:

essay suggests that politics does not only happen on the macropolitical level of laws or mass demonstrations. In fact, politics might even be more efficiently exercised on the micropolitical level of subtle bodily movements and relations because these affect bodies most immediately.⁴

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that this essay is part of a broader research project titled *Affective Fabrics of Contemporary Art: Stitching Global Relations*. In this project, multicultural craft activities are studied alongside cross-continently travelling fashion exhibitions and contemporary artists, who deploy fabrics and clothing in their political art-making. In the project, the concept of “affective fabrics” refers both to concrete woven or knitted fabrics and to the social-material relations that these fabrics facilitate. In other words, affective fabrics configure an intensive—and political—space of relation.

Margaret Mayhew’s *Prayer Rugs* (2014–2015)

Prayer Rugs is a series of demonstration banners crocheted by Melbourne-based critical thinker and textile artist Margaret Mayhew. Mayhew’s banners are informed by her work at an inner-city detention centre, where she runs weekly art classes for asylum seekers as part of Melbourne Artists for Asylum Seekers (MAFA).⁵ Her artwork is a response to refugees in detention asking her to pray for them: the banners spell out “freedom” in Arabic, Persian, and Tamil. As a non-believer, Mayhew decided to perform her prayers in a material form.

When I interviewed Mayhew about her art classes, she told me that her primary aim was to create a smooth, open space for creation⁶ – a space for freedom for the people trapped in the inhumane system of Australian immigration politics, where

Towards Methodologies of Relational Materialities,” *Cultural Studies Review* 21, no. 2 (2015): 14–46; Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, *New Materialisms: Interviews and Cartographies* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2013).

4 Erin Manning, *Relationescapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2009).

5 Margaret Mayhew, “Crafting Asylum: Text, Textiles and the Materiality of Hope.” Paper presented at the 6th International Conference on New Materialisms: *Transversal Practices: Matter, Ecology, Relationality*, Victorian College of the Arts, The University of Melbourne, September 27–29, 2015

6 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1987), 474–500.



1. Demonstrating with *Cutantiram: The Colours of Freedom Rug*. Turku, Finland, 2015. Photo by the author.

asylum seekers may find themselves accused of terrorism and whole families may be transported thousands of miles away and back again without any explanation. Under such extreme conditions of restriction and vulnerability, asylum seekers feel that only prayer can help them.

Interestingly, Mayhew's methods of creating this space of freedom included teaching simple art techniques. But where technique is conventionally understood to be about controlling matter, molding it according to certain rules, here, learning a technique becomes a technique of existence, a technique of becoming.⁷ It offers a possibility to relate one's body to something, to work with one material or another, and to be creative in a safe environment. I feel that her idea of smooth space was also transposed to her rugs.

My participation in this project began when I joined the *Refugees Are Welcome* rally and got the chance to carry the banners with Mayhew in Melbourne in October 2014. The following year,

⁷ Brian Massumi, *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 167–70.

I demonstrated with the *Cutantiram: The Colours of the Freedom* (2015) banner (Fig. 1)—which bore a text in Tamil—in a rally supporting multiculturalism, diversity, and solidarity in Turku, Finland. It was intriguing to see how attracted people were to the banners, and how affectionately they treated them. They wanted to touch them, took numerous photos, and asked to join us in carrying them. This raised a series of questions: Was it the softness of the yarn that appealed to people? Or did the message not feel too outspoken, as it was indispensably integrated into the crocheted fabrics? In any case, the crocheted banners provide an example of how craft can draw people who are “relative strangers” closer together—an expression used by Joanne Turney in her book, *The Culture of Knitting*.⁸ To sum up, Mayhew’s is not only activism of smooth space, but also a soft activism of relation that is most powerful in its striking colors, inventive patterns, and soft textures of crocheted yarn.

The Tjanpi Desert Weavers Master Class (2014)

The second craft project that incited me to rethink what can be considered activist practice was a basket-weaving master class run by Tjanpi Desert Weavers at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne, in July 2014. The Tjanpi Desert Weavers are a group of Indigenous Australian women from the Central Desert, the so-called Red Center. As people who are invited to give master classes usually are, these women are masters of a certain technique: basket-weaving. They excel in fiber art. Tjanpi women held the class just before the opening of the Tarrawarra Biennial, a contemporary art exhibition organized in cooperation with the prestigious Melbourne Art Fair, in which they were likewise invited to participate alongside major Australian artists. In 2015, their work was also presented at the Australian Pavilion during the 56th Venice Biennale.

Let me now describe what happened during the master class. When we—that is, art students and teacher-researchers—entered the class, we didn’t quite know what to expect. The briefing was very brief indeed: we learned that our teachers were in Melbourne for the first time and that for them, Melbourne felt as outback as their desert was to us. They had travelled



2. Crafting with the Tjanpi Desert Weavers. Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne, 2014. Photo by the author.

thousands of kilometers, and they didn't speak much English. Moreover, they had brought all the materials we needed with them: the grass we would use had grown in the red desert earth.

Fascinatingly, there were no verbal instructions or concrete illustrations of how to proceed and no technologies involved other than the needles passed to us, and grass and fiber piled everywhere around us. I sat next to a teacher called Molly, and without many words, she grabbed some fiber and started a basket by making the first knot. Soon she started to integrate the grass and weave the fiber around it: there was a basket silently in the making.

To learn how to weave, we couldn't but follow our teacher's skillful hands—her body in movement, her body moving with the basket in becoming. Occasionally when a student's basket-weaving got too tangled in the very beginning, our teacher shook her head, laughed a bit, and grabbed the beginnings of the basket to undo and redo it in a looser weave.

Observing Molly and other students around me, I learned a lot. We worked in almost complete silence; we didn't chat, we didn't make friends as one usually does when crafting together (Fig. 2). Individuals were not really the issue: all we did was focus on learning to work with the fiber, to feel the fiber, and, in more practical terms, on when to add the grass filling to make the basket beautifully round. We learned by making and following each other and our teacher weaving fiber. By doing that, we learned more than just making baskets. Through working side by side, elbow to elbow, rhythmically repeating the phases of basket-making, we wove not only certain fiber objects, but each other, closer together.

Of course, inequalities dividing Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians could not possibly be overcome during one or two master classes: life expectancy, income, education, and employment for Australian Indigenous people lag far behind that of non-Indigenous people. But still, something happened in the course of that class: as our bodies worked closely together, as they learned from each other, the sensation of possibility of collaboration quietly emerged.

This is what I would call a subtle sort of relational activism, one based not on grand gestures or loud demands, but on bodily relatedness, and hence on the increasing feeling of communality. Erin Manning and Brian Massumi's philosophies of relation⁹ and event help to understand how the tiniest, almost imperceptible connections and relations are, in the end, the most important ones in our lives. I will come back to their thinking when discussing my third case.

Kate Just's *Big Welcome Mat Project* (2014)

Some weeks after participating in the Tjanpi Desert Weavers master class, I participated in another community-based craft project led by Kate Just, a U.S.-born contemporary artist living in Melbourne who specializes in knitted sculptures. The project took place in and was funded by the City of Greater Dandenong, which, since 2002, has been one of Australia's official "refugee welcome zones." The aim of this public project was to bring together local people of multiple ethnic back-

9 Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2014).

grounds by collaboratively producing a *Big Knitted Welcome Mat* (the title of the project).

I joined the project after it had already begun, so I benefited from being surrounded by people who already knew what they were doing. I hadn't knitted for years, and my sole language of knitting was Finnish. Therefore, I struggled a bit to get going and became all the more confused when I realized that knitting terms also differed according to American and Australian/British conventions. But soon the confusion transformed into an invigorating discussion of how "knit" and "purl" were expressed in different languages, and when and how it was that we had learned to knit—whether the process took place in Australia, Chile, Finland, Malta, Italy, Singapore, Russia, or China.

Side by side, and each in their particular way, we knitted together, and also learned from each other, trying new stitches and designs. But this time we were not silent. As we sat and knitted, we chatted about our everyday practices, about love, partnership, food, and cleaning, but also about differences in our lives. The giant doormat, with its more than one hundred squares of multiple textures and different stitches, witnessed this process: it bore witness to our differences.

This comes close to what Joanne Turney claims in her book, *The Culture of Knitting*: "Knitting is a great leveler: the one activity or practice that can bring people together and overcome difference, creating harmonious environments in which sociability is at the forefront."¹⁰ Turney also suggests that what knitting circle members might gain from participation in their group is an understanding of their personal role in the community; they will find their place within a lineage and can also establish a sense of utopia.

When I thought about how the mat had come to embody diversity, difference, and close connection, I remembered how we had received clear instructions of what to do. Indeed, in comparison to the Tjanpi Desert Weavers master class, we were provided with a detailed how-to: the red squares were supposed to be 20 x 20 cm in size, and 104 of them were needed to construct the mat. Although there were clear rules, I didn't feel

restricted. Later, I understood that knitting instructions worked as *enabling constraints*. In Erin Manning and Brian Massumi's relational philosophy, *enabling constraint* means something that triggers action and does not restrict creativity, but rather, encourages it within certain limits.¹¹

It was through these enabling constraints of measurement and quantity that our knitting project brought together bodies of women of different ages and multiple ethnic and social backgrounds in a way that wouldn't have been otherwise possible. Intriguingly, it was only once we were putting the mat together and attaching the letters forming the word "welcome" that we worked most closely together. We had to climb around the table, stretch our arms, and twist our necks. Without the project and its material restrictions, we would never have worked in such close bodily proximity. That is, we wouldn't have learned to relate our bodies to each other in such an intimate manner while staying relative strangers to one other.

Although I share Turney's genuinely affirmative understanding of what communal crafting *can do*, there are significant differences in our thinking. I would not claim that crafting can overcome differences or create harmony. Rather, if a greater extent of communality is achieved, it is because people have learned to open their bodies and to feel how their relation to other bodies is both constitutive and indispensable.

This is what Erin Manning¹² and other philosophers of relation describe as *individuation*: The concept comes from the French philosopher Gilbert Simondon. For Simondon, individuation is about non-hierarchical subjectivity in relational becoming. To emphasize individuation's relational aspect, Manning speaks of *individuation's dance*. Dance is a bodily activity that necessitates moving one's body in relation to another body, be it another dancer, the nonhuman body of the floor, the rhythm of music, or all of them together. Importantly, in Manning's account, bodies are "always more than one"—this is precisely because they are open and in a continuous process of relational becoming.

11 Manning and Massumi, *Thought in the Act*, 111–14.

12 Erin Manning, *Always More than One: Individuation's Dance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

Crucially, feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz notes that Simondon's understanding of individuation has consequences for social activism.¹³ If we understand social divisions of genders, races, classes, and ethnicities neither as forms nor structures, we might be able to see that what forms collectives is not only the shared oppressive environment, but, as Grosz suggests, some sort of internal resonance that relates us to each other in more subtle ways.

Conclusion

To sum up, what I'm interested in is the potentiality of communal crafting to make people feel how their relation to other bodies is both constitutive and indispensable. Working this way does not *erase* differences; rather, it teaches us how we can cope with them, relate to them, live and work with them toward new futures. This is how communal craft-making works as relational activism.

13 Elizabeth Grosz, "Identity and Individuation: Some Feminist Reflections," in *Gilbert Simondon: Technology and Being*, Arne de Boever, Alex Murray, Jon Roffe, and Ashley Woodward, eds., 56–76 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012): 54.

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Whose History? Why? When? Who Benefits, and Who Doesn't?

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The opportunity to speak at this conference encouraged me to think together three of the main categories that partition the discipline of art history into subdisciplinary formations: geography, periodization, and collective identity.¹ As recently as ten years ago, attempts to conceive a world art history assumed that continents like the Americas were an obvious and relatively uncontroversial way to organize the discipline in an expanded field. However, geography, as cultural geographers such as Derek Gregory and Irit Rogoff insist, is neither natural nor neutral.² Geography is a concept, a sign system, and an order of knowledge established at the centers of power, an epistemic category grounded in issues of positionality. By occupying new positions, we can introduce questions of critical epistemology, subjectivity, and spectatorship.³

Edward Said and many others since have urged scholars to examine the history of our inherited nineteenth-century European categories as part of our studies by taking the subaltern position of the culturally dispossessed subject. My own interest in world art history initially sprang from disenchantment with existing approaches, which in principle hold much promise for the future of art historical studies. This is not to imply that all the contributions to such a rethinking of disciplinary practices

- 1 The following paper, originally presented at the 2015 CIHA conference in Rio de Janeiro is the product of years of thinking and writing about these issues. The argument developed from a shorter paper presented at the Renaissance Society of America annual conference, Berlin, 2015, which will appear in print as "The 'Global Turn' in Art History: Why, When, and How Does It Matter," in *The Globalization of Renaissance Art: A Critical Review*, ed. Daniel Savoy (Leiden: Brill Press).
- 2 As feminists and cultural geographers such as Henri Lefevbre, Trin Min-Ha, Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak, Derek Gregory, Irit Rogoff, and many others have been articulating for decades, by retelling the narratives we alter the very structures by which we organize and inhabit cultures. Sociologist and museum studies expert Tony Bennett affirms our efforts as academics to change the *status quo* in his recent book, *Making Culture, Changing Society* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013) in the following terms: cultural commentary is itself a directly political act in view of its capacity to reshape the discursive ground on which relations between identities are shaped.
- 3 (Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture*, 2000). In practice, however, the prospect of training future generations to think differently is hindered because amassing expertise in even one longstanding specialization of art history requires many years of study, and broaching new intercultural subjects frequently requires extensive language training, as well as knowledge of the historiography of each contributing subdiscipline organized along the lines of a monolithic cultural formation. The sheer volume of studies that pre-date the current turn of attention toward identity formation and away from essentializing myths of identity is daunting. Even more fundamental obstacles are the epistemological structures that underpin our vast storehouses of knowledge. How does one navigate the primary and secondary sources without also absorbing the values in these sources that may no longer be tenable? That is a fundamental question that deserves to be raised and widely discussed.

are wrongheaded—far from it—yet the schemes for a “world art history” currently on offer fall short in many ways. Many presuppose their subject of study, assuming that the category “art” requires no historical framing. Other versions of global art history are entirely presentist in orientation, thus avoiding the problems of narrating history altogether. The process of classification is a challenging activity if one wants to target essentializing categories. What Byzantinist Robert Nelson in 1997 called the “gerrymandered divisions of art history” has commanded considerable intellectual attention from scholars working at the margins of western European art, such as northern, central, and eastern Europe; Latin including South America; Byzantium; and Islamic societies ringing the Mediterranean, some extending far into Asia.⁴ Their concerns are relevant to the discipline as a whole. Of these, Latin Americanists were among the first to question such categories as “art,” “nation,” “culture,” “style,” “period,” and “canon” presumed to be universally valid by those who established the modern discipline in the nineteenth century during the era of modern nation-state formation.

- 4 At a CAA session of 1992, I first heard Byzantinists consider critically the modern construction of Byzantium and its chronological and geographical neighbors as the “Orientalist Other.” Chaired by Annabel Wharton, “The Byzantine and Islamic Other: Orientalism in Art History,” College Art Association Annual Conference, Chicago, February 1992. The speakers, in addition to Wharton, were Robert Nelson, Alice Taylor, Barbara Zeitler, and discussant Rifa’at Ali Abou-El-Haj. An understanding of the interrelationship between the Renaissance and Byzantium, wrote Anthony Cutler a few years later (“The Pathos of Distance: Byzantium in the Gaze of Renaissance Europe,” in Farago, ed., *Reframing the Renaissance*, 24), requires the recognition of our own theoretical attitude towards such accounts, which depends on an awareness of the historiographical matrix on which our present stance is grounded. Oleg Grabar is credited with launching a similarly motivated critique of Islamic Studies in the late 1970s, to which a number of leading scholars have recently contributed, notably in a 2012 issue of the *Journal of Art Historiography* that features essays by Avinoam Shalem, Gulru Necipoglu, Nasser Rabbat, Finbarr Barry Flood, Sheila Blair, Jonathan Bloom, and seventeen others. The volume edited by Eva Hoffman, entitled *Late Antique and Medieval Art of the Mediterranean World* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007) resonates strongly with what I regard as the most salient epistemological issues for the cross-cultural study of art and artifacts, regardless of time period. Among medievalists, as among Early Modernists, longstanding sub-disciplinary specializations are one of the main obstacles to re-envisioning the field in terms of cultural interaction. Hoffman writes that she conceived her volume to promote an integrated study of art and culture in the lands surrounding the Mediterranean from the third to the thirteenth centuries which are routinely separated, spatially and temporally, by traditional subcategories within Medieval art such as Early Christian, Byzantine, Romanesque, and Islamic - a situation that results in the study of these periods, places, and peoples in isolation, and divides antique from medieval; East from West; Christian, Jewish and Muslim; and so on. These inherited categories are founded on hierarchies of knowledge whose rationales are far from transparent or obvious, Hoffmann writes, so she organized her anthology as a series of linked, conceptual categories rather than chronologically or by medium, culture, patronage, or any other traditional nomenclature. In her own words, this reorganization presents a strategy for remapping the art of the Mediterranean that opens up political, religious, and stylistic boundaries for sake of a more holistic understanding (p. 1).

A pressing need, still, is to revise disciplinary practices at an epistemological level. Latin Americanists such as Serge Grusinki, Cecelia Klein, Carolyn Dean, Tom Cummins, Dana Leibsohn, and Janet Favrot Peterson; Donna Pierce, Susan Verdi Webster, Clara Bargellini, Edward Sullivan—the list goes on—distinguished themselves methodologically by attempting *partial* recovery of the culturally dispossessed during the early contact period and its viceregal aftermath. Treating provisional findings as a valid research outcome ran counter to the positivistic epistemology that still rules much of art history. The political, historical, and ethical urgency of telling history differently, using different sources, rescuing the voices of the culturally dispossessed, exploring difference and heterogeneity within those sources, interrogating received categories, defining new questions for investigation, and so on, certainly infuses new life into the humanities. Furthermore, this work potentially contributes to society beyond the academy by resisting notions of fixed truths in favor of understanding “truth” as something to be negotiated, to be debated, something that remains relative and particular, rather than fixed and universal. This is a redemptive but also always a provisional project tied to concrete situations and subject positions, including our own as part of the same historical continuum (with all its fractures, switchbacks, unexplored potentialities, and unrecognized privileges) as the subjects we study. This shift toward relativity and the inclusion of new subject positions entails a multi-faceted understanding of dynamic historical processes such as identity formation, and it articulates historical alternatives to monolithic ideas of “culture.”⁵

I have drawn up a short list of *desiderata* from recently published self-critiques of Byzantine, Islamic, and Latin American art, as well as Mediterranean studies, which is not intended as

5 Edward Said's call to address Eurocentric practices is not discussed by Renaissance art historians, even though many scholars are acting on his critique in framing cross-cultural studies. Why this reticence to explore the methodological and epistemological implications of a de-centered Renaissance? In a widely cited volume recently co-edited by James Elkins and Robert Williams, entitled *Renaissance Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2008), I was the only one of five roundtable participants to advocate, as I had more a decade earlier in *Reframing the Renaissance* (1995), that Renaissance art historians not remain isolated from debates regarding anachronistic and ethnocentric cultural and aesthetic values that interfere with our ability to understand the complexity of artistic interactions during the time identified with the term “Renaissance.” Elkins, 193-201, discussed me an “outlier” – a move that collapsed my identity as a person/scholar into my arguments for re-conceptualizing disciplinary practices. The extent of discrimination in our disciplinary debates is long overlooked and also deserves attention.

a comprehensive literature review, but rather to provide a fair idea of what is sought by leading scholars who specialize in the subdisciplines of Europe's Others as conceived in Orientalizing schemes. A short, widely shared set of practices would avoid or, better, eliminate altogether:

1. The use of binaries, and principally East and West, center and periphery, and art versus artifact.⁶ The evidence overwhelmingly indicates that there were many interwoven centers and varied peripheries operating in porous networks of trade.

2. The monolithic treatment of collective identities such as Byzantium and Islam, which is an effect of the Eurocentric binary of Us and Others.⁷ The purported "unity," religiosity, and timelessness of Islamic art are a widely discussed case in point. The problem of imagining monolithic identities is compounded by their compres-

6 Instead of occluding the entangled histories of colonialism, capitalism, and the canon that such unequal binaries promote by turning objects into object lessons to illustrate social relations, Islamicist Finbarr Barry Flood writes, 'From Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the End of Islamic Art,' *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield, London: Routledge, 2007, 31-53 (reprinted in *Journal of Art Historiography* June 2012), it is essential to explore the ways in which these imbrications are manifest in the practices of collecting and representation through which the field of Islamic studies was initially constituted (*Journal*, 44). Furthermore, often the margin takes the leading role, as in the case of Norman Sicily's important role in distributing Fatimid styles of artistic production.

7 In 1978, nearly 40 years ago, Oleg Grabar identified the need to encompass the entire cultural breadth of Muslim societies, rather than restricting the field of study to religious contexts. It is pure fiction to speak about Islam using one sole, monolithic and global term, argues Arnold Hottlinger in *Die Lander des Islam* (2008, cited by Avinoam Shalem, "What do we mean when we say 'Islamic art'? A plea for a critical rewriting of the history of the arts of Islam," *Journal of Art Historiography*, June 2012). Consider Qatar painting of the 1860s, or art produced in many places around the world characterized not on its own terms but as incompetent copies of second-rate European prints and engravings. One of the most harmful, Eurocentric projections is the myth of the unity of Islamic art, a monolithic projection of Islam that has been used by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Similar critiques can be made about other heterogeneous and diverse cultural formations that have been subsumed under monolithic constructs. Yet it is also important to note that all of these arguments are dependent on their specific contexts of use. In 1976, the Islamic Arts Festival held in London, promoted a pan-Islamic identity for the purpose of interrupting existing conceptions of Islam as unchanging – an orientalizing and Romanicist reductive view. Grabar was an active participant in the London festival, discussed as a turning point in public perception of Islamic culture by Monia Abdullaj. "A 1970s Renaissance: The Arts of Islam and Arabian Culture," in the session entitled *Back to Arabia: Arts and Images of the Peninsula after 1850*, chaired by Eva Maria Troelenberg and Avinoam Shalem, College Art Association Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., February 2016. Such strategic essentialisms have been effectively employed by many indigenous activists.

sion to a specific span of time that harmonizes with what Islamicist Avinoam Shalem calls the “grand history of Western artistic evolution.”⁸

3. Hegelian universalist history that casts Europe as the culmination and Asia as the beginning of a linear trajectory. It seems almost impossible to avoid this teleological narrative in universal survey texts, as Robert Nelson demonstrated in the 1997 article already cited, entitled “The Map of Art History,” as Carol Duncan and Allan Wallach had earlier exposed hierarchies of viewing embedded in the layout of art museums.⁹

4. Hierarchies of genre and medium that are invalid in the context of the arts of many other cultural configurations. The label “minor arts” treats what are sometimes dominant art forms such as textiles, metal, glass, and ceramic objects as marginal.¹⁰ The fault is in the application of criteria that are largely irrelevant to the

8 What does not fit the paradigm, such as the later history of Mughal and Ottoman artistic production, is ignored. Conversely, what aids this narrative, such as Umyyad art, is regarded as a branch of Classical art – but one that illustrates the degeneration of ancient aesthetics. Avinoam Shalem, “What do we mean when we say ‘Islamic art’? A plea or a critical rewriting of the history of the arts of Islam,” *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (June 2012): 1-28.

9 Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, “The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual: An Iconographic Analysis,” *Marxist Perspectives* (Winter 1978): 28-51, was one of the first critical studies of museums; see further, *Grasping the World: the Idea of the Museum*, ed. Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). For Islamic studies, see Gulru Necipoglu, “The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Disources and New Approaches,” *Journal of Art Historiography* June 2012, 1 – 26, reprinted from *Islamic Art and the Museum*, ed. Georges Khalil et al. (London: Saqi Books, 2012), based on papers presented in 2008 and 2010, as cited in her essay. There is no opportunity in this brief paper to engage with her detailed arguments advocating periodization, but the sequencing of objects and their historical contextualization within a disciplinary formation, porously envisioned, is not the focus of my own argument on how to connect such formations without imposing a universal or master narrative on world culture. Necipoglu is concerned with mapping Islamic studies, not the broader issue of art history as a discipline, and she does not take issue with Renaissance or Western art per se.

10 European biases extend to the type of image or decoration: inscriptions were incised and carved into diverse objects and incorporated into architecture in ways comparable to images: that is, what we call iconography was not limited to the meanings of images, as Irene Bierman, *Writing Signs: Fatimid Public Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), argued the case for calligraphy, but encompassed material aspects of artefacts such as substance, color, and shape (on which see Shalem, *op. cit.*). What holds for Islamic objects and architecture also holds for Inka stonework; see, for example Carolyn Dean, *A Culture of Stone: Inka Perspectives on Rock* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); and Tom Cummins and Bruce Mannheim, “Editorial: The river around us, the stream within us: The traces of the sun and Inka kinetics,” *Res* 59/60 (Spring/Autumn 2011): 5-21.

objects under scrutiny.¹¹ It is often difficult to distinguish the point of origin or authorship of manufactured items such as ivory sculptures, lacquer boxes, ceramics, and textiles, but that does not make them any less worthy of study.¹²

If the global turn of art history is to succeed in including the views and material culture of many different constituencies, it needs to take into account cultural productions that have been historically sorted into the separate disciplinary and subdisciplinary practices of art history, archaeology, and anthropology. A practical problem arises because everything and anything manufactured by humans potentially becomes a legitimate object of study. How is this immense object domain to be organized in the art history of the future?

At this point, to establish order in an ever-expanding domain of material objects and beliefs and practices about them, we are faced with a lot of basic questions about who is allowed to look, to what purposes, and how that looking is legitimated. The center-periphery model is inadequate to this task, stretched beyond its capacity to deal with complex, ricocheting patterns of exchange that are involved in the circulation of objects. A “pluritope” model of interchange, to cite Islamist Eva Hoffman, involves more complex notions of causality because it proceeds in many directions, continuously changing and connecting objects with makers and users in dynamic networks extending over vast areas of space and time.¹³ A promising alternative to existing schemes of world art, part-

11 Which leads to the exaltation of questions of minor significance over those of central importance, writes Anthony Cutler, “The Pathos of Distance,” 34. For example, conventions used by Byzantine writers to describe objects as “classical,” “lifelike,” or “naturalistic” have misled art historians to think that the Renaissance European understanding of terms derived from ancient art criticism is valid in this Greek Orthodox context. Cutler advises that similarities between icons of very different dates should be seen as the “embodiment of a sort of intertextuality,” a reference to an exemplary ideal at odds with European expectations of innovation and originality.

12 Christian, Jewish, and Islamic workers were employed in the same workshops that shared a common repertoire of motifs and techniques. Norman Sicily is a foremost example of the complex, multi-cultural, poly-linguistic places that once operated. In short, the signifying properties of any work of human artifice require acknowledgement of the way meaning is determined at the point of reception, whereas conventional classifications assume a single place, time, and culture of origin are universally valid and mutually exclusive categories. See Avinoam Shalem, *The Oliphant: Islamic Objects in Historical Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

13 Eva R. Hoffman, “Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century,” *Art History* 24/1 (February 2001): 17-50.

ly inspired by the new materialism, is suggested by current research initiatives that study trading networks. Trading networks are by nature porous, open-ended, and heterogeneous rather than bound entities imagined to be homogeneous and governed by some underlying unity.

Trading networks historically enabled the circulation of raw materials, manufactured goods, people, and ideas. Many new and ongoing projects on maritime trading networks and other long-distance exchanges are fundamentally reshaping inherited understandings of cultural transmission and exchange. The understanding of history emerging from the study of regions defined by trade is very different from modern conceptions of culture configured in terms of land masses such as continents and nation-states. Coastal regions, islands, and other geographical features define important points of exchange in trading regions.¹⁴ A topographical approach to world culture organized in terms of trading routes and networks also avoids hierarchical distinctions such as Western versus non-Western art, or art versus artifact, and many similar categories that have historically privileged certain types of cultural production and excluded many others.

What is at stake for the future of art history? To lose sight of the simple fact that the meanings assigned to the material world not only differ across different audiences but also collide, often violently, when different societies come into contact would deprive art and valued things and practices more generally of any historical significance whatsoever. How material things come to have significance, and how the same object or concrete manifestation can have multiple meanings for its users is a timely and appropriate subject for historical investigation. Because the works of art and other cultural artifacts that art historians study are irreducibly multivalent—that is, all images, and all material things for that matter, by their nature refuse absolute meaning—they can enable individuals with different beliefs to coexist in the same heterogeneous society. Images and objects with multiple cultural resonances are not necessarily synthetic products of cultural interaction, however. In fact, they are often

14 Historians Martin S. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, whose book, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), advocates discarding the commonplace notion that continents denote significant biological or cultural groupings.



1. Oliphant, Fatimid style, 11th and 12th century. Berlin, Museum of Islamic Art, inv. n. K3106. Photo courtesy of the museum.

just the opposite—meaning one thing to one person or group and something quite different to other users.

It is imperative to rethink our subdisciplinary formations from an historically informed point of view if we really want an emphasis on cultural interaction that gives voice to those marginalized in our inherited schemes. There is no doubt that a capacious form of organization is required—I am certainly not advocating that all art historians study trading networks! My argument is about how to rethink our subdisciplinary formations in a manner that favors the study of cultural difference and interaction. Take, for example, a class of object that defies conventional categorization: ivory oliphants (Fig. 1), known at least since the tenth century in northwestern Europe. Oliphants were once considered highly prestigious gifts presented to kings and the Catholic Church on special occasions, such as when conferring land tenure. Oliphants were considered extremely precious, and for this reason they were often reused as reliquaries, as were rock crystal and other extraordinary containers. Oliphants are documented in the inventories of many church treasuries, including the cathedrals of Bamberg, Speyer, Prague, London, Westminster, Salisbury, and Winchester, which had eight oliphants by 1171. Some can be directly connected with gifts offered to the Church by returning crusaders. Alexandria was the main port of entry into the Mediterranean Sea for goods coming from the east and the south, part of a complex trading network connected to the east coast of Africa and inland further south in Zimbabwe, the regions that initially supplied African elephant ivory.¹⁵ Several centuries later, ivory oliphants shipped from the west coast of Africa were recorded in the inventories of Europe's most re-

15 With the founding of the Fatimid Caliphate in northern Africa and Egypt in 909 ce, a new Mediterranean market for east Asian riches opened up. See Shalem, *Oliphant*.



2. Oliphant with coat of arms and devices of Manuel I King of Portugal (reigned 1495–1521) and his successor João III (reigned 1521–1557) of House of Aviz, Portugal. After Bassani and Fagg, *Africa and the Renaissance*.

owned *wunderkammers*. Several oliphants from this era suggest they were commissioned as gifts or tribute in that they bear the mottoes and coats of arms of the House of Avis, which ruled Portugal from 1385 to 1580 (Fig. 2).¹⁶

Modern photography does not do these impressive objects justice because they are viewed in our books as if they were on the same scale as intricately carved, small ivory containers; whereas in actuality, the tusks of African elephants, the preferred material for oliphants because of their greater size, whiter color, and the higher sheen of the polished enamel, can measure as large as 3.75 meters in length and weigh 100 kilograms.¹⁷ The majority of surviving carved oliphants measure from 50 to 70 cm in length, or roughly two feet, and many were prepared for display with hanging devices.¹⁸

16 Including those of the Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo I de' Medici, Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol whose famous collection remains at the Schloss Ambras, the great Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher in Rome, and Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II, who amassed one of the largest *wunderkammers* of all, in Prague, intended for scientific study as well as for royal display. For provenance, see Ezio Bassani and William Fagg, *Africa and the Renaissance: Art in Ivory*, ed. Susan Vogel (New York: Center for African Art, 1988), cat. nn. 87 (Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg), 88 (Musée National des Themes et de l'Hotel de Cluny, Paris), and 128 (National Museum, Prague).

17 See Shalem, *Oliphant*, fig. 2, reproducing a photograph, c. 1895, of a giant elephant tusk carried by four porters (Photo: National Archives of Zanzibar).

18 One of three large smooth oliphants still in the Vatican treasury once hung over the main altar of St. Peter's. The practice is documented in a drawing attributed to the School of Raphael, *The Donation of Constantine to Pope Silvester*, Sala di Costantino, Vatican, 1520, reproduced in Shalem, *Oliphant*, fig. 86.

The size and weight of oliphants made them difficult and expensive, but not impossible, to transport long distances. According to current schemes of classification, oliphants of medieval date reside in the province of Islamic studies; their possible connection to the later group of oliphants, classified as Afro-Portuguese or Luso-African products of cultural interaction, is unrecognized. Luso-African ivories were made in conjunction with Portuguese slaving on the west coast of Africa since the late fifteenth century and bear African imagery as well as motifs of European origin, sometimes combined on the same object.¹⁹ The scholarship on medieval oliphants also emphasizes their mixed cultural origins. Even though they are classed as Saracenic or Byzantine according to their type of embellishment (ornament and artifice), there is a general consensus that many of the seventy-five surviving medieval oliphants were the product of workshops in the western Mediterranean basin, where they were carved with Fatimid animal motifs as well as narrative hunting scenes derived from textiles and other sources. The carved ornament appears to be related to more than one geographical area or religious-cultural domain.²⁰

19 There is no doubt that some of these Afro-Portuguese or Luso-African objects were made for export to European destinations, but the most recent scholarship suggests that people of mixed ancestry on the west coast of Africa who regarded themselves as Portuguese and lived in cities that served as meeting points between merchants and African rulers who supplied the slave trade, also prized such objects for display in their opulent, European-inspired homes; see Peter Mark, "Portugal in West Africa: The Afro-Portuguese Ivories," in *Encompassing the Globe: Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, exh. cat., ed. Jay A. Levenson (Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, The Smithsonian Institution, 2007), 131-163.

20 According to Avinoam Shalem, the current leading authority on Islamic oliphants (*Oliphant*, 2004), it is particularly interesting to consider that some examples now in western and northern European collections were re-carved with roundels typical of Fatimid imagery (such as one in Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Museum) and Byzantine hunting scenes (such as one now in the Berlin, Skulpturensammlung and Museum für Byzantinische Kunst). The later group of oliphants imported from west Africa also includes hunting scenes and animal imagery, also derived from portable sources such as printed books. These two bodies of art historical scholarship are unaware of one another. Indeed, the oliphants which survive are separated by two centuries, although Sarah Guérin has recently made a compelling case that the availability of ivory increased in mid-thirteenth century France due to the alteration of medieval trade routes along the Atlantic coast of Europe, enabled by the development of hardier vessels equipped with both sails and oars that could get through the treacherous Strait of Gibraltar and then bypass tariffs charged if they were transported overland. ("Avorio d'ogni ragione": the Supply of Elephant Ivory in Northern Europe in the Gothic Era," *Journal of Medieval History* 36 [2010]: 156-174). My thanks to Eva Hoffman for drawing my attention to this article and discussing ivory trade in the Mediterranean with me. See also Eva R. Hoffman, "Translation in Ivory: Interactions Across Cultures and Media in the Mediterranean during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries" in *Siculo-Arabic Ivories and Islamic Painting, 110-1300: Proceedings of the International conference, Berlin, 6-8 July 2007*, ed. David Knipp, Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2011, 99-122. Guérin postulates that ivory shipped by sea since the mid-thirteenth century came from Alexandria and Maghreb ports that distributed ivory obtained from western savannah elephants, a region that had not previously been har-

Nonetheless, from the standpoint of how and what ivory oliphants signified in Europe, the formal differences in design may have mattered less than other factors, such as the similarities of subject matter, reference to Islamic origin, symbolic value of the white ivory, prestige of the precious material, wondrousness of the tusk itself, associations with cornucopias signifying abundance, and so on.

None of our traditional taxonomic categories appear to be of much use to understand these magnificent objects historically: the point of origin of carved oliphants is often impossible to determine and does not correspond with any of the usual, mutually exclusive, essentializing categories such as Islamic, Byzantine, Portuguese, Sapi, Benin, and so forth. They do not obey period or style classifications, nor are they associated with known individual makers. Nor were carved oliphants a species of the “minor arts” at the time of their manufacture and greatest prestige.

Oliphants are peripatetic objects whose charge changed over time. The precious ivory, more highly valued than gold, was embellished by skilled artisans who organized the surface with visual motifs drawn from a variety of sources. Thus, oliphants are “transcultural” in a double sense. They participated in social interactions in a relational field not delimited by modern categories of nationhood, culture, geographical territory, period, or style, although for at least 800 years they circulated in an international network of trade and exchange in the Euro-Mediterranean-African region.

One important aspect that has so far remained invisible even in the current transcultural framing of oliphants and related ivories involves longstanding traditions for carving and collecting these magnificent objects. The oliphant phenomenon is conso-

vested, at a time when the main source of supply from African elephants in east Africa had been exhausted. The Atlantic sea route enabled larger amounts of Flemish cloth to be sold in Majorca to merchants who transported the material to eastern Mediterranean ports and returned with large shipments of alum, used as mordant in the flourishing international textile industry based in Flanders. According to this recent study of shifting trade routes and documented shipments of ivory, raw and carved, there is probably no chronological gap in the European history of collecting ivory oliphants as the taxonomic schemes of our subdisciplinary categories might imply, although the differences between Church treasuries and the collections of secular Christian rulers cannot be discounted, nor different points of origin of the ivory itself – when the supply from the east coast of Africa was exhausted, new sources from the Savannahs of northwestern Africa were tapped as early as the mid-thirteenth century.

nant with an art history focused on networks of trade in which coastal regions, islands, and other geographical features defined important points of exchange in the medieval as in the early modern era. Such an approach to organizing art history seems to me in keeping with the widely shared desire to include products of cultural interaction in the general problem of art historical description. How do we account for the appearance of these once very prestigious objects? To what kinds of relatedness or unrelatedness do they attest? The next step would be to understand the interrelationships among peoples within Africa during the long period of their manufacture and use. What about carved ivory tusks that were not made for export or those that were manufactured after the period of the oliphants' greatest prestige in European *wunderkammers*?²¹

There is no doubt that the first period of intensive global contact developed in the sixteenth century. However, the situation is complicated—our period designations, as the example I have just given attests, also deserve to be examined epistemologically and historically. In her important book, *Before European Hegemony: The World System AD 1250–1350* (1989), Janet Abu-Lughod argues (*contra* Wallerstein, Braudel, and other theorists of world systems) that failure to begin the story of a world system of trade early enough has resulted in a “truncated and distorted causal explanation for the rise of the West.” In her view, events affecting a trading network in which manufactured goods were central that stretched from China to northwestern Europe between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries made Europe's rise possible.²²

21 Consider the carved tusk, meant to be displayed on an altar honoring ancestors, Minneapolis Institute of Art, accession n. 56.33, the history of which is known: it was commissioned by Ekeneza in 1775, the year this Benin official became *ezomo*, or military commander under King Akengbuda (reigned 1750–1804), according to information published on the museum's website, accessed February 12, 2016, at: <http://collections.artsmia.org/art/1312/tusk-edo>.

22 Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350*, New York: Oxford UP, 1989, citing Robert Gottfried, *The Black Death: Natural and Human Disaster in Medieval Europe* (New York: Macmillan, 1983); William Hardy McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (Garden City [NJ]: Anchor Books, 1976). By c.1300, the old world was linked into a common commercial network of production and exchange beyond the subsistence economies of all the participating regions. In fact, as widely recognized, this large and complex network in which surplus goods circulated was built on the foundation of an earlier system that existed by the second century ce. One research finding that Abu-Lughod identifies as striking is that similarities between trading partners in the thirteenth century far outweighed their differences: among Asian, Arab, and Western forms of capitalism, to use her categories and terminology, manufactured goods were dominant, land and water pathways were longstanding, recognized currencies were in use, independent merchants were powerful, and a labor force was utilized to produce

In the international trade economy Abu-Lughod examines, the Middle East was the heartland region linking the eastern Mediterranean with the Indian Ocean by both sea and land at a time when Europe was a peripheral economic region.²³ It is important to bear in mind that Abu-Lughod avoids a center-periphery model by charting the circulation of raw materials, trade goods, and people. She argues that the rapid increase in agriculture, mining, and manufacturing in northwestern Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries must be attributed, at least in part, to the expansion of its horizons and heightened opportunities for trade generated by the Crusades.²⁴ An economic collapse in the mid-fourteenth century followed the plague that spread from Caffa in the Crimea by way of Venetian and Genoese ships, but the establishment of a trading system spanning the globe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would not have been possible without the robust international trading network that preceded it in the thirteenth century and the network of pathways in existence since the second century CE.²⁵

Abu-Lughod's critique of modern understandings of an East/West divide does not imply that the trading network was equally developed in all places, or that all manufactured goods participated equally in it. The immediate implication for anyone seeking to incorporate the American continent in a global history of art is that if we fail to examine the longer history of world trade when Europe was not at the fulcrum of events, we could fall into the very trap of Eurocentrism that de-centering the field by

goods for foreign trade. The most cataclysmic event to disrupt that network was the spread of the plague between 1348 and 1351. The sudden contraction of the population had complex economic effects that fragmented the system so that many parts of it went into simultaneous decline. Abu-Lughod argues that fragmentation and decline created fluidity in world conditions that facilitated radical transformations, among them the rise of European hegemony.

23 This trade system was not global in the sense that all parts were evenly articulated with one another - a situation which does not exist even today, Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, 32, notes, but by the thirteenth century there were subsystems defined by trading enclaves within larger circuits of exchange. The Crusades from the end of the eleventh century established regular trading exchanges on the preexisting circuits of commerce that joined Europe with the Middle East with India and China since the second century ce.

24 Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, 45.

25 This network included navigation by Arab and Indian ships around Africa centuries before the Portuguese "discovered" the same alternate route to Asia that de-centered the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Citing G. R. Tibbetts, trans. and intro, *Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean before the Coming of the Portuguese: The Kitab al'fasa'id fi usul al'bahr wa'l-qawa'id of Ahmad B. Majd al'Najdi* (London: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1981).

expanding its reach to a global context was intended to avoid. The American territories, particularly the viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru, played a crucial role in establishing transoceanic trade in luxury objects from 1565, when the first galleon bound for Manila set sail, until 1815, when the last galleon left Acapulco for the Philippines, yet this new commerce of unprecedented scale also benefited from long-established maritime trade routes in Southeast Asia. Excavations of shipwrecks show that bulk trade in ceramics from China, for example, began in the early ninth century, with fluctuations in intensive trade cycles due to changing political regimes. When the Portuguese and Spanish arrived in Southeast Asia in 1511 and 1521, respectively, they entered the region during a cycle of increased trade.²⁶ Land routes and waterways have linked the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean trading networks since the most ancient times of human settlement. Roman gold coins have been excavated in Pudukottai, India: one coin shows Caligula (31–41 CE) and two coins portray Nero (55–88 CE) (both London, British Museum).²⁷ Indian imitations of a Roman coin of Augustus, first century CE, have also been found in India (London, British Museum).²⁸ Long-distance commercial relations are documented in settlements on the east coast of Africa since the first century CE. An array of exotic imports from the ninth to the fourteenth century have been excavated, including ceramics and glass beads as far inland as the fourteenth-century city of Great Zimbabwe, located 300 miles from Mozambican coast, capital of a twelfth-century state that controlled large gold fields which made it important to Indian Ocean trade.²⁹

26 Roxanna M. Brown, "Shipwreck Evidence for the China-Manila Ceramics Trade," in *Asia & Spanish America: Trans-Pacific Artistic and Cultural Exchange, 1500-1850*, ed. Donna Pierce and Ronald Otsuka (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2009), 59-68.

27 Accessed on line, February 12, 2016, at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Roman_gold_coins_excavated_in_Pudukottai_India_one_coin_of_Caligula_31_41_and_two_coins_of_Nero_54_68.jpg.

28 A silver Denarius of Tiberius 14 ce – 37 ce, found in India; an Indian copy of the same coin, 1st century ce; and a coin of Kushan king Kujula Kadphises copying a coin of Augustus: accessed on line, February 12, 2016, at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Silver_denarius_of_Tiberius_14CE_37CE_found_in_India_Indian_copy_of_a_the_same_1st_century_CE_Coin_of_Kushan_king_Kujula_Kadphises_copying_a_coin_of_Augustus.jpg.

29 Other commodities were exported: cotton textiles in exchange for silk and other luxury fabrics; iron, steel, stone vessels, gold, ivory, tortoise shell, rhino horn, frankincense, myrrh, ebony and other hardwoods, and slaves; see G. Pwiti, "Trade and Economies in Southern Africa: the Archaeological Evidence," *Zambezia* 18/2 (1991): 119-129.

Considering the global trading network established in the sixteenth century in a longer historical context effectively de-centers the dominant role attributed to Europe in the making of American art history centered on the era of colonialism. Entangling history by reimagining lines of transmission that go in multiple directions; treating geographical and period boundaries as porous, heuristic categories; reading canonical works against the grain; and bringing to the fore important cultural artifacts marginalized by our inherited nineteenth-century categories also leads to new considerations of “family resemblances” or gradations of interrelatedness at large scale both in and beyond the Americas. Trade routes differ in nature and scope in the Americas from connections in Asia, Africa, and Europe. Several Mesoamerican societies had connections that led to exchanges of goods over a long period of time. The great kiva of Chetro Keytl at Chaco Canyon in northwestern New Mexico, active between 900 and 1150 CE, shares many characteristics with the interior of a cave temple at Malinalco, Mexico, while the temple-topped pyramids that once stood around ceremonial plazas at Cahokia and other sites of the Mississippian culture show a generic relationship to Mesoamerican structures, signaling connections that are further suggested by their common reliance on maize, squash, and beans, as well as copper that was carried from the woodlands of North America to South America.³⁰

A groundbreaking exhibition organized by Richard Townsend at the Art Institute of Chicago, entitled *The Ancient Americas: Art from Sacred Landscapes* (1992–93), is one of the few attempts to date to study these longstanding “familial” resemblances stretching the entire length of the American continent.³¹ Could

30 These examples are taken from Richard F. Townsend, ed., *The Ancient Americas: Art from Sacred Landscapes*, exh. cat., Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago and Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1992). The National Historical Museum in Rio de Janeiro, where this paper was delivered, includes a display of early indigenous cultures 500 centuries before first contact with Europeans that also stresses degrees of relatedness across a wide geographical area. The permanent display, accessed on February 12, 2016, can be seen on line at: <http://www.museuhistoriconacional.com.br>.

31 As Townsend et al., *Ancient Americas*, describes, sedentary Ecuadorian villages established by 4000 bce are documented to have Pacific connections, partly through the appearance of the Spondylus shell found only in warmer Pacific waters near Mexico, which were first excavated in ritual contexts around 3000 bce and served as currency after 700 bce. Around 1000 bce, Olmec jade was traded from what are now Costa Rica and Guatemala in the south to the Mexico Valley in the north. Around 1500 bce, the appearance of maize along the Peruvian coast suggests connections with Mesoamerica, where maize was first domesticated. From the first century bce until the eighth century ce, Teotihuacan was part of a wide trading network that linked Mesoamerican cultures: obsidian, for example, has been found widely

we imagine our shared investment in the Americas as a basis for writing new narratives in which contacts among peoples on the American continent are treated with the same concern as contacts among regions within Europe or across the Mediterranean? The *Picturing the Americas* project presented at the CIHA conference in Rio de Janeiro is a major contribution on a specific genre of painting in this vein, and Margit Kern's project to link portraiture in North and South America is another.³² Treating first contact with Europeans as the initiating event of Latin American cultural history continues to reproduce a chronology centered on European events. Studying forms of relatedness over the *longue durée* also raises further research questions for anyone interested in establishing an overview that ties the local to regional, continental, and global history: how the different *scales* at which American-ness operates are interconnected is a research question for the future.

The practices and protocols by which we divide our objects of study from the present are always those of the present. It follows that history itself is not a fact of the world that is more or less accurately represented, but rather that it is but one way for a society to constitute the past and establish a relation with it, a certain way to conceive of and be in the world, a certain practice of subjectivity.³³ If history writing is to be an ethical rath-

distributed, and the Mayans traded in salt, hard stone, and pottery. Exchange routes were established along the west coast of South America by c. 1000 bce, brought under control by the Inkas in the fifteenth century, who administered over 23,000 square miles of territory ranging over a complex assortment of ecological zones. Northern routes from Teotihuacan extended into presentday Arizona and New Mexico, where Mesoamerican feathers, gold, and cacao beans were traded for turquoise along routes that moved as far east as Oklahoma and Arkansas, where Toltec traders from the mid-eighth to the twelfth century went in search of alum, salt, incense, and raw copper. Mississippian cultural sites occupied from the seventh to the fourteenth century, with a great center at Cahokia along the Mississippi River near presentday St Louis, Missouri, controlled trade in raw materials such as seashells, copper, flint, and mica drawn from Lake Superior to the Gulf coast shoals of Florida, from the Appalachian Mountains to the plains of the Dakotas and Nebraska. They also manufactured goods for export including tools, jewelry, and ceremonial goods, linking much of what is now the southeastern United States more than 500 years before European contact.

32 *Picturing the Americas: Landscape Painting from Tierra del Fuego to the Arctic*, ed. Peter John Brownlee, Valéria Piccoli, and Georgiana Uhlyarik, exh. cat. (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario; São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo; Chicago: Terra Foundation for American Art, and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Margit Kern, " 'Provincialising' Portrait Painting in the Americas in the late 18th and early 19th Century: The Political Semantics of Plain Style," paper delivered at the CIHA Congress XXXV, "New Worlds: Frontiers, Inclusions, Utopias/ Novos Mundos: Fronteiras, Inclusão, Utopias," Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, August 27, 2015.

33 Kalahari bushmen, postcolonial theorist Sanjay Seth observes, do not do anthropologies of the white man: Sanjay Seth, "Reason of Reasoning? Clio or Siva?," *Postcolonial Traces*, ed. Brent Hayes Edwards, special issue of *Social Text* 78 (Spring 2004): 84-101. Seth advocates writing history as a "translational" exercise.

er than an imperial practice (I quote the postcolonial theorist Sanjay Seth), this needs to be recognized and its implications explored. The unthought ground between the categories nature and culture, cast as an opposition between innate capacity (biology) and acquired content (culture), has become a major topic of discussion among anthropologists and sociologists in a way that bears directly on the issues I have been discussing. It is more productive to think of ourselves as becomings, social anthropologist Tim Ingold recommends, treating the domains of the social and the biological as inextricably intertwined, like a rope twisted from multiple strands that are themselves twisted from multiple fibers.³⁴

In any case, my subject position as critic and historian needs to be considered *within* the framework of the interpretation: I am part of the same historical continuum as my subject of study. If my vested position remains outside the framework of discussion, the most significant epistemological and ethical issues will remain unarticulated and unaddressed. Articulating the ways in which one is entangled with the imperatives of one's profession is no easy matter, however. The categories of "art," "nation," "culture," "style," "period," "canon," "genius," "masterpiece" and so on remain entrenched not only in academe but also in the commercial world of the art and culture industry—in museum exhibitions, commercial galleries, international biennales, general education, popular culture, and so on. Another model of identity or cultural memory is needed, one that recognizes that multiple identities or cultural memories are simultaneously possible, that identities and diverse cultural memories can coexist without being commensurable or reducible one into another.

In the current political climate in the United States, Brazil, and elsewhere, the extent of our responsibilities as academics and intellectuals to link museology, history, theory, and criticism to contemporary social conditions is an urgent and painfully obvious question. Collaborative approaches that require institutional support and networks of exchange that share data *before* publication is increasingly used in the sciences when it comes to subjects like biodiversity and climate change that are highly time-sensitive. Since any synthetic account of cultural history

34 Tim Ingold, "Prospect," in *Biosocial Becomings: Integrating Social and Biological Anthropology*, ed. Tim Ingold and Gisli Palsson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 22-41, citing pp. 18-19.

depends on accumulating many individual case studies to build a larger picture, such a collaborative approach could greatly enhance the speed and quality of our research outcomes too by integrating regional studies into an international network of scholarly connectivity, as facilitated by our conference at the Museu Nacional de Belas Artes in Rio, and the publication in which you, readers, are reading this essay.

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