The Codes of the Global in the Twenty-first Century

Anna Maria Guasch

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Universitat de Barcelona
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CONTENTS

Prologue

The book that you now hold in your hands, *The Codes of the Global*, scans the period between 1989, the year of the exhibition *Magiciens de la terre*, and 2014, when the Centre Georges Pompidou presented a documentary recreation of the earlier show. This was a period of changing currents and mixed categories, dominated by the creative capacity of interaction and dialogue, by a gasping economy that called into question the sustained development of continuous growth, and by a post-politics that generated – and continues to generate – borderless utopias, at the same time as provoking radical processes concerned with identity and territory.

With this text, of which an extract from an earlier version was published under the title *El arte en la era global 1989-2015* [Art in the global era, 1989-2015],[1] we seek to define how, at the start of the twenty-first century, the contemporary implies a clear desire to affirm a type of art that is expanding across the globe, challenging old geographical borders and reclaiming narratives of place and displacement. In other words, new cultural practices that transfigure the relationship between the global and the local, and articulate the discourse of difference.

Being in the place of "here" and "now", working with others in a simultaneous and specific practice, and contemplating the production of work in the experience of connection means raising the value of the "performative" aspect of the practice and displacing the reflective role of cultural production.

What we wish to illustrate in *The Codes of the Global* is how global concepts circulate from the critical analysis of transnational contemporary art to the global. The new cartography of this multifarious global art, which combines theoretical and curatorial discourse with creative practice, is structured in three sections: the first concerns the codes of the global, the second its theories and discourses, and the third analyses its exhibitions.

1 Anna Maria Guasch, *El arte en la era de lo global*, Madrid: Alianza Forma, 2016.

In this respect, along with Irme Szeman, we consider that with globalisation there is a play that did not exist with postmodernity, and that extends beyond aesthetic categories in determining the form of the present and the future. Even if both concepts function as terms of periodisation for the present, globalisation refers to blood, soil, life, and death in ways that postmodernity was never able to imagine.[2]

2 For an in-depth discussion on the relationship between postmodernity and globalisation, see Imre Szeman, "Imagining the Future: Globalization, Postmodernism and Criticism", *Frame: Tijdschrift voor Literatuurwetenschap,* Vol. 19, No. 2, 2006, pp. 16-30. Available at: http://individual.utoronto.ca/nishashah/Drafts/Szeman.pdf (consulted 25 February 2015).

APPROACHES TO THE GLOBAL

To define the contemporary at the start of the second decade of the twenty-first century implies a clear will to overcome all forms of exclusion to demand a presence in a world of art that expands across the globe, defying old geographical borders and reclaiming narratives of place and displacement – which is to say, new cultural practices that transfigure the relationships between the global and the local and articulate the discourse of difference. Temporal dimensions and relational experiences provide new questions for artistic production and dissemination. And, as Nikos Papastergiadis claims, the "coda" for the contemporary artist remains defined by the desire to be "in" the contemporary more than to produce a profound response "to" the everyday. To be in the place of "here" and "now", to work with others in a simultaneous and specific practice, to contemplate the execution of work in the experience of connection means raising the value of the "performative" aspect of practice and displacing the reflective role of cultural production.[1]

Today the contemporary artist no longer has to decide between the disjunction of remaining in the local context or taking part in transnational dialogues. Everyone who enters the context of contemporary art forms part of a complex process that flows around the world and which is defined not only by the question of difference but also by the various ways of "being in the world". Artists, N. Papastergiadis continues, expand the limits of their practice by defining their context and their strategies as a sum of paradoxes:

> Museums without walls. Cities as laboratories. Living archives. Walking narratives. These slogans are now common in the art world. They reveal a recurring desire: to stretch the parameters of art by incorporating new technologies, sites

1 Nikos Papastergiadis, "Spatial Aesthetics: Rethinking the Contemporary", in Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor and Nancy Condee (eds.), *Antinomies of Art and Culture. Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity* (Duke: Duke University Press, 2008), 363-364.

and perspectives. As they introduce foreign tools, places and subjects they also expand the category of the contemporary.[2]

It would also be about an art that affirms its contemporaneity without limits and without history, in maintaining that it can "only" be contemporary because at the local level it does not have its own history of modernity, with all that this implies in pointing towards new audiences, many of which have local traditions that have not been filtered through Enlightenment thinking.

In the new redistribution of places in which that which counts are the new narratives of mobility and difference, the theories of Arjun Appadurai about "ethnic landscapes" are highly relevant. He writes of the landscape not of stable communities but of people who constitute the changing world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, as well as other groups or individuals in constant movement.[3] In effect, Appadurai makes use of the term ethnoscapes (in place of landscapes)[4] inasmuch as the essential – language, skin colour, district, and family relationships – is globalised. This equates to speaking of an extension of feelings of intimacy and belonging in vast and irregular spaces that converts the question of identity – "once a genie contained in the bottle of some sort of locality" – into a global force, "forever slipping in and through the cracks between states and borders".[5] As Appadurai argues, in so far as groups migrate, they regroup in new places, reconstruct their histories and reconfigure their ethnic projects, the *ethno* of ethnography takes on a slippery and non-localised quality, to the point that the new landscapes of group identities – the "ethnic landscapes" or *ethnoscapes* – cease being familiar anthropological objects by losing their connection to a territory and constituency of certain spatial limits, and the cultural dynamic of what has been called "deterritorialisation" makes sense. This term was originally coined by Deleuze and Guattari who applied it to ethnic groups that went beyond specific territorial borders and identities. According to these philosophers, the traditional classification between subject and object offers no close approximation to thinking and must be substituted by the classification land/territory,

2 Nikos Papastergiadis, "Spatial Aesthetics: Rethinking the Contemporary", cit., 364.

3 Arjun Appadurai identifies five planes or dimensions of global cultural flows: a) ethnoscapes, b) mediascapes, c) technoscapes, d) financescapes and e) ideoscapes. Each "landscape" would thus be a *construct* that would seek to express the inflections provoked by the historical, linguistic, and political situation of the different classes of actor involved. See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 33.

4 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, cit., 33.

5 A. Appadurai, cit., 41.

with the subsidiary concepts of "lines of flight" (which provoke movement and open the breach in territory making possible a pure DT – "deterritorialisation") and "assemblage" [*agencement*] (the minimal unit of reality and elements in movement).[6]

In this study, we approach globalisation as a new class of contemporary art of the last two decades; a type of art that clearly distances itself from postmodernity and which in turn requires other narratives when writing a new history of art (a history of art under the global turn?), which opts more for cultural identity than for aesthetic feelings and which seeks to emphasise geopolitical and institutional aspects to the detriment of questions of style, innovation, and progress, taking for granted a clear complicity between art and social and cultural fields.

And while it can seem that globalisation is a new and renovated version of postmodernity, the two incorporate a clear desire for periodisation, a long way from being a simple substitution of postmodernity. The differences between the two are important, as argued by the cultural theorist Imre Szeman, who establishes a series of provocative observations about the role of culture in the era of globalisation understood as a neoliberal political project. Globalisation, unlike postmodernity – considered as an aesthetic category used to describe architectonic styles, artistic movements, and literary strategies, is a reality that has relatively little to do with concepts of aesthetics and culture as understood by postmodernity. There is not a globalising culture in the same way that we can speak of a postmodern culture (nor would there be global architecture, art, or literature); and if postmodernity shares various formal innovations, globalisation seems to invert this relationship, putting all the emphasis on restructuring the links between politics and power, and as a resizing of economic production from the national to the transnational in light of the operations of financial capital.

Globalisation seems to suspend that which was central to the debates of postmodernity: the category of representation. On the contrary, globalisation would be readable in the relationships that have always been considered primary to representation and, within it, culture would be only one of many aspects of the production of goods.[7] And, finally, that which would most dis-

6 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980) (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

7 For an in-depth discussion of the relationship between postmodernity and globalisation, see Imre Szeman, "Imagining the Future: Globalization, Postmodernism and Criticism", *Frame: Tijdschrift voor Literatuurwetenschap,* vol. 19, 2 (2006), 16-30. Available at: http://individual.utoronto.ca/nishashah/Drafts/Szeman.pdf (consulted 25 February 2014).

tance globalisation from postmodernity would be the public ambition of the concept in and of itself:

> There is clearly more at stake in the concept of globalization than there ever was with postmodernism, a politics that extends far beyond the establishment of aesthetic categories to the determination of the shape of the present and the future – including the role played by culture in this future. Even if both concepts function as periodizing terms for the present, globalization is about blood, soil, life and death in ways that postmodernism could only ever pretend to be.[8]

How would these questions affect the terrain of literature or artistic theory? Perhaps in this sense the biggest contribution to globalisation has been to redefine its practices in the light of a world of transnational connections and communications, which to a certain extent imply the end of the nation-state and of the provincialism (parochialism) implicit in national culture. From here, many theoretical and visual practices within globalisation direct themselves towards the transfer and movement of culture: changes from one place to another, the recently discovered mobility, decontextualisastion and recontextualisation in new places, and the new concepts that all this entails: diaspora, cosmopolitanism, the politics and poetics of the "other", and the language of postcolonial studies in general.[9]

From another perspective, Okwui Enwezor refers to globalisation as what he describes as "postcolonial constellation", understanding constellation to mean a set of agreements of deep relationships and force established by the discourses of power: relationships of a geopolitical nature that are based on the aleatoric and discontinuous forms of creolisation, hybridisation, and cosmopolitanism.[10] As, in turn Terry Smith holds, the parallelism between contemporaneity and globality must imply a stage in which the planet, people, and things that inhabit it can imagine a constructive mutuality based on the fact of sharing our differences:

> "Contemporaneity" and "planetarity" are words that I believe should be reserved for these kind of reflections. They open up multiple interactions through which

8 Ibid., 8.

9 See also Douglas Kellner, "Globalization and the Postmodern Turn". Available at: http://pages.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/essays/globalizationpostmodernturn.pdf (consulted 25 February 2014).

10 Okwui Enwezor, "The Postcolonial Constellation: Contemporary Art in a State of Permanent Transition", in Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor, and Nancy Condee (eds.), *Antinomies of Art and Culture. Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity* (Duke: Duke University Press, 2008), 208-209.

"worlds within worlds" can be created, a world that – as it is being globalized – seeks to go beyond globalization itself.[11]

Smith refers to the art of the "transnational transitionality", which includes at least three phases within the global contemporary: a reactive and anti-imperialist search for a national and localist imagery; a rejection of a simple identity politics and of a corrupt nationalism in favour of a naïve internationalism, and, finally, a wide search for a cosmopolitanism in the context of a permanent transition of all kinds of things and relationships. It is precisely the third of these tendencies, which can in no way be denominated as a style or a period, which proliferates under the radar of globalisation. It results from a significant increase in the number of artists across the world and of opportunities that new technologies offer millions of users and it directly affects tentative explorations of temporality, place, affiliation, and affect, along with the more and more uncertain conditions of life within contemporaneity on a fragile planet.[12] Smith understands contemporaneity as a stage on which the planet and all that is upon it (people and things) can imagine a constructive mutuality based on an adequate sharing of our differences.

The global in the field of history

As Hans Belting argues – citing one of the pioneers of the use of the word "global" in the field of history, Bruce Mazlish[13] – if the publication of recent

11 Terry Smith, "Contemporary Art: World Currents in Transition Beyond Globalisation", in Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel (eds.), *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds* (cat. exp.) (Karlsruhe: ZKM/Center for Art and Media, 2013), 192.

12 T. Smith, "Contemporary Art: World Currents in Transition Beyond Globalisation", cit., 188.

13 Bruce Mazlish, "Comparing Global History to World History", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* vol. 28, 3 (1998), 385-395. See also *The New Global History* (New York: Routledge, 2006), a text in which the author develops his ideas in three key chapters: 1) Nature of New Global History; 2) Factors of New Global History; 3) Politics and morality, with a special section entitled "The Global and the Local", 66-80.

As Mazlish argues in the Introduction: "This book is a critical inquiry into the present-day process of globalization. The inquiry is guided by an interdisciplinary perspective, in which the historical is central. It is also guided by the desire for impartial scholarship and empirical research, which is then connected to theory." And the book concludes with the following claim: "There are many ways of seeking to understand the problem of globalization. In this book, I am arguing for one such way: the application of an historical perspective, which I am labeling the New Global History. Employing this perspective, I have sought to deal with particular aspects of present day globalization: my intent is to illustrate how this perspective can operate. Thus I hope to contribute both to a general discourse surrounding the

books with titles such as *World Art History* and *Global Art History* seems to suggest that the two terms are being used in the same way, it is nonetheless important to indicate the differences in their meaning, both from a conceptual point of view and in relation to their chronological reach.[14]

In the transition from *world art* to *global art* one would have to make a clear differentiation, which in Belting's opinion would coincide with the impact of the exhibition *Magiciens de la terre,* that would indicate a before and after not only in the field of curation and institutional theory but also in that of historiography. This, while *world art* would indicate an old idea complementary to modernity and colonialism which designated the art of "others" shown in "Western museums" – in general ethnographic museums – the concept of *global art* would be essentially contemporary and of a postcolonial "spirit" and would seek to replace the scheme of the hegemonic modernity of centre-periphery with an art of all origins and in many cases excluded from the Western artistic mainstream.

World Art Studies

The concept of world art designated the art of "all times" as the heritage of humanity; it was initially coined as a colonial notion used to collect the art of "the others", as a distinct typology of art that was tied not to the interests of art criticism but to those of anthropologists. The project *Atlas of World Art,* edited by John Onians in 2004, was one of the first to correct this prejudice by considering that the only distinction between Western and non-Western art was purely geographical. But until that point, colonial connotations had been inherent to the conception of world art. For Onians, it is fundamental to liberate any trace of colonialism from the conception of world art as it had been practised in the first decades of the twentieth century by art historians of the Vienna School, such as Heinrich Glück at the Department of Art History of the

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subject as well as to further research and thought concerning what I like to call the 'factors' of the contemporary globalization process. In attaching the adjective 'historical' to what I am doing, I do not mean to restrict the approach to the discipline of history as such. In fact, the New Global History must include the insights and work of the other social science disciplines as well as those aspects of the humanities and the natural sciences that can bear on the topic. The phrase 'multidisciplinary' is, in fact, better suited to what we are talking about. Still, I believe that history is the context in which globalization best takes place. Only history, in my view, allows and fosters the attempt at a holistic view of the subject."

14 Hans Belting, "From World Art to Global Art: View on a New Panorama", in *The Global Contemporary,* cit., 178-185.

University of Vienna, who in 1934 wrote a study entitled *Hauptwerke der Weltkunst,* and later by historians of the post-war period such as the American William H. McNeill, who in 1967 published his notable *A World History,* already freed of all Eurocentric visions of the "other" as a subject for writing history. [15]

Taking up the spirit of McNeill, the discourse of world art – still to incorporate the concept of global art – added to this anti-ethnocentric vision, as shown by Onians' article "World Art Studies and the Need for a Natural History of Art",[16] which suggested the new field of study should not only be global in orientation but also multidisciplinary in approach. As Onians himself argues,[17] as well as providing access to a wide spectrum of knowledge in relation to artistic institutions, the most notable aspect of both projects – *Atlas of World Art* and *The World Art Library*[18] – is that they allow the acquisition of a genuinely global point of view on subjects which have often been excluded by European interests: a point of view that offers the opportunity to re-evaluate the European-American tradition itself, which will lead to many conclusions. One of these is that our understanding of that tradition has been constrained by the preference of a "historical" approach; which is to say, that which analyses events mainly in terms of a chronological sequence and presents, for example, the history of art as an essentially linear development which goes from Ancient Greece to modern America. A historical approach that would not only obstruct the study of the traditions of other parts of the world but which would also make it difficult to appreciate the variety and complexity of their own:

> Adopting the geographical approach, the Atlas and the Library do more than merely provide an equal treatment of all the traditions as they are found in the world. They also make possible the recognition of the complexity of the mosaic of which the Euro-American tradition is constructed, taking the art of Estonia as seriously as that of England, and the institutions of Skopje as those of Stuttgart.[19]

15 Especially interesting is the fourth chapter, entitled "The Onset of Global Cosmopolitanism". See William H. McNeill, *A World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

16 John Onians, "World Art Studies and the Need for a Natural History of Art", *Art Bulletin* 78 (1996), 57.

17 John Onians, "A New Geography of Art Institutions", in Peter Weibel and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.), *Contemporary Art and the Museum. A Global Perspective* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2007), 136-137.

18 The World Art Library, housed at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, opened in 1978 at the University of East Anglia, is a project that complements the *Atlas* and which gathers together museum catalogues and guides in accordance with the said Atlas, as well as housing a department of publications directly related to museological aspects and which offers a window on a myriad of changing worlds.

19 J. Onians, "World Art Studies and the Need for a Natural History of Art", cit., 137.

Ultimately, what the *Atlas* and the *Library* offer is the chance to understand that there are many other perspectives on art around the world, perspectives formed by a great variety of social, political, economic, religious, ideological, and historical factors. Without such a geography, it is impossible to understand the importance of art as a global manifestation.

The multidisciplinary character provided by "World Art Studies",[20] with coverage that ranges from neuroscience to anthropology and philosophy, was in turn shared by art historians such as Kitty Zijlmans, anthropologists such as Wilfried van Damme[21] of the School of World Art Studies at the University of Leiden, and David Carrier,[22] who, like John Onians, saw in world art an approach to identity politics and cultural practices beyond the Kantian value judgment as an aesthetic postulate.[23]

Global Art Studies

The step from "World Art History" to "Global Art History" – with all that would imply in regarding a globalised and interconnected world that implicated the end of the histories of art, both universal and national[24] – was entrenched in the artistic context parallel to the attempts by historiography to overcome the territorial limits imposed by the old parameters of Eurocentrism based on Western domination and a project of modernity constituted as a form of universalism, of instrumental rationality, and autonomous individualism. In a new definition of the concept of the global, which would imply the

20 See Whitney Davis, "World Series. The Unruly Orders of World Art History", *Third Text,* vol. 25, 5 (September 2011), 493-501. Davis argues that while one could establish clear lines of convergence between "World Art Studies" and "Visual Culture Studies", these nonetheless differ in the way that the first point to global artistic chronologies and topographies although within universal processes of aesthetic activity and visual perception.

21 See Kitty Zijlmans and Wilfried van Damme (eds.), *World Art Studies: Exploring Concepts and Approaches* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2008). From these two authors, see also "World Art Studies", in Matthew Rampley, Thierry Lenain, Hubert Locher, Andrea Pinotti, and Kitty Zijlmans (eds.), *Art History and Visual Studies in Europe. Transnational discourses and National Frameworks* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publications, 2012), and Kitty Zijlmans, *World Art Studies. Exploring Concepts and Approaches* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2008).

22 See David Carrier, *A World Art History and Its Objects* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008).

23 Hans Belting, "From World Art to Global Art: View on a New Panorama", in *The Global Contemporary,* cit., 180.

24 Regarding James Elkins, see "Can We Invent a World Art Studies?", in Kitty Zijlmans and Wilfried Van Damme (eds.), *World Art Studies: Exploring Concepts and Approaches*, cit., 109.

move from the concept of "world" to that of "global", it is necessary to highlight the celebration of a series of seminars and debate forums. For example, *The Art Seminar* (University College Cork and The Burren College of Art, Ireland) – in whose 2005 edition the event's promoter James Elkins tackled the subject *Is Art History Global?*,[25] asking what kind of histories of art could be written under the impetus of globalisation – and the International Congress of the History of Art (ICHA) in Melbourne (Australia, 2008) which, with the heading *Crossing Cultures*[26] and with lectures such as "Perspectives on Global Art History" and "The Idea of World Art History" tried, still within an ambiguous use of the terminology, to make visible a change in perspective that allowed the interchangeable use of the terms "global art" and "world art", freeing the latter from all its global baggage. Global art is not only polycentric as a practice, but also requires a polyphonic discourse; and while the history of art proposes dividing the world, global art tries on the contrary to restore its unity at another level. And, as Belting argues, there is not only a change in the game, but it is also opened up to new participants who speak in many languages and who differ in how they conceive of art from a local perspective: "We are watching a new mapping of art worlds in the plural, which claim geographic and cultural difference".[27]

This had already been pointed to by Belting himself in his essay *Art History after Modernism*,[28] which notes the new challenges that emerge in the discipline of art history in the face of the end of modernity.[29] Global art not only accelerates the departure of contemporary art from a linear history of art but also expands and flourishes in parts of the world where the history of art had never been practised or where it had followed only colonial models. In this same spirit, Hans Belting, together with a group of intellectuals and theoreticians tied to the ZKM in Karlsruhe, Peter Weibel, and Andrea Buddensieg, through various exhibitions, symposia, and publications took on the role of introducing the concept of "global art" into artistic discourse; a concept to

25 The lectures and conversations of this seminar appeared in volume 4 of the series of seven books published on the occasion of the staging of *The Art Seminar*. See James Elkins (ed.), *Is Art History Global?* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

26 See Jaynie Anderson (ed.), *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence. The Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress in the History of Art* (Carlton, Victoria: The Miegunyah Press, 2009).

27 Hans Belting, "From World Art to Global Art: View on a New Panorama", in *The Global Contemporary,* cit., 184.

28 Hans Belting, *Art History after Modernism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

29 See also Hans Belting, *The End of the History of Art?* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987).

overcome the formulas both of modern internationalism and the post-modern "new internationalism", which was consolidated in the strengthening of a new discipline of studies: so-called "Global Studies".

In what would be the first book of the trilogy *Contemporary Art and The Museum* in 2007,[30] Peter Weibel and Andrea Buddensieg try to document the impact of globalisation on contemporary art and on the stage of the museum in order to give visibility to a phenomenon that in recent years had been produced only within the ambit of the so-called peripheral biennials and which would consist of going beyond the concept of "EuroAmericanism"; which was known as "Beyond EuroAmerica". According to Hans Belting, the classic exhibition of art tied to the "white cube" was followed by, first of all, performance art and then by new media and video installations,[31] phenomena that were produced only in the world of Western art, while nobody could fail to recognise that the recent arrivals from the old Third World were taking on the leadership of the course of events and that the phenomenon of "globalism" had become the antithesis of universalism in decentralising a unified and unidirectional world and making space for "multiple modernities".[32]

We are arriving at a stage, argues Belting, in which the concepts of modern, contemporary, and global take on special relevance for the new museums founded in non-Western places in the world that – in a way that is different from the art fairs and the biennials, organised by individual curators who direct themselves to individual collectors and follow the laws of the market – have to represent those aspects both from the point of view of their collection and for the local public.[33]

Following this same line, in 2009 Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg published a new book, *The Global Art World. Audiences, Markets, and Museums,* in which they carried out research of the various processes of production of global art, distinguishing in one part the concept of "world art", the world heritage of art of all eras and countries, and finally "global art", which clearly denoted a contemporary development and which, like the phoenix reborn in

30 The book *Contemporary Art and the Museum* gathers together the lectures given at the international congress "The Global Challenge of Art Museums", held at the ZKM/Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe in 2006 whose participants included John Clark, Hans Belting, Lin Chi-Ming, Beral Madra, John Onions, Wonil Rhee, and Peter Weibel.

31 Hans Belting, "Contemporary Art and the Museum in the Global Age", in Peter Weibel and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.), *Contemporary Art and the museum in the Global Age. A Global Perspective* (Osfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2007), 21.

32 H. Belting, "Contemporary Art and the Museum in the Global Age", cit., 22.

33 H. Belting, "Contemporary Art and the Museum in the Global Age", cit., 23.

the ashes of modern art at the end of the twentieth century in clear opposition to the cherished ideals of progress and hegemony, would acquire a new dimension as a result of the changes and challenges, both economic and political, which took place since 1989 across the length and breadth of the globe. Global art cannot in any way be considered as a synonym of modern art; by definition it is contemporary, and not only from a chronological point of view but also in a symbolic and also ideological sense.[34] Art on the global scale should not imply, according to Belting, an inherent aesthetic quality: more than representing a new context it would rather indicate the loss of a context or a focus, including thus its own contradiction in implicating the counter-movements of regionalism and tribalisation, from a point of view that is both national and cultural or religious.

In the third volume of the trilogy *Global Studies. Mapping Contemporary Art and Culture*,[35] in the framework of the project "Global Art and the Museum" (GAM), the wide spectrum of the term "global" had already been announced, tied to the contemporary image of the world and which should be distanced from terms such as "universal" and employ other categories and power relations to order the totality of things, contexts, and experiences; a totality that could be called "global", "universal", or "the world". Hence the need to adopt a new working method, "Global Studies" – halfway between Visual Studies and Cultural Studies – which more than being considered an independent discipline, should be seen as an auxiliary discipline that crosses the gap between the history of art, ethnography, and regional studies.

The global from a sociological perspective

As Habibul Haque Khondker[36] argues, it is often difficult in the field of social sciences to identify who first used the term "globalisation". The sociologist Malcolm Waters[37] defines globalisation as a process that entails a transformation in the spatial organisation of social relationships and transactions, creating transcontinental flows and networks of activities, interactions, and exer-

34 Hans Belting, "Contemporary Art as Global Art. A Critical Estimate", in *The Global Art World. Audiences, Markets, and Museums* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz: 2009), 39.

35 Hans Belting, Jacob Birken, Andrea Buddensieg and Peter Weibel (eds.), *Global Studies. Mapping Contemporary Art and Culture* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2011).

36 Habibul Haque Khondker, "Glocalization as Globalization: Evolution of a Sociological Concept", *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, vol. 1, 2 (july 2001), 1.

37 Malcolm Waters, *Globalization* (London: Routledge,1995).

cises of power. Waters also defines globalisation as a social process in which geographical restrictions on social and cultural matters retreat and in which people acquire a clear awareness of what is, in effect, retreating. However, before Waters we find some initial definitions and uses of the concept of globalisation in the writings of two sociologists: Mike Featherstone and Roland Robertson. Just after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Mike Featherstone[38] sees in globalisation a transnational process in which various cultural flows are mediated by the exchange of goods, capital, people, information, knowledge, and images. And rather than wanting to reduce culture to the political economy, he proposes that the diversity, variety, and richness of the "third cultures" act as counterpoints to the homogenising forces of capitalism. In fact, these "third cultures" are also the result of a series of transnational flows closely related to a complex macroeconomic scenario.

The global and the local

The sociologist Roland Robertson, in his text *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (1992), starting out from the term "globalisation of business", which experts in marketing were using to refer to the fact that products of Japanese origin should be local – that is, they should respond to local tastes and interests without ceasing to be global in their application and reach – defined the term globalisation as the "compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" or, in other words, as "the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism."[39]

The expansion of the format of the nation-state around the world, and the biennials of contemporary art in almost every nation-state, would in this case be "universalized particularities". And, on the other hand, a particularised universalism would be exemplified by each of the national supplements to the history of art or to contemporary art itself.[40] Robertson establishes a clear distinc-

38 Mike Featherstone, "Global Culture: An Introduction", in M. Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (London: Sage, 1990).

39 Roland Robertson, *Globalisation, Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992), 177-178. According to Robertson, it was the syncretism and eclecticism of Japanese religion which gave Japan a privileged role in the present state of globalisation.

40 Roland Robertson developed this theme in depth in his text "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity", in Mike Feartherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Roberston, *Global Modernities* (London: Sage, 1995), 25-44.

tion between "globalisation" and "globality", assigning the phenomenon of globalisation to a historical process that is responsible for extending the idea of Western modernity around the world and that of globality to a specific, geographical, and spatial matter.[41] Analysed historically, globalisation includes five key stages in its process in Europe. The "germinal phase" (first phase), a phase that had been started in the middle of the fifteenth century when ideas about national communities started to emerge, was followed by the "incipient phase" at the end of the nineteenth century, which made a reality of the original ideas of the initial phase and established international relations. The "take-off phase" was developed between 1870 and 1920 and, in Robertson's words, was the most important. It was at this time that the concept of the contemporary world was created and there was a growth of a good number of international networks. Events such as the Second World War and the atom bomb during the period between 1920 and 1965 formed the fourth phase or "struggle-for-hegemony phase". At the start of the 1970s the "uncertainty phase" began, in which capitalism prevailed as an individual form of the process of globalisation.

From another point of view, the question of space is more specific and independently affects the concept of "globality". Thus, while the idea of modernity often suggests a process of homogenisation from a temporal and historical point of view that would lead us to talk of "globalisation", the concept of "globality" is evidenced in terms of the interpenetration of geographically distinct civilisations:

> The leading argument of this discussion, contends Robertson, is thus centred on the claim that the debate about global homogenization versus heterogenization should be transcended. It is not a question of *either* homogenization or heterogenization, but rather of the ways in which both of these two tendencies have become features of life across much of the late-twentieth-century world. In this perspective the problem becomes that of spelling out the ways in which homogenizing and heterogenizing tendencies are mutually implicative.[42]

Hence the pertinence of a new neologism, which Robertson dubbed "glocalisation",[43] which results from the union of global and local and which is

41 See Roland Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity", cit., 25-44. See also Roland Robertson, "Social theory, cultural relativity and the problem of globality", in A. D. King (ed.), *Culture, Globalization and the World-System* (London: Macmillan, 1991), and especially R. Robertson, *Globalisation, Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992).

42 R. Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity", cit., 28.

43 According to Robertson, the term "glocal" and the word "glocalisation" have been formed by uniting the words "global" and "local". This idea would have been modelled on the Japanese term

manifested in the fact that globalisation implicates the reconstruction of concepts of home, community, and locality. The local should not be seen as offsetting the global; rather, it should be contemplated as an aspect of globalisation. An idea which is implied by a general homogenisation of the institutions and the experiences of a historical and temporal mode. Because, as Robertson argues:

> In numerous contemporary accounts, then, globalizing trends are regarded as in tension with "local" assertions of identity and culture. Thus ideas such as the global *versus* the local, the global *versus* the tribal, the international *versus* the national, and the universal *versus* the particular are widely promoted.[44]

The global does not oppose the local but rather that which refers to the local is essentially included within the global. Globalisation understood as "an understanding of the world in its totality" incorporates the linking of localities, but also the invention of locality. It is this which Robertson calls "the ideology of home" as a response to the fact that we live in a state of being "homeless" and "rootless".

Thus too Robertson's insistence on using the neologism "glocalisation" as that formula which keeps the tendencies of globalisation and localisation in constant tension: "I have maintained that globalization – in the broadest sense, the compression of the world – has involved and increasingly involves the creation and the incorporation of locality, processes which themselves largely shape, in turn, the compression of the world as a whole".[45] This leads Robertson to use the term "glocalisation" in a strategic way, first to demonstrate the complementary and interpenetrative nature of two seemingly opposite tendencies – homogenisation and heterogenisation – and secondly to promote, beyond the Japanese concept of "glocalisation", a process of generalisation to understand and encompass the world as a whole, thus assuming the passing of the era of the national state (an ideological construct from the end of the eighteenth century), the greatest source of the production of diversity and hybridisation.

"dochakuka" (derived from "dochaku", "the one who lives in his own land"), and concerns the agrarian principle of adapting the techniques of the farm to local conditions but which would have extended the Japanese ambit of business for *global localisation*, a global vision adapted to local circumstances.

44 R. Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity", cit., 33.

45 R. Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity", cit., 40.

Globalisation as the intensification of modernity

Diametrically opposed to the interpretation of globalisation as a phenomenon tied to microsocial and local perspectives, as defended by Robertson, the sociologist Anthony Giddens, another of the leading thinkers in this field, proposes the incipient phenomenon of globalisation as a consequence of the intensification of processes associated with modernity.[46] According to Giddens, globalisation can be defined as the intensification of social relations around the world, which link distinct localities in such a way that local events are determined by events that occur many miles away and vice versa. And in any case, Giddens would illustrate the first generation of debates about globalisation: that which from the Marxist and foundational perspective would privilege the homogenising tendencies of globalisation, which opt for a notion of "system-world" that prioritises the universal over the particular, in clear opposition to the tendencies of heterogeneity, and which includes those theoreticians formed not in social sciences but in cultural and intercultural studies, such as Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Stuart Hall, as well as the anthropologists James Clifford, George Marcus, and Robertson himself.

The archaeology of the future

As a synthesis between the positions of Roland Robertson and Anthony Giddens, one would have to cite the "third way" proposed by the American theoretician Fredric Jameson in the line of his sharp reflections on post-modernity,[47] multiculturalism,[48] and globalisation.[49] In the anthology *The Cultures of Globalization* – whose contributors include Noam Chomsky, Enrique Dussel, David Harvey, Geeta Kapur, Walter Mignolo, and Masao Miyoshi – Jameson sees globalisation as the sign of the emergence of a new class of social phenomenon which encompasses not only political and economic questions, but also

46 See thereon Anthony Giddens' text *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), especially the sections "The Globalising of Modernity" (63-65) and "Dimensions of Globalisation" (70-79). Of Giddens' work, see also *Modernity and Self-Identity* (Oxford: Polity, 1991).

47 See Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Duke University Press: 1984).

48 Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Žižek, *Estudios culturales. Reflexiones sobre el multiculturalismo* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1998).

49 Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (eds.), *The Cultures of Globalization* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998).

cultural and sociological ones, not to mention aspects related to information and communications media, ecology, consumption, and daily life.

A phenomenon, however, which still does not possess a strict disciplinary field as a privileged context and which requires an urgent definition in order to widen global communication and the horizon of the global market. Disassociating himself from Robertson's theories about the dynamic of globalisation as the double process of particularisation of the universal and universalisation of the particular in a "utopian vision" of globality, Jameson contributes a structural perspective of distinct forms of globalisation which concern the political, the economic, and the cultural, pointing out that it is necessary to add a dose of "negativity" to this formula and insisting on relationships of antagonism and tension.

Hence the proposal of defining globalisation as a "non-totalizable totality" that intensifies the binary relationships between its parts, in most nations but also in regions and groups, which is articulated more according to the model of national identity than in terms of social class. Relationships that can claim both universality and particularity, depending on the point of origin, and which necessarily involve a symbolic component, expressed through a series of collective imaginaries. Jameson defines this "symbolism" not as merely "cultural" or not real: in order to produce this symbolic transmission, there first needs to exist the economic and communicational channels that boost all kinds of interchange – both positive and negative – challenging the old concept of the nation-state in favour of a new spatial and geopolitical dimension.

In Jameson's judgement, the intellectual space of globalisation includes the intersection of a number of different conceptual lines, which involve the liberation of local culture from the rigidity of the national space and which ultimately propose a substitution of the regional or the local by the transnational, even returning to the ideal of a civil society, as happened in the origins of the emergence of bourgeois society from feudalism. More than as a new field of specialisation, globalisation should be seen as a space of tension in which that which is really problematic about globalisation has still to occur. As Jameson claimed as early as 1998: "What seems clear is that the state of things the word globalisation attempts to designate will be with us for a long time to come".[50]

50 Fredric Jameson, "Preface", in *The Cultures of Globalisation,* cit., XVI.

The global from an artistic perspective

The first cracks in relation to the dismantling of the Western paradigm based on a hegemonic and centralised notion of art occurred in the area of postcolonial thinking, which was slowly replacing the "old" and "Eurocentric" internationalism of the art world with a wider notion of a "globalist" imaginary in contemporary art.

The case of *Third Text* and the "New Internationalism"

Two years before what can be considered as the first attempt at a global exhibition in the area of the visual arts – we refer to *Magiciens de la Terre,* 1989 – from the field of postcolonial thinking and the anthropological-artistic-cultural area, the first voices started to emerge defending a historic change towards the periphery and a moving away from the centre of the dominant culture. To be specific, it was Rasheed Araeen, an artist and postcolonial theoretician based in London since 1964, who, as a continuation of his reflections published in three editions of the magazine *Black Phoenix* (1978),[51] led from 1987 in the editorial project of the *Third Text* magazine[52] the need to find a way out of the intellectual paralysis of most Western critical discourses in the 1980s and to recover "alternative" modernities that had been ignored by the main current of modernity itself. In the text *Making Myself Visible* (1984), which gathered together his artistic work and writings to that date, Araeen started to raise the question of "who" is made visible and "where", at the same time indicating that "cultural identity" was not a priority issue within the official system of Western modernity, nor could it be identified by a simple return to art of a nationalist or traditional character. Beyond the progressive spirit of modernity, non-Western artists continued to experience a total exclusion from the history of modern art. Hence the choice of the word *third* in the framework of contemporary art in a postcolonial society, in clear reference to the "other", con-

51 In January 1989, Araeen published the "Black Manifesto" *(Studio International* 988), in which he defined the term "black artist" not alluding to skin colour but in reference to the "other" in the world of art. In this manifesto, Araeen posed the question of how people of the Third World try to enter the modern era and create their own contemporary history. See the Manifesto, republished in Rasheed Araeen, *Making Myself Visible* (London: Kala Press, 1984), 73.

52 The magazine's subtitle was *Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture* until, in 1999, in a determined attempt to eliminate the concept of the Third World, it was replaced by *Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture,* a clear commitment to a global discourse.

verted into the "third", as a challenge to the model of binary opposition based on a system of fixed classification, according to which cultural practices are catalogued in terms of "self" and "other". As Araeen asks: "If the original understanding of the Third World as that underdeveloped entity which was only aspiring to Western models and standards can no longer be sustained [...] can 'culture' be privileged as a more authentic representation?"[53]

It was thus essential to localise the manifestation of domination in the functions of the cultural practices in question. And in this sense, it was necessary to fight against a modernity associated with the internationalisation of artistic practices, as happened after the Second World War with North American abstract expressionism and the resulting homogenisation of its practices in terms of style. A modernity which had excluded artists of the Third World in terms of recognition and acceptance given that from the 1960s – with movements such as Black Power in the United States – a real crisis of legitimacy was being experienced at the heart of Western culture:

> The "crisis of legitimation" in Western culture has a long history, but what is new in its postwar manifestation is a recognition of the lack of (positive) representations of both women and colonial peoples. This recognition is a direct result of anticolonial/antiracist struggles and the women's movement.[54]

In the face of this crisis in Western culture, it seemed necessary to reclaim the cultural identity furthest from any return to a nationalist and "traditional" art and in the framework of an art that was not separate from politics. Hence the appearance of an editorial project such as *Third Text* which – distancing itself from magazines such as *October*, which enshrined the theoretical-artistic discourse as its main current, or *Frieze*, which represented the Young British Artists (YBA) – sought to analyse that which was excluded and repressed by power and institutional structures.[55] The question was not so much the exclusion of artists from the artistic scene as the ignorance and suppression of their contributions to the different developments of the main current. In this context, *Third Text*, following the teaching of Edward Said and his postcolonial

53 Rasheed Araeen, "Why *Third Text*", *Third Text* 1 (1987), 4. See also Rasheed Araeen, "¿Cómo se ha convertido *Third Text* en Tercer Texto?", in *Third Text/Tercer Texto. Una perspectiva crítica sobre el arte y la cultura contemporáneos* 1 (spring 2003), 11-20.

54 R. Araeen, "Why Third Text", cit., 6.

55 Rasheed Araeen, "A New Beginning. Beyond Postcolonial Cultural Theory and Identity Politics", in Rasheed Araeen, Sean Cubitt, and Ziauddin Sardar (eds.), *The Third Text Reader: On Art, Culture and Theory* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 334.

theory, came to the conclusion that the actual situation was not only the result of human negligence but also represented the ideology of the artistic institution: "*Third Text* represents a historical shift away from the centre of the dominant culture to its periphery in order to consider the centre critically".[56] And if the celebration of the exotic was not new, what was indeed new was the fact that the "other" had stopped being the culturally exotic "other", including Afro-Americans and African blacks who, living in different Western countries, shared not only the fact of being abroad but also the constant concern about their countries of origin. A Palestinian artist could articulate his experience of the diaspora, a South African could show what took place during apartheid, and thus an endless number of examples.

> But the buck stops here. Try to turn your eyes towards the ideological and institutional structures of the institutions which are now so concerned with the plight and struggle of peoples in other countries and you will see how the doors shut in your face.[57]

A paradigmatic example of how the renewed "other" was appearing in the successive issues of the magazine *Third Text* is offered by Geeta Kapur's text "The Centre-Periphery Model or How We Are Placed? Contemporary Cultural Practice in India",[58] which puts forward the dualism between internationalism and regionalism pointing to the need to talk not only of a "regional diversity" but also of a "cultural difference". The concept of centre-periphery as a kind of political geography of world cultures is based, in Kapur's opinion, on a model of superstructure and base. The advanced industrial cultures (the First World) constitute the centre, corresponding to internationalism, while the underdeveloped and economically dependent postcolonial subcultures (the Third World) fall into the category of the periphery. Since the Second World War, internationalism as ideology suppresses the possibility of a historical vanguard in spite of simulating its conceptual reflexes. This suppression of the vanguard as a historical category would connect, according to Kapur, what Fredric Jameson calls the logic of late capitalism: consumerism, artistic markets, media networks.

56 Rasheed Araeen, "A New Beginning. Beyond Postcolonial Cultural Theory and Identity Politics", cit., 334.

57 Rasheed Araeen, "A New Beginning. Beyond Postcolonial Cultural Theory and Identity Politics", cit., 342.

58 See Geeta Kapur, "The Centre-Periphery Model or How We Are Placed? Contemporary Cultural Practice in India", *Third Text*, vol. 5, 16-17 (autumn-winter 1991), 9-19.

In opposition to this, an attempt to recover the old concept of regional diversity or the renewal of cultural is imposed, which implies reclaiming the term regionalism, with all that this implies in terms of territorial and cultural integrity belonging to the peripheries. Against the cosmopolitan centre or even the notion of multicultural difference, the concept of "cultural difference" is imposed, which introduces a relativism that in turn encourages the idea of the principal of universality. The regional would provide the sources that make up the universal, argues Kapur: "We on the periphery should desist from using essentialist categories of an ancient civilization including perhaps those of myth and other indigenously romantic, organic-symbolic modes of thought".[59]

On the other hand, the Institute of New International Visual Arts (INIVA) based in London enabled debates from the beginning of the 1990s about *New Internationalism*,[60] in clear harmony with the cultural politics of the Arts Council of Great Britain, based on a gradual integration of ethnic minorities – above all, the community of black artists – into the heart of British society and culture. And this coincided with the postmodern concept of multiculturalism, a problematic concept which, at the same time as it allows the co-existence of multiple specific cultures in Western metropolises – the majority, immigrant cultures – converts the city into an animated cultural patchwork that does not stop being a discriminatory instrument according to which the Western cultural institutions consider as the "other" something or someone that needs to be named in a different way.[61] As Araeen argues:

> There is nothing wrong with multiculturalism *per se* so long as the concept applies to all. But in the West, it has been used as a cultural tool to ethnicise its non-white population in order to administer and control its aspirations for equality.

And is it thus that, in the context of the new international geopolitical situation, the arrival of the term "New Internationalism" was vital – a concept, however, that differed from other earlier internationalisms represented by the

59 Geeta Kapur, "The Centre-Periphery Model or How We Are Placed? Contemporary Cultural Practice in India", cit., 10.

60 Already in 1990, Mary Jane Jacobs started the discussion about the worn-out concept of internationalism in the framework of the symposium *Expanding Internationalism: A Conference on International Exhibitions*, held at the 49th Venice Biennale. The proceedings of the symposium – with contributions from, among others, Mary Jane Jacob, Homi Bhabha, Emmanuel N. Arinze, and Beral Madra – can be read in the text *Expanding Internationalism: A Conference on International Exhibitions* (New York: Arts International, 1990).

61 See Lotte Philipsen, *Globalizing Contemporary Art* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2010), 51.

Bauhaus and the internationalism of new architecture that, among others, had tried to implant a utopian and Western model of the world. As Hou Hanru argues, the "new internationalism" would reflect both the pluralism of international political, economic, and cultural relationships and the contradictions and conflicts that belong to this very process of pluralisation. From this point of view, the "new internationalism" would not be in any way a new "ism" but rather, on the contrary, a process of "de-ism-isation". This could be compared to the scientific concept of "entropy", when a stable order of material enters a period of disintegration towards a total chaos and, at the same time, new and varied orders are produced in this chaos. The work of art would then indicate both the degree of disorder in the constituent parts of the artistic systems and the new alternatives.[62]

Following Hanru, all debate about "new internationalism" in contemporary art is based firstly on research about "multiculturalism", debates that are extremely important in postmodern artistic practice and in theoretical research. This was how the situation was understood by the Institute of New International Visual Arts (INIVA), set up in 1991, which did not hesitate to describe the "new internationalism" as an emerging concept that was based on nine points gathered together in a pseudo-manifesto in a clear commitment to the "institutional" inclusion of non-Western art in an expanded mainstream. One can read in the fourth point:

> New Internationalism reflects a *changing moment in art history*, resulting from post-war migration and the shifting and ideological boundaries. It is subject to evolutionary change and therefore cannot be narrowly defined or fixed, principally because it reflects this transitional moment in history.

And in point number seven:

> New Internationalism is *not exclusive*. It will not disregard the achievements of Western Europe and the USA. Neither does it seek a negative confrontation with Western Eurocentric art history. It desires instead to broaden our understanding of the history of art beyond the narrow confines of the past.

And in the eighth point:

> New Internationalism embraces the concept of "Black Art" because it hinges upon a cross-fertilisation of views in the contemporary visual arts. However it al-

62 See Hou Hanru, "Entropy; Chinese Artists, Western Art Institutions", in Jean Fischer (ed.), *Global Visions. Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts,* cit., 80.

lows artists a choice, a subjective decision-making process based on personal experience which takes it *beyond the definition of "Black Art"*.[63]

After the 1991 publication of these principles, which sought new approaches to production, exhibition, presentation, and interpretation in permanent dialogue with the old formulas of centrality, the INIVA – later InIVA[64] – continued to be active in organising symposia, such as the one named *A New Internationalism*, held at the Tate Gallery in London in April 1994, and the later published anthology *Global Visions. Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts (1994)*,[65] in which the definition of New Internationalism – a politically correct term that could lend any institutional practice a label of legitimacy[66] – was increasingly questioned by a significant number of contributions, such as those of Sarat Maharaj, Olu Oguibe, Hou Hanru, Rasheed Araeen, Jimmie Durham, and Gerardo Mosquera.

Beyond the possible reservations which these authors expressed in their reflections, we could conclude that the "new internationalism" was interested more in institutional mechanisms than in isolated works of art or in groups of styles. The question would be how do artistic institutions accept and represent non-Western art in exhibitions, catalogues, and academic writings? The text *Changing States. Contemporary Art and Ideas in an Era of Globalisation*[67] gathers together all the activities carried out over a decade by the Institute, as well as analysing some of the macro-concepts which govern the new space, now neither multicultural nor national but, as Stuart Hall argues, of a contradicto-

63 The Manifiesto is included in Gavin Jantjes and Sarah Wilson, *Final Report. The Institute of New International Visual Arts* (London: Arts Board/Arts Council, 1991), 7.

64 From 1994, the Institute changed its initials to those of InIVA, opting for a wider and more functional of "international" concept and leaving the old designation of "new internationalism", understood more as an official concept, to one side. See Lotte Philipsen, *Globalizing Contemporary Art. The art world's new internationalism* (Copenhagen: Aarhus University Press, 2010), 10.

65 As Jean Fischer argues in "Editor's Note", the *New Internationalism* runs parallel to multiculturalism, but as the series of essays indicates, if this is not to become another fashionable word appropriated by the existing power structures to maintain their own positions, we should ask ourselves what it means – in the case that it has some meaning – and if it does, what we want to know is how to achieve this notion and what action must be carried out to attain its objectives.

66 In "New Internationalism, or the Multiculturalism of Global Bantustans", Rasheed Araeen claimed: "If recoding means only a change of codes but not a transformation of the object itself, does the general idea of a New Internationalism make any sense? Would it not implicate the construction of a new façade on the postmodern spectacle of decoration? [...] My fear is that this can end up becoming reality", cit., 3.

67 Gilane Tawadros (ed.), *Changing States. Contemporary Ideas in an Era of Globalisation* (London: Institute of International Visual Arts, 2004).

ry process of globalisation defined by concepts of travel and translation that is irremediably transforming the world as well as the work of art and the artistic domain:

> Making lateral connections, crossing frontiers, subverting boundaries, but also decentring individual lives, uprooting communities, displacing people, destroying fragile ecologies – fundamentally redrawing relationships of power and culture, globally, between "us" and "them", the West and the Rest, North and South, margin and centre.[68]

The Global Issue, after *Art in America*

Another fissure in the new post-Eurocentric condition of art, in this case from a defence of the work of contemporary artists from various geographical contexts, was led by one of the most mainstream magazines, *Art in America*, whose July 1989 edition, "The Global Issue",[69] put forward the definition of that inaugural moment of the global through a series of declarations from artists and cultural theoreticians – such as Martha Rosler, James Clifford, Boris Groys, Robert Storr, Craig Owens, and Michele Wallace − in which a common idea seems to stand out: that of the danger of an unwelcome homogenisation and culture of consumption caused by the growing process of globalisation. A process which the US economist Theodore Levitt had associated in his 1983 text *The Marketing Imagination* with the concept of "marketing imagination", according to which it is the imagination (in the sense that people do not buy things but rather solutions to problems, with all that this means in terms of jumping from the evident to the significant) in which the origin of the success of different commercial transactions resides.[70]

Drawing on Levitt's theories, which saw the world in its totality as being unified in a few markets of cultures of taste ("More and more, people everywhere are growing more alike in their wants and behavior, whether we're talking

68 Stuart Hall, "Preface", in *Changing States. Contemporary Ideas in an Era of Globalisation,* cit., 7.
69 *Art in America*, "The Global Issue" (July 1989), 11-12.
70 In 1983, the professor of marketing and editor of the *Harvard Business Review* Theodore Levitt wrote the article "Globalization of Markets" (*Harvard Business Review,* May-June 1983), in which he referred to the term "globalisation", popularising it and applying it to the currents of economic thinking. Levitt coined the concept of "global corporation", understood as the recognition that the "Republic of Technology" had made the international bourgeoisie into a growing, homogenous – and locally fitting – culture of consumption. See also Theodore Levitt's 1983 text *The Marketing Imagination.*

about Coca-Cola, microprocessors, jeans, movies, pizzas, cosmetics, or milling machines"), Martha Rosler traced a parallel between the incipient globalisation and the post-modern context:

> Whereas culture tends to emanate from the metropolis, in the postmodern world of the internationalized transmissions, the culture of the peripheral areas paradoxically is object of a progressive revaluation, whether these areas are the fringes of the metropolis itself or distant, marginally incorporated locales.[71]

But, warns Rosler, the history of "global connections" which made theories about the postmodern possible is also the history of the "disconnections" of people of different classes and identities, within the same city and country, including in the advanced economies: "If we re-consider the photographic image of the whole world – of spaceship earth – it represents an identity that can only be envisioned from outside, a mirror-phase identity firmly located in the imaginary".[72]

From another point of view, the anthropologist James Clifford – exploring the questions of whether the arrival of a "new postmodern global visual culture" means the end of local and regional specificities, and whether we are witnessing the emergence of a hybrid international culture which respects difference and heterogeneity – points to the need to establish distinct orders in the study of "difference" in the new neo- or post-colonial map which takes into account the impact of technology and the production of culture in any local context. One of these orders would be the "disappearance" of difference, a second would consist of the "translation" of certain orders of difference, while a third would involve the "creation" of new orders of difference. And if it is relevant to take account of these three levels, Clifford suggests that the important thing is the processes of "translation" of this difference, which makes it possible to "create" new orders of that difference.[73]

For his part, Craig Owens, who at that time was preparing the exhibition – never staged because of his early death – *Exoticism: A Figure for Emergencies* (ICA, London), emphasised the growing interest on the part of academics, curators, critics, and artists in the cultural products of the so-called Third World through the reconstructive and/or archaeological work of postcolonial intellectuals such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi K. Bhabha, and indi-

71 Martha Rosler, "The Global Issue: A Symposium", cit., 86.
72 Martha Rosler, "The Global Issue: A Symposium", cit., 151.
73 James Clifford, "The Global Issue", cit., 87.

cated that these authors had been influenced by the European theory that was the fruit of the effects of decolonisation, specifically by Foucault's ideas on the power-knowledge pairing, Derrida's critique of Western ethnocentrism, and Lacan's formulation "the desire of man is the desire of the other". A conjunction which would explain the emergence of a "new exoticism" or, in other words, the recovery, beyond the distortions of racist/imperialist representation, of an authentic voice of the "other": the native, the tribal, etc. The paradox would reside, according to Owens, in the fact that postcolonial intellectuals were interested not so much in the "native" as in the "European subject" of imperialism and, more specifically, in the mechanisms through which Europe consolidated itself as a sovereign subject in situating its colonies as an "other".

And, Owens concludes: "Instead of representing the Third World (as the site of difference or heterogeneity), we in the increasingly routinized metropolitan centres might ask the question of what (or who) cannot be assimilated by the global tendencies of capital and its culture [...] Perhaps it is in this project of learning how to represent *ourselves* – how to speak *to*, rather than for or about, others – that the possibility of a 'global' culture resides".[74]

Marco Polo syndrome

In April 1995, the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin organised the symposium *The Marco Polo Syndrome. Problems of Intercultural Communication in Art Theory and Curatorial Practice*, in which, alongside interventions from Hans Belting, Catherine David, Thomas McEvilley, and Jean-Hubert Martin,[75] among others, the Cuban critic Gerardo Mosquera, in his lecture "The Marco Polo Syndrome", through seeing the Venetian traveller as a pioneer of the experience of understanding the "other" (although the attempts to unite the two cultures failed because of the suspicions aroused on both sides), argues that we

74 Craig Owens, "The Global Issue", cit., 89. Already in 1986 Owens had written about the work of Lothar Baumgarten, calling attention to the "rhetorical strategies" of ethnographic discourse. See Craig Owens, "Improper Names", *Art in America* (October 1986), 130. According to Owens, Baumgarten, more than being interested in racial and ethnic stereotypes, was interested in the historical construction of Western notions of the "Western" and the "exotic". Indeed, Baumgarten's project for the Venice Biennale of 1984, in which the artist superimposed the topographic structure of the Amazon Basin on the Venice Lagoon, was fundamental to the theoretician's later reflections.

75 Available at: http://universes-in-universe.de/magazin/marco-polo/english.htm (consulted 11 February 2014).

have had to wait until the end of the twentieth century to discover that we are suffering from the "Marco Polo Syndrome":

> What is monstrous about this syndrome is that it perceives whatever is different as the carrier of life-threatening viruses rather than nutritional elements. And although it does not scare us as much as another prevalent syndrome, it has brought a lot of death to culture.[76]

Thus, we should not simply think of globalisation in the sense of a trans-territorial course with contacts in all directions. Nor does it consist of an effective interconnection of the planet thanks to a network of communications or exchanges. Rather, it is in line with a radial system that extends from the most differentiated centres of power towards their many and diverse zones of economic influence. Globalisation has advanced little in the peripheries, given that they have been globalised from and for the centres. Such a structure would imply the existence of wide areas of silence disconnected from each other, or connected only indirectly by means of the new metropolis. This map of the world of a radial nucleus and unconnected areas causes intense currents in search of connection; the global orbit structurally generates the diaspora. The inherent contradiction is reproduced in the centres of control for immigrants: they are feared and they are needed. In the midst of these complex confrontations, the concept of the "global South" acquires its meaning, which is more about the geography of power than physical geography. A concept which can function as a ghetto, a call for the multicultural quota or for cultural correction, or even as a space of the new exoticism. And it can also function as a notion of solidarity between the excluded in their critique of power. And if it is obvious that the "art of the South" constitutes neither a cultural identity nor a synthesis, we can however speak of a mosaic:

> The unfortunate result is that Third World countries and cultures have barely been able to articulate their points of conjunction through a mosaic based on what might unite them beyond their multiple differences.

Thus, in Mosquera's view, the "cult" art of the Third World is not the result of the evolution of the precolonial cultures, whose trajectories were dramatically changed by colonialism. As contemporary art, they form part of the uni-

76 Gerardo Mosquera, "The Marco Polo Syndrome", in *The Third Text Reader. On Art, Culture and Theory* (London: Continuum, 2002), 267.

versalisation of the concept and practice of art as a self-sufficient activity based on "disinterested" contemplation and resulting from the production of a type of codes that are very specialised from the aesthetic-symbolic point of view. All this never ceases to be a colonial product. But as Mosquera argues, citing Jimmy Durham in *Does any contemporary experience exist that isn't?*, Western art is also a colonial product, although one from the "other side". Thus, Mosquera suggests, it is not plausible to see a difference per se in the art of the Third World as something opposed to other contemporary practices. The differences would come through the "use" that each author, movement, or culture makes of art, which could be conditioned by the *weltanschauung* (a certain philosophy of life), by values, strategies, interests, cultural patterns, and particular techniques.

And from the centres there is a certain tendency to look at this art which is suspected of illegitimacy: artists are asked to show their passports, which are often not in order, because they correspond to processes of hybridisation, appropriation, resignification, neologisms, and inventions regarding the actual situation. From the West, this art is asked to be tied to traditional cultures (which derive from the marginalisation that colonial modernisation has imposed on them), which is to say, focused on the past or on a product of the "pure present". In this sense, the term "authenticity" has been used from the "purity of the origins" to thereby disqualify postcolonial culture and accuse it of being simply derivative of the West.

This kind of "Marco Polo syndrome",[77] in Mosquera's opinion, finds itself so strongly installed that it dominates all postmodern manifestations. The new attraction of the centres towards alterity has allowed a great circulation and legitimation of the peripheries. Nonetheless, all too often the art that explicitly manifests difference has been valued, or better, has satisfied the expectations of the "other" in the so-called post-modern neo-exoticism: "Fridamania" in the United States would be a striking example, an attitude which has ultimately fed the "self-ostracism" of the peripheries through which some artists, consciously or unconsciously, have supported a paradoxical self-exoticism which had given a place to vernacular and non-Western cultures in the dominant circuits of art. This, however, would have led to a new wave of "exoticism", the

77 "We had to wait until the end of the millennium to discover that we were suffering from the Marco Polo Syndrome" [...] "a popular character from the comics – a captain in the wars of independence in the 19th century and a symbol of Cubanness – during and after a trip to China. The character, like Marco Polo, was a pioneer in the experience of understanding the Other, but his chances of bridging two cultures were lost through the suspicion provoked by both sides, especially from his." See Gerardo Mosquera, "The Marco Polo Syndrome: Some Problems around Art and Eurocentrisme", *Third Text* 21 (winter 1992), 35-41.

bearer of a passive or second-class egocentrism that, rather than universalise its paradigms, would end up formatting the cultural production of the periphery according to the paradigms of Western consumption.

"Marco Polo syndrome", according to Mosquera, is a complex illness which likes to hide its symptoms. The struggle against Eurocentrism should not burden art with the myth of authenticity, which paradoxically could contribute to the discrimination which exists in the visual arts of the Third World in the international circuits. It would be more plausible to analyse how the actual art of a country or a region responds to the aesthetic, social, and cultural needs of the community to which it belongs. And the response is generally mixed, relational, involving appropriation and in every case "inauthentic" and at the same time suitable to confront our reality.[78] Thence the need to reclaim new intercultural relationships that would consist not only of accepting the "other" in order to understand it, or contribute to our own enrichment thanks to its diversity, but would also imply reciprocity: "It also implies that the Other does the same with me, problematizing my self-awareness. The cure for the Marco Polo Syndrome entails overcoming centrism with enlightenment from a myriad of different sources", Mosquera concludes.[79]

78 G. Mosquera, "The Marco Polo Syndrome", *Third Text*, cit., 33.
79 Ibid., 34.

EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE GLOBAL. THEORIES AND DISCOURSES

The end of monocultural modernity meant the emergence and consolidation of a discourse that dominates contemporary artistic practices as well as curatorial, theoretical, and historiographical practices: the discourse of otherness, of identity, of the differences that try to answer the following questions: who has the authority to speak of the identity or the authenticity of a group? How do the self and the other clash and converge in the encounters of ethnography, travel, and inter-ethnic relationships? What narratives can explain the present range of local movements? How to integrate the local and the global?

The years since the end of the 1970s, with the first symptoms of the erosion of the principle of the legitimation of knowledge – which, in the words of Jean-François Lyotard,[1] gave way to an "immanent and flat network" which favours the dissemination of language games and which in turn runs in parallel to the growth of postcolonial approaches by authors such as Edward Said[2] – have witnessed the supreme emergence of the discourse of differences, within which one can refer to the "distribution of exoticisms" where that which was at first the dominant (civilised) self approaches and merges with the (primitive) other, and where the borders between the concept of citizen and foreigner, nation and subject, tend to disappear.

As the title of the Lyon biennial of 2000 – *Partage d'exotismes*[3] – puts it, "we are all exotic in the gaze of the other" or, as Coco Fusco argues, racial identity not only concerns the black, the Latin, the Asian, the Afro-American, but also the white: "Ignoring white ethnicity is doubling its hegemony and avoiding all critical judgement in the construction of the other". The world is no longer di-

1 Jean-François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne. Rapport sur le savoir* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1979). (English edition: *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* [trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, foreword by Fredric Jameson], Manchester University Press, 1984).

2 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

3 *Partage d'exotismes. 5 Biennale d'Art Contemporain de Lyon* (exhibition catalogue) (Lyon: Halle Tony Garnier, 27 June – 24 September 2000).

vided into binary structures: the civilised, the primitive; the raw, the cooked; culture, subculture. Nor is it dominated by an ethnocentric gaze and by a society based on monoculturalism and the fundamentalist homogenisation that belongs to modernity; a modernity which had perverse effects for "exotic cultures", which were maintained almost in the category of "curiosities" and which served only to stimulate the excellence of the creations of the "civilised" world.

Postmodernism, post-structuralism and difference

In the context of post-structuralist analysis of language, an important dimension is held by the notion of "difference", understood from the perspective that a positive definition is based on the denial of something which is presented as antithetic to it. From which it is deduced that any analysis of the signified would involve unravelling these denials and oppositions, seeking their effectiveness in specific contexts.

The theories of Jacques Derrida can be considered foundational inasmuch as they question the structure of the Western "episteme" that positions Europe at the centre and subordinates other cultures and invites the conceptualisation of the relationship between the self and the other through language. Derrida, in effect, deconstructs the rejection of the other by the dominant discourse following a line opened by fellow philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, in an ethical relationship of "openness" to the distinct forms of difference. A first approach to this from philosophy to this denouncement of the ethnocentric gesture which situates the other in an apparently universalising framework was produced in 1965, when Derrida replaces for the first time the vowel *e* with an *a* in the term "différance", in an article dedicated to Antonin Artaud, *La parole soufflé* ("the blown-away word"),[4] and later in the lecture *La différance*, given at the Société Française de Philosophie in 1968.[5] In fact, when Derrida replaces the *e* of the French word *différence* with an *a* to create the term *différance,* he is resorting to a word that does not exist in French, a neologism, going back to the difference in use and meaning between the Greek term "di-

4 Jacques Derrida, *Tel Quel* 20 (winter 1965). This article is included in *L'écriture et la difference*.

5 The content of this lecture given on 27 January 1968 at the Société Française de Philosophie was published for the first time in *Théorie d'ensemble* (Paris: Seuil, 1968) and later reprinted in *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972). (English edition: *Margins of Philosophy*, Translated, with additional notes, Alan Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

aphérein" and the Latin *diferre,* which are found in the two corresponding French verbs that are related to *différance*. Regarding the first version of *différance,* whose trace Derrida discovered in Artaud's "theatre of cruelty", where no distinctions are made between the "organs" of the theatre – the author and the director – and where, in brief, *différance* would be "improvising anarchy", in the sense that it would be the bearer of an otherness that would ceaselessly escape itself and the identical,[6] the second version[7] implies reclaiming the fact of difference paradoxically from a universal without giving into either communitarianism or the narcissistic cult of small differences. How do the differences get along – that which would correspond to the psychology of the peoples or "ethnopsychology", with their cultural, national, linguistic, and even human differences – without renouncing the universalising character of *différance?,* asks Derrida. And the answer is in the text *La différance,* which starts with this assertion:

> I will speak, therefore, of a letter. Of the first letter, if the alphabet, and most of the speculations that have ventured into it, are to be believed. I will speak, therefore, of the letter *a*, this initial letter which it has apparently been necessary to insinuate, here and there, into the writing of the word *difference*.[8]

And Derrida continues:

> *Différance* is literally neither a word nor a concept... it would be rather, an excess, and in any case it would go beyond all ontological representation [...] *différance* is not, does not exist, it is not a present-being.

Everything in the outline of *différance* would be "strategic" and "risky"; strategic because no transcendent and present truth outside the field of writing can dominate the totality of the field: risky because this strategy is not a simple

6 See Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *De quoi demain...* (Paris: Arthème Fayard et Galilée, 2001).

7 In his lecture to the Société Française de Philosophie of 27 January 1968, Jacques Derrida proposed the neologism (or rather then non-concept) *différance* from the French world *différence* to refer to the fact that something cannot be symbolised because it overflows representation. The neologism basically evokes two meanings: one refers to "deferring" (from the Greek verb *diaphérein*) in the sense that meanings are "proposals", "deferred" in an endless chain of significations; and a second which concerns the idea of "differentiate" (from the Latin verb *diferre),* that which distinguishes elements and thus generates binary but never hierarchical oppositions which end up affecting the meaning itself. This essay by Derrida appears in the collection *Margins of Philosophy*, cit.

8 Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, Translated, with additional notes, Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 3.

strategy in the sense of orientating tactics towards a final goal, a *telos*. Ultimately a strategy without an empirical end, which could be called "blind tactics". There would then be a certain "vagrancy" in the outline of difference in the sense that it does not follow the philosophical-logical discourse and, above all, a willingness to place oneself strategically in a present, which Derrida calls "our era":

> Therefore I am starting, strategically, from the place and time in which "we" are, even though in the last analysis my opening is not justifiable, since it is only on the basis of *différance* and its "history" that we can allegedly know who and where "we" are, and what the limits of the "era" might be.[9]

And it is this linking the verb "to differ" with the Latin verb *diferre* – namely, to defer, the action of leaving until later – which implies a detour, a delay, a hold-up, a caution, as Derrida makes his own a concept that had never previously been contemplated in his discourse: that of timing. To *differ/defer* is thus to place in time, to resort to temporal mediation; and it is in this sense that *différance* would have to be understood not as an essence, an ontology, a metaphysic, but as a movement of space, a "becoming space" of time, a "becoming time" of space and, clearly, a reference to alterity, to a heterogeneity. Which would explain, according to Derrida, the inscription of that which is not identical as *différance*. A *différánce* that ultimately (these concepts would be developed by Derrida in a much later book, *Le monolinguisme de l'autre,* of 1996)[10] would be constructed historically and would be articulated as a reaffirmation of itself: an economy of itself "in its relation" to the other.

Approaching ethnocentrism as the intellectual and hegemonic construction of history, Derrida, in another text of 1967 – in fact, his doctoral thesis *De la grammatologie*[11] – not only challenged the structuralist theses proposed by Saussure, in the sense of proposing a new conception of the decentred structure, but also used Heideggerian language to declare a new era. An era in which the task is "to read off" and play at writing according to the new relationships of "pertinence" and "rupture" with respect to the history of Western metaphysics. Derrida points out that a tradition can only be distorted and transformed in its constitutive hierarchies by the deconstructive route. Following an enigmatic chapter entitled "Exergue"[12] (part of a medal or coin where

9 Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, cit., 7.
10 Jacques Derrida, *Le monolinguisme de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1996)
11 Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967).
12 Jacques Derrida, "Exergue", in *De la grammatologie,* cit., 11-14.

the inscription is located), included by way of prologue in *De la grammatologie,* Derrida calls attention to "ethnocentrism", which in all places involves a concept of writing that finds parallelisms with logocentrism and metaphysics – which he exemplifies with the figures of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Ferdinand de Saussure – which, according to him, would belong to a tradition that would have to be questioned in order to think of a "new era". Hence it can be concluded that, despite the fact that this text is still dominated by an authoritative "I" and an inclusive "we", it nonetheless attracts attention because of its "strange" character, to the extent that it advances "between the lines", in hidden spaces, in a polyphonic version of the rational order of metaphysics.

This discussion about justice and cultural differences has one of its centres of gravity in the debate that within the area of postmodernity – and in a parallel way to that which took place in the field of anthropology with figures such as Clifford Geertz – sought to approach history not from the vision of the victors but from the ethnographic knowledge of the vanquished. The postmodern version of this debate comes from Jean-François Lyotard, for whom dissent, the activation of differences, of "cultural islets without mutual communication", and cultural diversity are the defining elements of this situation. Lyotard, in effect, is one of the first theoreticians who appeals to the lack of credibility of the notion of universal theory and of the metanarratives – Marxism, for example – of modernity. This is made specific in *The Postmodern Condition* (1979), which formulates most categorically his theory of "difference" (of the silence of differences in the space of modernity) through three key concepts: paralogy (from an etymological point of view signifying beyond reason or beyond the *logos* and obliging the system to move its limits), debate, and continuous dissent (images of alteration of the rules established by the universals). These three forms of thinking would make possible the "facture" of the totalities and of the foundational metastories, and the end of a monocultural modernity, based on universalising, excluding, and authoritarian systems. Lyotard establishes the disenchantment of the "modern utopia", a change in the condition of knowing in the face of the crisis and the exhaustion of the great stories of modernity.

It is in this sense that the postmodern condition opens the possibility of the enunciation of differences, of the marginalised spaces, of the heterogeneities of language, silenced under the mantle of the unique discourses. Now, argues Lyotard, these displaced spaces come to join the "old city" through a dissemination of language games ("New languages are added to the old ones, forming the suburbs of the old city, chemical symbols, infinitesimal nota-

tion")[13] and of a fragmentation which leads us to the conclusion that a universal metalanguage does not exist, that the project of the system-subject has been a failure, that the project of emancipation has nothing to do with science, and that the tasks of research have become tasks divided into lots that no one dominates. And, concludes Lyotard:

> The differences must find a pertinent enunciation, to be revealed from feeling, from the instability which they produce, to be able to be re-written in their own languages, to show their tensions and clashes with imposed systems, spaces in which differences can express themselves from the silence to which they have been subjected.[14]

In a later text, *Le différend* (the "diferend", difference in the sense of dispute)[15] of 1983, dedicated to explaining how one can save the honour of thought after Auschwitz, Lyotard, although arguing that there will always be differences that cannot be reduced to universal criteria, nonetheless tries to ensure that differences are articulated and that the minority and oppositional positions appear in the language and are affirmed by social discourses through the reclaiming of the term "diférend". Because, as he argues:

> The modern "we", of community, solidarity, and universality, is shattered. After Auschwitz one cannot pretend that humanity is one or the universality of the human condition. The diferend would in this sense be the principle of justice where everyone is allowed to talk and to enter the field of contemporary agonistic life, understanding by agonistic that which presupposes that social and cultural life is always divided into positions that differ.[16]

The theoretical strengthening of the postcolonial and the peripheral

The term "postcolonialism" is extremely ambiguous, and both its meanings and its implications would have to refer in the first place to the colonial thinking from which they emerged. Postcolonialism is directly linked to the decline

13 J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge,* cit., 34.

14 J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* cit., 35.

15 J.-F. Lyotard, *Le Différend* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1983). (English edition: *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* [trans. George Van Den Abbeele], Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

16 J.-F. Lyotard, *Le Différend,* cit., 10.

of the British and French empires in the second half of the twentieth century, although one should not forget what emerges from the first experiences of independence and neo-imperialism in Latin America. And, in any case, postcolonialism can only be understood as a "sequel" to any colonial regulation; hence, the term should be understood as a means to name a series of historical contexts and geographical places that are disconcerting in their scale.

Postcolonialism refers to the analysis of the mechanism of colonial power, the economic exploitation which this brought with it, and a form at the same time critical and asking ethical and cultural questions. It is, then, a political philosophy, but at the same time, in a wide sense, it is an ethic which describes a multifaceted and open process of interrogation and criticism. In this sense, and through considering the precursor role of the West Indian thinker Frantz Fanon – without doubt the most influential of the postcolonial thinkers – who, in works such as *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952) describes the psychological effects of colonialism and, in particular, the trauma of being forced to look at oneself from the outside,[17] we think that it is Michel Foucault who is the clearest forerunner of postcolonial philosophy in his innovative dissection of the relationship between power and knowledge. The mode of analysis which Foucault calls "archaeological" is interested in how knowledge operates as part of a system-network underpinned by power structures, both political and social. Thus, the use of knowledge is a political "weapon" and can serve to propagate and reinforce the social marginalisation and the oppression of those who are left out of the official discourses.

The Oriental gaze

The influence of Foucault's archaeological thinking allows one of the founders of postcolonial thinking, Edward Said, to use the notions of power and discourse to explore in depth the mechanisms of colonialism. In his text *Orien-*

17 In the book cited, and specifically in the fifth chapter, entitled "L'experiénce vécue du Noir", Fanon shows the "black" against his race and, above all, his desire to be white; for that purpose, we witness the desperate efforts of a black determined to discover the meaning of black identity. White civilisation, European culture, have imposed on the black an existential deviation. The evolved black, slave of the black myth, spontaneous. Cosmic, he realises at a given moment that his race no longer understands him. Or that he does not understand it. It is then that he congratulates himself and, developing this difference, this incomprehension, this disharmony, finds the meaning of his true humanity. See Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952) (Paris: Le Seuil, 1971), 12-13. See also his work *The Wretched of the Earth*, a more militant text than the previous one.

talism (1978),[18] he observes the dividing relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, but from a different angle. Like Fanon, he explores the way in which colonialism developed a form of seeing the world, an order of things that had to be read as true and proper. But Said pays more attention to the "colonisers" than to the "colonised", and especially to the gaze which the former projected onto the latter.

What Said does, starting out from the notion of discourse defined by Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and in *Discipline and Punish* (knowledge-power-language), is to analyse the process by which Europe produced and codified knowledge about the East:

> My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period. [...] In brief, because of Orientalism, the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought and action.[19]

Following Foucault, Said highlights the links between imperialism (power) and human sciences (knowledge); here the coloniser appears as a fundamental principle of narratives − in which the colonised is converted into the "Other" – by expressing knowledge about him or her, amid the various processes of domination. This colonising narration avoids that the "Other" speaks for himself or herself; it is the colonial power that produces the image of the colonised, which becomes something "exotic". According to Said, the relationships between East and West, Orient and Occident, do not correspond to a stable reality that exists as a natural fact. Said claims that Orient and Occident work as opposite terms, and that Orient has been constructed as a negative inversion of Western culture.

18 In the introduction to his text *Orientalism* (cit.), Edward W. Said defines the concept of "orientalism" with a meaning related to the university: "Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient – and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist – either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism." Said also refers to a wider concept of orientalism: a style of thinking based on the ontological and epistemological distinction between Orient and Occident. And this without forgetting a third meaning of orientalism that, since the end of the eighteenth century, has been analysed as the global institution that deals with the Orient through its approaches, its declarations, its descriptions. From this perspective, orientalism is an "occidental style" of domination and authority over the Orient. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London and Henley, 1978), 10.

19 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London and Henley, 1978), 11.

The term "orientalism" covers three inter-related meanings: first it refers to the academic study of the East in the multiple disciplines of anthropology, sociology, history, and philosophy. In the second place, "Orientalism" is a way of thinking based on an ontological and epistemological distinction between Orient and Occident, which tends to seek a binary opposition or a dichotomy – always destructive and deceitful – between the East and the West. And in the third place, "Orientalism" can be seen as a Western style of dominating the other. And, as Jane Hiddleston[20] argues, "Orientalism" is a discourse in the Foucauldian sense, a wide network of texts, images, and preconceptions which serves to designate the "Oriental Other" as a kind of substitute and even subterranean. It would be about representing the Orient using a certain number of preconceptions and assumptions that help reinforce the position of the Occident as the centre of power.

Perhaps Said's most notable act is not the text in itself but how it inspired a new generation of thinkers, some fundamental to the world of art. That which his followers learnt was basically the idea that the empire "colonised" imaginations. Fanon had worked on this subject on the psychoanalytical level, while Said demonstrated the legitimation of the empire for the oppressor. And if colonialism signified colonising the mind, then resistance to it signified "decolonising the mind".

The Antillean discourse

Indebted to Foucault's thinking, but in this case mixed with Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, one would situate the contribution of the Martinique thinker Édouard Glissant who, in his text *Le Discours antillais*,[21] conceived the identity of the Caribbean and the poetry of creolisation as catalysts which can be read as a global cultural revolution, a revolution that defends an alternative model of relationality with an ethical and cultural bias.

In the chapter "Le retour et le détour", Glissant establishes the difference between "displacement" (by exile or the dispersion of a people that continues its traditions in another place) and "traffic" of a population which moves to another part of the world. It is in this change where one would find the best guarded "secrets" of this "relationship", in which Glissant, from his Caribbean experience, understands the "one" as a trick, as that which tries to hide the multiplic-

20 Jane Hiddleston, *Understanding Postcolonialism* (Stocksfield: Athenaeum Press Limited, 2009), 85.
21 Édouard Glissant, *Le Discours antillais* (Paris: Le Seuil), 1981.

ity of being: "If I examine the West, I see that it has decidedly not ceased to understand the world initially as solitude and, then, as an imposition".[22]

In the face of the current process of globalisation, which is no more than an opposition of the West (system-world constructed on the basis of a transnational market which seeks to legitimise political, economic, and linguistic hegemony), only a change in our thinking, in our poetics, which is to say, in our imaginations, will lead us to conceive of the world in a way that respects difference and diversity. In the face of imaginaries that from years ago have consisted of desiring and conquering, taking into account the domination of territory – the nomadism of the arrow – the poet proposes an imaginary that describes how an "archipelago thinking" destined to put all the forms of culture in contact, to provoke meeting, interference, collision, harmony and disharmony between cultures within the whole-world.

From the concept of "relation", Glissant creates a network at the service of a vast decolonialisation project, replacing the criteria of unique root identity with that of rhizome identity and replacing the feeling of belonging with that of relation. And a most important thing, the space stops being a space of exclusion and becomes a place where, we would say metaphorically, the ground is free of constructions, where the territory gives place to the earth. And between the earth and humankind, Glissant proposes to weave privileged and unpredictable relations on a system that no longer functions as legitimate possession of the territory but as a "link between Man and the Earth". And always based on the supposition that the place is a relational place that does not correspond to the nation-state, a place in spiritual expansion rather than territorial expansion and conquest. What happens in the Caribbean (and its language based on interchanges and collisions with cultural elements coming from completely different horizons) with the phenomenon of creolisation can also serve as a metaphor that operates in the rest of the world. The cultures of the world creolise themselves, which is to say they not only mix with and contaminate each other but also – most importantly – they interact, they alter each other mutually by means of exchanges, with inevitable collisions, pitiless wars, new colonisations, but always favouring the progress of awareness and hope. Because, as Glissant says referring both to the term "creolisation" and "Earth totality" or "Earth understood as an archipelago", where there is no organic authority, "the phenomena of creolization are very important because they permit a new approach to the spiritual dimension of humanity in its diversity".[23]

22 Édouard Glissant, *L'intention poétique. Poétique II* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 328.
23 Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la relation. Poétique III* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 24.

The third space

In the transition between the concepts of postmodern and postcolonial, the contributions of Homi K. Bhabha, an Indian cultural theoretician based in the United States, proved decisive. Bhabha, after considering the end of the postmodern discourse and its adjoining sub-concepts such as simulacrum, deconstruction, the death of the author, and the end of the great narratives ("The discourse of postmodernism is at once a post-mortem report on the end(s) of modernity and a postpartum report on the origins of the present"),[24] proposed the alternative of the postcolonial discourses as the position from which to deconstruct the strategies of colonisation, as well as the place allocated to cultural discourses and contemporary intellectuals.

Among the processes of deconstructing the colonial, the notion of the "third space" – or the recognition that difference is free of all positional and negative systems, overcoming any binary, dialectical, and oppositional system – stands out. For Bhabha, to write about cultural difference means to recognise moments of hybridisation and to incorporate a new and sometimes paradoxical vocabulary with such words as "ambivalence", "border", "contingency", "dispersion", "disjunction", "dissemination", "discontinuity", "hybridisation", "in-between", "incommensurability", "indetermination", "interstitial", "liminal", "marginal", "transitional", "translation", and "uncertainty". An initial approach to these proposals was made in the text "Beyond the Pale: Art in the Age of Multicultural Translation",[25] which concludes that the present moment is not defined by the prefix "post" but rather by "beyond":

> The "beyond" is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past. Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the *fin de siècle*, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion [...] There is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the "beyond" [...] The move away from the singularities of "class" and "gender" as primary conceptual and organizational categories has resulted in an awareness of the multiple subject positions – of race, gender, generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale, sexual orientation – that inhabit any claim to identity in the (post)modern world. What is theoretically innova-

24 Homi K. Bhabha, "Postmodernism/Postcolonialism", in Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (eds.), *Critical Terms for Art History* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 307-322.

25 Homi Bhabha, "Beyond the Pale: Art in the Age of Multicultural Translation", *1993 Biennial Exhibition* (exhibition catalogue) (New York: Whitney Museum of America Art, 1993).

> tive, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of origin and initiatory, initial subjects and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of "differences". These "in-between" spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood and communal representations that initiate new signs of cultural difference and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation.[26]

In this text, the author proposes various ways in which the "one" (the pale, the hegemonic Western white) finds himself and ends up confusing himself with the "Other" (the subordinated minority): "The act of translation between cultures is effected through the exacerbation of what is cultural incommensurable or strange, which then allows an understanding of the 'other' to emerge from an elision, an uncanny alienation, of one's own cultural priority".[27]

The cited essay anticipates some of the thesis of his text *The Location of Culture* (1994),[28] in which he puts forward in a very lucid way the notion of "living at the borders", in transitional places where the concepts of "beyond" and "in-between" are imposed. The beyond is not a horizon, which leaves the past behind, but a transit zone, a journey, an in-between where past and present, difference and identity, outside and inside, inclusion and exclusion intertwine: a space, then, that is interstitial, hybrid, liminal, beyond binary definitions (such as native/foreigner or master/slave):

> The move away from the singularities of "class" or "gender" as primary conceptual and organizational categories, has resulted in an awareness of the subject positions – of race, gender, generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale, sexual orientation – that inhabit any claim to identity in the modern world.[29]

And it is precisely these intermediate spaces which provide us with the terrain favourable to the strategies of self-protection – individual or communitarian – which initiate new signs of identity. Remaining at the border, Bhabha tells us, the emigrant is invited to intervene actively in the transmission of cultural heritage or tradition (both of home and of the land of reception) much

26 Homi Bhabha, "Beyond the Pale: Art in the Age of Multicultural Translation", *1993 Biennial Exhibition,* cit., 61-62.

27 Homi Bhabha, "Beyond the Pale: Art in the Age of Multicultural Translation", *1993 Biennial Exhibition,* cit., 64.

28 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994).

29 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* cit., 23.

more than passively accept his venerable ancestors. This emigrant can question, make fashionable again, or mobilise received ideas. And it is thus that the inherited knowledge can be reinscribed with new meanings. Bhabha calls this action "reinstate" or "reinvent the past": "the past-present becomes part of the necessity, not of the nostalgia of living". This reinventing the past also introduces other incommensurable cultural temporalities towards the invention of tradition; hence the appearance of the concept of hybridisation, as a way of thinking beyond the binary concepts of identity, based on ideas of races and cultural, racial, and national purity. Bhabha does away with binary definitions: native/foreign and master/slave, which are considered ideologically suspect and inappropriate. The art of the present requires a mental habit in which movement and intertwining are fundamental. Bhabha urges us to think beyond the narratives of the originary: everything inside the intermediate territory. And it is also in the presence of "incommensurable cultural temporalities" where Bhabha anticipates the next stage in his ideas, where he puts forward the aesthetic of the border that directly questions binary understandings. It is here where Bhabha implicitly alludes to an aspect of surprise, of disruption (he literally cites Freud and his concept of the "uncanny", of trauma, of anxiety); and it is this uncanny presence which, according to Bhabha, has the power to disactivate the exclusive binary logic on which a large variety of discourses – nationalist, colonialist, patriarchal – depend.[30]

Finally, Homi K. Bhabha reclaims the affective experience of "social marginality", belonging to non-canonical cultural forms, which obliges confronting the canonisation of the idea of the aesthetic in favour of a culture as unequal production and lacking a complete meaning and value, developed in the act of social survival. The transmission of cultures of survival would not take place in the imaginary museum of national cultures:

> Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and transitional because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement, whether they are the "middle passage" of slavery and indenture, the "voyage out" of the civilizing mission, the fraught accommodation of Third World migration to the West after the Second World War, or the traffic of economic and political refugees within and outside the Third World. Culture is translational because such spatial histories of displacement – now accompanied by the territorial ambitions of "global" media technologies – make the

30 Homi Bhabha, "Remembering Fanon: self, psyche and the colonial condition", in Patrick Williams NS Laura Chrisman (eds.), *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: a reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 66-111.

question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue.[31]

It is from this hybrid perspective of cultural value ("the transnational as transitional"), more and more remote from any holistic attempt at social explanation, that the postcolonial intellectual tries to develop a historical and literary project that integrates the fact of otherness without falling into the theories of relativism or cultural pluralism that belong to postmodernism. According to Bhabha, the postcolonial perspective obliges us to reconsider the limitations of a liberal and knowing meaning of the cultural community; cultural and political identity are constructed by means of a process of alterity in which not only questions of racial and cultural difference are important but also the problems of sexuality and gender:

> Culture becomes an uncomfortable and disturbing practice of survival and supplementarity – between art and politics, past and present, the public and the private – as its resplendent being is a moment of pleasure, enlightenment or liberation. It is from such narrative positions that the postcolonial prerogative seeks to affirm and extend a new collaborative dimension, both within the margins of the nation-space and across boundaries between nations and peoples. My use of post-structuralist theory emerges from this postcolonial contramodernity. I attempt to represent a certain defeat, or even an impossibility, of the "West" in its authorization of the "idea" of colonization. Driven by the subaltern history of the margins of modernity – rather than by the failures of logocentrism – I have tried, in some small measure, to revise the known, to rename the postmodern from the position of the postcolonial.[32]

The question of subalternity

In her influential essays "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography"[33] and "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Gayatri Spivak articulated her discourse around differences and subalternity, putting in evidence the process of "epistem-

31 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* cit., 172

32 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* cit., 175.

33 Gayatri Spivak, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography", in *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (London: Routledge, 1988); "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (eds.), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993). See also Rosalind C. Morris (ed.), *Can the subaltern speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

ic violence" that is established in the creation of the figure of the "other", the subaltern. Spivak explored the question of whether or not it was possible to recover the voices of those who had been subjected to colonial representations – in particular, women – and interpret them as potentially disruptive and subversive.

According to Spivak, the history of imperialism is marked by its "epistemic violence": in the sense that the figure of the colonial subject is converted into a European projection upon which the patterns of European knowledge are imprinted. The "other" is represented as a reality that it is possible to know, classify, control. The need for control by the colonising Western reason begins – claims Spivak, following Derrida – in the power to represent the other through his or her own cognitive field.

Hybridisation

In the introduction to the expanded section edition of *Culturas híbridas*[34] [Hybrid Cultures], Néstor García Canclini concerns himself with how studies of hybridisation change the way of speaking about identity, culture, difference, inequality, and multiculturality, and about organising pairs of conflicts in social sciences such as tradition/modernity, north/south, and local/global. After presenting the various uses of the concept of hybridisation by postcolonial theoreticians such as Homi K. Bhabha (interethnic processes and decolonialisation), James Clifford (journeys and border crossings), Stuart Hall and Martín-Barbero (artistic and literary fusions), he asks whether, in fact, the recourse to a term as charged with ambiguity as "hybrid" can supplant the old concepts of syncretism in religious matters, *mestizaje* in history and anthropology, or fusion in the field of music. The author asks what advantage there would be to scientific investigation in resorting to a term that is so full of ambiguity. A term which García Canclini defines as a "sociocultural process in which 'discrete' structures, which exist in separate forms, are combined to create new structures, objects, and practices".[35] A term which helps him identify multiple alliances within the intercultural mixtures derived from migratory processes, tourism, and economic or communicational exchange, without forgetting the

34 Néstor García Canclini, "*Introducción a la nueva edición. Las culturas híbridas en tiempos globalizados*" [Introduction to the new edition. Hybrid cultures in globalised times], in *Culturas híbridas. Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad* [Hybrid Cultures. Strategies for entering and leaving modernity] (1989) (Mexico: Paidós, 2001).

35 N. García Canclini, "Introducción a la nueva edición. Las culturas híbridas en tiempos globalizados", in *Culturas híbridas. Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad,* cit., 14.

individual or collective dimension of hybridisation, not only in the arts but also in everyday life and technological development.

From these considerations, García Canclini is interested not so much in the term "hybridity" as in the "processes of hybridisation", and indicates that hybridisation is directed at both the economic sectors of the dominant classes and at the disfavoured classes that want to appropriate the benefits of modernity. In this sense, that which is imposed is a relativisation of the notion of pure or authentic identities; against a closed concept of identity opposed to globalisation, García Canclini, in line with other cultural theoreticians such as David Goldberg,[36] proposes displacing the object of study from identity towards heterogeneity and intercultural hybridisation:

> In a world that is so fluidly interconnected, the sedimentations of identity organised in more or less stable historical sets (ethnicities, nations, classes) are restructured in the midst of interethnic, trans-class and transnational sets.[37]

And it is from this perspective that García Canclini reclaims heterogeneity and the possibility of multiple hybridisations as a first political movement to liberate the world from the logic of homogenisation. He calls this "multicultural heterogeneity",[38] proposing a vision of the different modalities of hybridisation as a term of translation between miscegenation, syncretism, and fusion which characterises the culture of developing countries, such as those that make up Latin America. García Canclini claims that the artistic forms of the "elite culture" are losing their privilege in the face of "industrialised" forms (film, television, popular music); this evolution opens the door to a field of enormous cultural possibilities. In this way, aesthetics is no longer the exclusive domain of the traditional means of expression of high culture but a concept that is used in all fields of cultural activity. For him, consumption is thus something that is good for thinking (quite the contrary to the tradition of Marx and Adorno). In a later text, *Diferentes, desiguales y desconectados. Mapas de interculturalidad*,[39] [Different, unequal and unconnected: Maps of interculturality], the author indicates that – in the face of a world whose economic

36 See David Theo Goldberg, "Introduction. Multicultural Conditions", in David Theo Goldberg (ed.), *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader,* cit., 1-41.

37 N. García Canclini, "Introducción a la nueva edición. Las culturas híbridas en tiempos globalizados", in *Culturas híbridas. Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad,* cit., 18.

38 N. García Canclini, *La globalización imaginada* [The Imagined Globalisation] (Mexico: Paidós, 1999).

39 N. García Canclini, *Diferentes, desiguales y desconectados. Mapas de interculturalidad* [Different, unequal, and unconnected] (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2004).

globalisation not only simultaneously interconnects the whole planet but also creates new differences and inequalities – there is a triple need to *recognise* differences, *correct* inequalities, and *connect* the majorities to the globalised networks. It is in this point that García Canclini moves on from the vision of a *multicultural* world − a juxtaposition of ethnic or other groups in a city or nation under the sign of heterogeneity – to another globalised *intercultural* world which refers to confrontation and entanglement. Against the relativist politics of difference that promote multicultural ideology, García Canclini understands the intercultural as a direct consequence of the processes of hybridisation, inasmuch as it implicates the fact that "the different are what they are" in relationships of negotiation, conflict, and reciprocal loans.[40] As García Canclini concludes:

> We are figuring out what a globalised citizenry would be [...] In a world organised at the same time to interconnect and to exclude, the two forms of politics most tested until now for interculturality – tolerance towards the different and solidarity with those below – are requirements for being able to continue living together [...]. Communicating to the different, righting inequality, and democratising access to intercultural heritage have become inseparable tasks for getting out of this time of mean abundance.[41]

The multicultural discourse

The prefix "multi" of multiculturism as the replacement for the prefix "mono" (we refer to the monoculturalism that had dominated a good part of the ethnocentric character of modernity and colonialism) was driven as the Western face of postcolonial ideology which from the metropolis, from the centres of power, reclaimed the politics of identity and otherhood, coinciding with the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the consolidation of ethnic minorities in the United States and English-speaking countries in what was known as the "politically correct", understood as a strategic fusion of currents coming from French poststructuralism (Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida) and deconstructive Marxism (Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe).

40 N. García Canclini, *Diferentes, desiguales y desconectados*, cit., 15.
41 N. García Canclini, *Diferentes, desiguales y desconectados,* cit., 214.

The postmodern concept of multiculturalism, as has been seen by certain theoreticians such as Lotte Philipsen,[42] is the example of the differentiation of many specific cultures – the majority, immigrant – that live in the Western metropolis. The multicultural signifies the cohabitation of different ethnic and cultural groups who negotiate a common framework of citizenship but always taking the West as a privileged subject of knowledge. From the perspective of this "polycentric" vision, the world consists of multiple dynamic cultural places, many possible points of view; as Robert Stam and Ella Shohat[43] argue, this emphasis on polycentrism does not refer to spatial points of origin but to "fields of power", energy, and struggle. The prefix "poly", more than alluding to an infinite list of centres of power, introduces systematic principle of differentiation, relationality, and bond. No single community or any part of the world, whatever its economic or political power, finds itself privileged from the epistemological point of view.

In 1994, one of the pioneers of multicultural ideology, the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, in "The Politics of Recognition",[44] defending the need for "recognition" by minority or subaltern groups and some forms of feminism, was the trigger for what is known as the politics of multiculturalism. Taylor holds the thesis that our identity is shaped in part by recognition or the lack of it and also often by the "false" recognition of the "other". This leads to thinking that an individual or a group of people can suffer a real damage, an authentic "deformation", if the people that surround them show a limited, degrading, or contemptable picture of them. Taylor demands that all value judgements about the "other" presuppose a fusion of normative horizons in order not to fall into favourable or premature judgements that would be condescending and ethnocentric.

According to Taylor, if we wish to understand the intimate connection between identity and recognition, we should take into account a decisive characteristic of human life: its "dialogic" character, the capacity of human language for self-expression. And by language Taylor alludes both to the language of art and to that of gesture, that of love; languages that we learn through our exchange with others: "The genesis of the human mind is in this sense not monological (not something each person accomplishes on his or her own) but dialogical", argues Taylor.[45] And he concludes:

42 Lotte Philipsen, *Globalizing Contemporary Art* (Copenhagen: Aarhus University Press, 2010), 51.

43 Robert Stam and Ella Shohat, "Contested Histories: Eurocentrism, Multiculturalism, and the Media", in David Theo Goldberg (ed.), *Multiculturalism. A Critical Reader* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), 296-325.

44 Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", in Charles Taylor (ed.), *Multiculturalism: Examining The Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994).

45 Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", cit., 63.

> Thus my discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others [...] My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others.[46]

It is in this context that the theories of the US educator Peter McLaren make sense. In his initial reflections about the phenomenon of the multicultural, McLaren distinguishes between a conservative multiculturalism, a liberal one, and other liberal-left one which he calls "critical multiculturalism" and which, in contrast to the conservative (for which the separatism between ethnic groups is subordinated to the hegemony of the WASP and its fixed canon about how to act in a way that is "politically correct"[47]), shows the possible violations in which this equality can flow into unequal access to goods in the social arena. Hence the term "critical multiculturalism" shared by Mexican-American, Latin, and feminist minorities, which consists of considering, as García Canclini[48] said, differences as related and not as separate identities. This way of conceiving ethnic differences in a relational form would favour the construction of a new form of *mestizaje* which, in McLaren's words, would not be:

> [...] a doctrine of identity based on cultural bricolage or a form of bric-a-brac subjectivity, but a critical practice of cultural negotiation and translation that attempts to transcend the contradictions of the dominant Western dualistic thinking.[49]

He adds that the critique of the dominant culture, rather than being made from each group, would be a multicultural resistance. Also writing in the 1990s in the US, dominated by the *melting pot* phenomenon from the field of social sciences, the cultural critic Fredric Jameson, in his essay "On Cultural Studies" (1993),[50] attempts to define the field of research, presenting cultural studies as a "post-disciplinary" project which defies any historical approach and which seeks to inscribe a series of academic works referring to pluralism in what Deleuze called "microgroups" (feminism, black politics, the gay movement, Chicano studies, popular and mass cultures) and their particular identities. Certain differences (race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality) would collide to constitute a new object of post-disciplinary study that would affect the areas

46 Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", cit., 65.

47 Peter McLaren, "White Terror and Oppositional Agency: Towards a Critical Multiculturalism", in David Theo Goldberg (ed.), *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader,* cit., 45-74.

48 N. García Canclini, *La globalización imaginada* (Mexico: Paidós, 2001), 110.

49 P. McLaren, "White Terror and Oppositional Agency: Towards a Critical Multiculturalism", cit., 67.

50 Frederic Jameson, "On Cultural Studies", *Social Text* 34 (1993), 17-52.

of sociology, anthropology, history, and literature. In particular, Jameson highlights anthropology which, far from being a traditional discipline, is the object of a "convulsive textual and methodological transformation". It would be an anthropology understood – according to the foundational guidelines of James Clifford, George Marcus, and Michael Fischer – as a new class of ethnology, a new "interpretative anthropology" or textual anthropology in the framework of the identity politics of the new social movements or microgroups.

To dispel the monological, Jameson welcomes the celebration and analysis of new types of structural complexity and mixture per se that strengthen the creation of groups, their articulation, and their space. As Jameson argues, it is:

> [...] a situation in which stable cultural objects, works, or texts, are to be rewritten as dialogically antagonistic moves in struggle between groups (which very specifically includes the achievement of group consciousness as one of its aims), moves which tend to express themselves affectively in the form of loathing or envy.[51]

Questioning multiculturalism

During the 1990s, multiculturalism was defended and defamed, idealised and condemned, both as a pedagogic and cultural instrument and from its political dimension. As can be read in *Third Text*, institutional multiculturalism is a regulating instrument developed by the West to strengthen its cultural hegemony and perpetuate the hierarchy according to which Western artists obtain their recognition on the basis of their own individual merits, while non-Western artists are accepted only to the extent that they represent an ethnic community and a local culture to which they or their ancestors belong.[52]

Multiculturalism was presented with its benefits and its weaknesses, and these were accepted by a good number of cultural theoreticians in the field of the visual arts who considered it to be a discriminatory instrument through which Western cultural institutions could handle the other as someone or something so different that it needed to be named in a different way. As Rasheed Araeen

51 Frederic Jameson, "On Cultural Studies", 48.

52 Sean Cubitt, "In the Beginning: *Third Text* and the Politics of Art", in Rasheed Araeen, Sean Cubbitt and Ziauddin Sardar (eds.), *The Third Text Reader on Art, Culture and Theory* (London and New York: Continuum, 2005), 5.

points out, while there is nothing bad in multiculturalism per se, it has nonetheless been used by the West as a cultural instrument to "ethnicise" the non-white population with the aim of being able to administer and better control its aspirations to equality. And, in the same way, it serves as a smokescreen to hide the contradictions of a white society unable to renounce its imperial legacy.[53]

Multiculturalism applied to the field of the visual arts would be, in Araeen's opinion, rationalised by the "anything goes" attitude of postmodernism often in complicity with the postcolonial discourse. The problem is not located within postmodernism, but extends in time towards colonialism and the form in which native artists responded to that which was imposed on them as a discourse of modern civilisation. And Araeen asks:

> Did these artists succumb to this domination, producing pastiches of western art, or was it a starting point for a painful journey which eventually took them to the modern metropolis? What exactly did they do in the metropolis? Did they only produce second or third rate derivative works, as we are told by art institutions and their spokespersons who call themselves art critics and historians?[54]

To sum up, in Araeen's judgement, the dominant Western notion of multiculturalism would be the main obstacle that would confront us in our attempt to change the system and create an international paradigm in which what counts is the work of art, with its own roles for production and legitimisation in terms of aesthetics, historical formation, place, and meaning. Roles not necessarily derived from any original culture.[55] On the other hand, for Jean Fisher[56] one of the greatest paradoxes of multiculturality was precisely the integration of black and non-European artists into the system of Western art and, specifically into its historiography, its market, its aesthetic, and its critical values. Thus, the exhibition of a greater number of non-European artists by Western galleries and museums did not always respond to a willingness to

53 Rasheed Araeen, "New Internationalism, or the Multiculturalism of Global Bantustans", in Jean Fisher (ed.), *Global Visions. Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts* (London: Kala Press, 1994), 3-12.

54 Rasheed Araeen, "New Internationalism, or the Multiculturalism of Global Bantustans", in Jean Fisher (ed.), *Global Visions. Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts,* cit., 1994, 9.

55 Rasheed Araeen, "New Internationalism, or the Multiculturalism of Global Bantustans", in Jean Fisher (ed.), *Global Visions. Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts,* cit., 10.

56 Jean Fisher, "The Syncretic Turn. Cross-Cultural Practices in the Age of Multiculturalism", in Lia Gangitano and Steven Nelson (eds.), *New Histories: The Institute of Contemporary Art* (Boston: The Institute of Contemporary Art, 1996), 32-39.

challenge Eurocentric aesthetic theories and their hierarchical value system. Quite the contrary: they were participating in a new phenomenon of "exoticisation" through an appropriation of signs of cultural difference:

> Globe-trotting has become a popular curatorial pastime, resulting in "geo-ethnic entertainments" that maintain the unequal intellectual hierarchies between the art practices of Europeans and non-Europeans, while also masking their unequal economic and power relations.[57]

And while for the West to frame and evaluate cultural productions through its own stereotypes of otherhood is to reduce them to a spectacle of racial essentialism or ethnic typology, for the artistic and economic survival of black and non-European artists it implies accepting the commercialised signs of ethnicity, which makes them complicit in the Western desire for the "exotic other". The "exoticised" artist is labelled not as a thinking subject or an individual innovator but as the bearer of homogenising signs and cultural meanings. To be seen "within" the framework of ethnicity is to be seen "outside" of a rigorous historical and philosophical debate; the problem resides in how to create a space from which it is possible to speak and to be heard without compromising the real vital experience whatever its origins might be.

The need to reconceptualise cultural marginality, more than being a problem of "invisibility" is one of excessive visibility in terms of interpreting cultural difference as something that is easily negotiable. The fact that black and non-European artists are expected to produce an art both ethnic and political, while other positions are implicitly ignored, suggests that visibility has not been adequate to provide the conditions for an independent speaking subject. On the contrary, these strategies have been counterproductive for art: when work is incorporated within identity politics, it tends to become a subcategory of sociology or anthropology, diminishing both its aesthetic and its critical efficacy. In Fisher's view, an absurd situation arises in which it is expected that black artists make art only about "black" questions as if, for example, racism were not an issue of representation for the dominant white culture.

The solution would not be so much the adoption of the model of hybridisation, extensively conceptualised by Homi K. Bhabha,[58] as syncretism, which

57 Jean Fisher, "The Syncretic Turn. Cross-Cultural Practices in the Age of Multiculturalism", cit., 35.

58 Fisher refers to Homi Bhabha's text "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817", in Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (ed.), *Race, Writing and Difference* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 163-184.

does not imply fixed elements but a contingent affiliation of disparate terms that are able to challenge positions or alter relations of permeable borders. And if hybridisation depends on the visibility of a sign that seeks to establish itself and attempt to resolve all ambiguity, syncretism points to relations that are constantly mobile, which operate in the structure of languages and at the level of performance, as shown by the works of Jimmie Durham, Gabriel Orozco, and Santi Quesada, who live and work in the midst of a plurality of cultural signs.[59] In the case of Jimmie Durham, we would be speaking of an artist who throughout the 1980s played with various rhetorical categories, one of which was to parody the metalanguage of ethnography – a Western discipline complicit in the repression of Native American cultures – through the representation of false ethnographic artefacts in installations such as *On Loan from the Museum of the American Indian* (1985), or other pieces which undermine Western aesthetics through a strategy of neoprimitivism – "savage idiot" – very appealing to the white audience that seeks a redemptive post-industrial utopia.

Postmodernity and multiculturalism were seen as problems that had to be deconstructed and replaced by other ways of thinking about plurality and difference in a "politically correct" way. In this sense, after a meticulous analysis of the political-social situations of the countries of Eastern Europe and, specifically, those of the Balkans as a space outside of time onto which the West projects its "phantasmagorical content" (a concept similar to Edward Said's "Orientalism"), the Slovenian philosopher and sociologist Slavoj Žižek[60] gives us as examples two films, one from the Macedonian filmmaker Milcho Manchevski, *Before the Rain* (1994) made in the independent Republic of Macedonia, which mixes three stories – about an Orthodox Christian monk, the director of a British news agency, and a native Macedonian war photographer – and the other from Emir Kusturica, *Underground* (1995),[61] as the latest ideological products of liberal Western multiculturalism. Both films offer to the gaze of liberal Western viewers precisely what they wanted to see in the Balkan war: the spectacle of mythic, incomprehensible, and timeless passions which contrast with the decadent and anaemic life of the West. The weak point of the universal multiculturalist gaze would not be in its incapacity to "throw out the dirty

59 Jean Fisher, "The Syncretic Turn. Cross-Cultural Practices in the Age of Multiculturalism", cit., 38.

60 Slavoj Žižek, "Multiculturalism or the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism", *New Left Review* 225 (September-October 1997), 28-51.

61 In this film, Emir Kusturica used the motif of the old European fairy tale in which during the night, while people are sleeping, industrious dwarfs emerge from their hiding places to finish the work so that in the morning people find them completed magically. See S. Žižek, "Multiculturalism or the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism", cit., 39.

water without losing the baby",[62] in Žižek's words − which suggests establishing an analogy with psychoanalysis whose purpose would not be to dispose of the dirty water (the symptoms, the pathological "tics") in order to save the baby (the centre of the healthy ego) – but rather to throw out the baby (suspend the patient's ego) to confront the patient with his or her own "dirty water", with the symptoms and fantasies that structure his pleasure. And the merit of the film mentioned earlier, *Underground*, is that, without being conscious of it, this dirty water becomes visible; which leads one to ask: how can this multiculturalist ideological poetry be placed into today's global capitalism while keeping present the fact that the real problem continues to be the universalism of today's societies? Or how does the universe of capital relate to the form of the nation-state in the era of global capitalism? And Žižek answers:

> With the direct multinational functioning of Capital, we are no longer dealing with the standard opposition between metropolis and colonized countries; a global company as it were cuts its umbilical cord with its mother-nation and treats its country of origin as simply another territory to be colonized. [...] Today's global capitalism is thus again a kind of "negation of negation", after national capitalism and its internationalist/colonialist phase. [...] the final moment of this process is the paradox of colonization in which there are only colonies, no colonizing countries – the colonizing power is no longer a Nation-State but directly the global company. In the long term, we shall all not only wear Banana Republic shirts but also live in banana republics.[63]

And, without doubt, the ideal form of the ideology of this capitalism is that of multiculturalism, an attitude which, from a kind of empty global position, treats every local culture as the colonialist treats the colonised people: as "natives", whose majority must be studied and carefully respected. That is to say, the relationship between traditional imperial colonialism and global capitalist auto-colonialism is exactly the same as the relationship between Western cultural imperialism and multiculturalism. In the same way that the paradox of colonialization without the colonising metropolis of nation-state variety ex-

62 In relation to the expression "throw out the dirty water without losing the baby", Žižek adds: "it is deeply wrong to assert that, when one throws out nationalist dirty water – 'excessive' fanaticism – one should be careful not to lose the baby of 'healthy' national identity, so that one should trace the line of separation between the proper degree of 'healthy' nationalism which guarantees the necessary minimum of national identity, and 'excessive' nationalism." See S. Žižek, "Multiculturalism or the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism", cit., 38.

63 S. Žižek, "Multiculturalism or the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism", cit., 44.

ists within global capitalism, in multiculturalism there is respectful Eurocentric distance towards local cultures, without putting down roots in any specific culture.[64]

In other words, according to Žižek, multiculturalism is a form of racism that is denied, inverted, self-referential, a "racism with a distance": it respects the identity of the "other", and conceives of it as an authentic closed community towards which the multiculturalist maintains a distance that is made possible thanks to his or her privileged universal position. Multiculturalism would be, in Žižek's view, a racism that empties its position of all positive content but which equally maintains this position as a privileged "empty point of universality" from which one can appreciate and depreciate other cultures: multicultural respect for the specificity of the "other" is precisely the form of reaffirming its own superiority.[65] And Žižek notes:

> The conclusion to be drawn is thus that the problematic of multiculturalism – the hybrid coexistence of diverse cultural life-worlds – which imposes itself today is the form of appearance of its opposite, of the massive presence of capitalism as universal world system: it bears witness to the unprecedented homogenization of the contemporary world. It is effectively as if, since the horizon of social imagination no longer allows us to entertain the idea of an eventual demise of capitalism – since, as we might put it, everybody silently accepts that capitalism is here to stay – critical energy has found a substitute outlet in fighting for cultural differences which leave the basic homogeneity of the capitalist world-system intact. So we are fighting our PC battles for the rights of ethnic minorities, of gays and lesbians, of different life-styles, and so on, while capitalism pursues its triumphant march.[66]

The intercultural discourse facing diversity

From the field of political philosophy, multiculturalism soon gave way to another "ism" – interculturalism – based on new possibilities in the relation between cultures, which seemed to transcend the specifics of history, race, language, and time. We are a long way from multicultural ideology understood as a pluralism *tout court* that continued to maintain a space of hierarchies, and

64 S. Žižek, "Multiculturalism or the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism", cit., 44.
65 S. Žižek, "Multiculturalism or the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism", cit., 44.
66 S. Žižek, "Multiculturalism or the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism", cit., 46.

the phase of multiculturalism was overtaken by that of interculturalism, that is to say, that of the exchange of cultures through nations, with all that this implies in terms of a reappropriation of the national and its renewed critical contacts with the international.

The intercultural presents itself as a "third state", overcoming the old dichotomy of identity/difference and the dialogues between different national contexts through a greater promotion of subjectivities, the particular realities of each human being beyond the concept of the ethnic, and a greater dialogue between the universal and the local, understanding the local (synonym of place or location) more as relational and contextual, concerning space or scale. In a way that was different from the multiculturalist, which would distance itself from the other through a privileged universality, the interculturalist – at least in its more idealised manifestations – would erase distinctions, defending above all a shared universality ("we are all universal", "we are all exotic").

According to Arjun Appadurai, one of the first authors to defend interculturalism as a response to a world in which national and geographical borders are in constant flux, we live in a world in which "modernity is at large, irregularly self-conscious, and unevenly experienced".[67] Which would mean a total break with all types of past that, according to Appadurai, implies a theory of rupture adopted by the communications media and migratory movements and explained through three concepts formulated by Appadurai: the work of the imagination, the production of locality, and the idea of the post-nation.

The work of the imagination

Starting from the basis that electronic communications media transform the area of mass media, in the same way that they do in relation to the traditional media of expression and communication, Appadurai understands the imagination as a social and collective act and, from this, the work of the imagination as a constitutive element of modern subjectivity in the post-electronic society.

> In suggesting that the imagination in the postelectronic world plays a newly significant role, I rest my case on three distinctions. First, the imagination has broken out of the special expressive space of art, myth, and ritual and has now become part of the quotidian mental work of ordinary people in many societies. It has entered the logic of ordinary life from which it has been largely sequestered.

67 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 3.

> [...] The second distinction is between imagination and fantasy. [...] The third distinction is between the individual and collective senses of the imagination.[68]

In this last aspect, Appadurai underlines that, more than the imagination as a faculty of "specially endowed (charismatic) individuals", it would have to be referred to as a property of groups.[69]

One of the main changes in the global cultural order provoked by cinema, television, and video technology, as well as by other more traditional means of communication, would – according to Appadurai – have to do with imagination at a social level. And if imagination (an imagination as a property of individuals and not as the faculty of brilliant individuals) and fantasy can be considered antidotes to all social experience, it is true that in the last two decades many people started to feel and imagine things jointly, as a group – in what the author calls a "community of sentiment" – in the same way as in their own lives through the prisms of the possible lives presented by the communications media. In this way, fantasy would become a social practice implicated in the fabrication of many social lives for many people in many countries.[70] And as Appadurai makes clear, more than being about a ludic version of the imagination, what this new play with the imagination proposes is the possibility of confirming a variety of "imagined communities"[71] which generate new forms of political action, new types of collective expression, and also new needs for social discipline and vigilance on the part of the elites: "Thus the biographies of ordinary people are constructions (or fabrications) in which the imagination plays an important role".[72]

Modern ethnicity

In the chapters "Global ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology" and "Life after Primordialism", which tell of the step from primordialist theories, which explained the ethnicities of the twentieth century, to culturalist and transnational theories, in which many national ethnicities –

68 A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, cit., 5-8.

69 A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, cit., 8.

70 A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, cit., 28.

71 The concept of "imagined community" was coined by Benedict Anderson, who held that a nation is a community constructed socially or, in other words, imagined by the people who perceive themselves to be members of the group. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread on Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

72 A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, cit., 54.

mobilised as a result of international emigration – operate beyond the limits of the nation-state, Appadurai puts forward the idea of the "post-national" as well as the question of post-national subjects. We would thus be absorbed into a process towards a global order within which the nation-state becomes obsolete and is replaced by other formations of loyalty and identity, and by alternative forms of organising the traffic of resources, images, and ideas; forms that either defy the nation-state in an active way or are antagonistic alternatives which forge loyalties on a grand scale. The nation-state is in crisis, and part of this is because it maintains a relationship with its post-national others that is more and more tense and violent.[73]

Thinking beyond the nation

And it is thus that the new ethnic movements would reclaim a new understanding of the relations between history and social agency, the field of affection and that of politics, large-scale factors and local values. In this sense, inasmuch as states lose their monopoly regarding the idea of the nation, it is perfectly understandable that groups of all kinds try to use the logic of the nation to conquer the state – or a part of it:

> This logic finds its maximum power to mobilize where the body meets the state, that is, in those projects that we call ethnic and often misrecognize as atavistic.[74]

The production of the local

In relation to the nation-state, Appadurai is particularly concerned with the new meanings of the local in the framework of all kind of transnational destabilisations. On this question, Appadurai asks: "What is the place of locality in schemes about global cultural flow? Does anthropology retain any special rhetorical privilege in a world where locality seems to have lost its ontological moorings?"[75] Hence the way that Appadurai understands the local as something relational and contextual rather than something spatial or a mere matter of scale. He understands it as a complex phenomenological quality, constitut-

73 A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, cit., 166.
74 A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization,* cit., 157.
75 A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, cit., 178.

ed by a series of relations between social immediacy, the technologies of social interaction, and the relativity of contexts.[76]

Appadurai is also concerned with local subjects, localisable contexts in a world that has "deterritorialised", a diasporic and transnational world; a world where electronic mass communications media are transforming the relationships between information and mediation. Appadurai understands the local as something "fragile"; destabilised by the movement of people and groups, full of contradictions and displaced by formations of new types of neighbourhood, above all virtual ones. And it is thus how numerous human groups and displaced populations – deterritorialised and vagrant, making up the ethnoscapes of the contemporary world – are enveloped in the construction of the local, in the structuring of sentiment, generally as a response to the erosion and dispersion of neighbourhoods as coherent social formations. And if this dislocation between neighbourhoods and the local is not new and does not lack historical precedents, what *is* new is the dislocation between these processes and the discourses that today surround the nation-state determined by the electronic communications media, including the discourses of economic liberalisation, multiculturalism, human rights, and the claims of refugees.[77]

From another perspective, the dramaturg and writer Rustom Bharucha, who in a first text of 1990, *Theatre and the World. Performance and the Politics of Culture*,[78] started to formulate some initial theses about intercultural theory in the area of theatre, in the essay "Interculturalism and its Discriminations. Shifting the Agendas of the National, the Multicultural and the Global",[79] refers to the political philosophy of interculturality as an exchange of cultures through nations. Together with the tendencies of globalisation (and resistance to globalisation) incorporated into intercultural practices, it becomes necessary to highlight the frontier areas in which the agendas of "inter" and multiculturalism converge and separate again. From the intercultural point of view, the national would have no future:

> The world is in the process of moving from the nationalist phase to the cultural phase, and it is preferable to distinguish cultural areas more than nations, with

76 A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, cit., 178.

77 A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, cit., 1999. See also Arjun Appadurai, *The future as cultural fact: essays on the global condition* (London: Verso, 2013).

78 Rustom Bharucha, *Theatre and the World. Performance and the Politics of Culture* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2005).

79 Rustom Bharucha, "Interculturalism and its Discriminations. Shifting the Agendas of the National, the Multicultural and the Global", *Third Text* 46 (spring 1999).

> all which that implies in terms of a certain disdain towards the nationalist discourses or resistance, which are described as coercive, totalising, elitist, authoritarian, essentialist, and reactionary. And in this context, the intercultural is the best option that can explain these dialogues and these relations beyond biased or inverted racisms, xenophilia, xenophobia, veiled authoritarianism, ideological patronage, overidentification with and/or alienation from the other.[80]

Thus, Rustom Bharucha defends intercultural theory as a way to recognise not only that culture is a changing field that encompasses the set of social processes of production, creation, and consumption of the meaning of social life, but which is also fundamentally based on mechanisms of interaction and confrontation. Culture cannot be seen as an adjective but should be seen as a noun. Or to put it another way: in using the term "cultural" we refer to a dimension that takes account of differences, contrasts, and comparisons between cultures and not something that each group carries in itself; it is a defence of interculturality understood as the form in which each individual relates to alterity – which is to say, with the "other", with that from which he or she is different – and recognises it on a level of equality. The intercultural attitude is precisely that which arises from the encounter with the strange, the exotic, and from respect and tolerance of our differences.

Utopia and antagonism in globalisation

The fact that the concept "global" and its neologism "globalisation" have positioned themselves with such force since the 1990s in political, social, economic, and cultural debates leads us to think that we are witnessing a vastly ambitious process which would equate the notion of globalisation to an epistemological concept that understands history and capitalism within the same dynamic, with all that this implies in terms both of hope towards an uncertain and unknown future (hence the concept of utopia), and of closing down unfulfilled promises. As Pablo Dávalos[81] argues, the discourse of globalisation is entering the terrain of philosophy as a notion that creates a field of meanings about re-

80 Rustom Bharucha, "Interculturalism and its Discriminations. Shifting the Agendas of the National, the Multicultural and the Global", cit., 9.

81 Pablo Dávalos, "Utopía y atopía en la globalización" [Utopia and atopia in globalisation], *Alai, América Latina en Movimiento*. Available at: http://alainet.org/active/5681&lang=es (consulted 5 April 2014).

ality, the human being, and its possibilities of social transformation. A notion that reframes the old concept of totality tied to the theoretical body of Marxism and to a concept of reality understood as a structured and dialectical whole in which any act can be understood conceptually.

As the discourse of globalisation has evolved, raised up by new telematic technologies, it has incorporated various conceptual lines, some of which point to "utopias of globalisation", to those cultural processes that approach times and spaces (and which would take account of concepts such as translocal, deterritorialisation, liquid cultures, the theory of the spheres, "glocalism"), while others allude to its contradictions (movements of social and citizen resistance to a society without utopias and a history as "no place", from Seattle to Porto Alegre and Mumbai). Of these and others we will seek to speak in the following pages.

Empire and multitude

If deconstruction was one of the major *ethos* of postmodernism in its disaffection towards grand narratives and its support for fragmentary discourses, then without doubt it is deterritorialisation that supplants deconstruction within the framework of the global: overcoming the concept of the centre, as was already shown by Hardt and Negri in their decisive essay *Empire* (2000), that which dominates now are deterritorialised spaces, peripheral spaces, displaced spaces: the places of the new geographies of the global, which invite us to draw an artistic panorama dominated by some new cartographies in which that which dominates are journeys, displacements, migrations, diasporas – and all this under a fundamental impulse: that of differences.

Geography, ethnography, memory, and translation are some consequences of this "global effect" which, despite having its most notable manifestations in the first years of the twentieth-first century, nonetheless follows a genealogy that traverses the final years of high modernity, years dominated by the leading role of attitudes and processes beyond formal positioning, as well as the moment of postmodernism and postcolonialism, marked by the irruption of the posing of the differences that question the hegemony of the monocultural discourse, ethnocentrism, and the Western gaze.

In this new state of the global, a decisive role was played by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's 2000 reflections when, in the face of irreversible globalisation in the area of economic and cultural exchange and the energising of contemporary geographies, they defined our actual times with a renewed concept of empire which has nothing to do with the colonial. Hardt and Negri

ask: what does empire mean? Empire is understood as a new global form of sovereignty, made up of multiple national and supranational organisms that invite decentralisation and deterritorialisation in the context of the global economy. In contrast to imperialism (the imperial form of government), Empire does not establish a territorial centre of power – the empire would be there where capital is accumulated in Singapore, Wall Street, Harvard, or the most remote part of Black Africa – and thus there is already no hegemonic centre or fixed barriers in the new "cartography of the non-place":

> We think there is no place of centralization of the empire, that it is necessary to speak of the no-place, as a metaphor of multiple and undifferentiated places. [...] But the places of command cross everything, there where there are new hierarchies and new forms of exploitation.[82]

In a new work in 2004, *Multitude*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri contributed a renewed concept of "multitude", which no longer presented the negative connotations of the masses who would never be able to act on their own initiative and who would be extremely vulnerable to all kinds of external manipulation, but rather involves a social component of great activity: the multitude encloses a great internal diversity, characterised by communal life and guaranteeing a considerable individual freedom within its own cultural differences. The multitude would not be a mass of people, but rather it would be composed of a heterogeneous jungle of ideas, things, actions, and singular attitudes. Multiple attitudes: the multitude would transcend the national borders of the nation-state, it would be a category closer to an intercultural set of people, of conventions, of actions, while the nation would assume a unique identity.[83]

Following this line, Paolo Virno in his A *Grammar of the Multitude*[84] developed the concept of multitude in a different way from that of Hardt and Negri. He sees the multitude as the result of the process of post-Fordist production: just as today's consumer is a by-product of the transition of advanced capitalism from a market of products towards a market of symbols, the multitude is the product of the transformation of the process of production. In contrast to Fordism, aspects such as flexibility, language, communication, and

82 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

83 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude. War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004).

84 Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude. For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of life* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004).

emotional relationships have acquired considerable importance in numerous activities. And these, as Pascal Gielen claims, are the components to which the multitude responds. And, finally, what Virno does share with Hardt and Negri is the same way of understanding the multitude as something flexible, hybrid, in constant flux, and deterritorialised. On the other hand, and following Pascal Gielen, the multitude would feed a permanent feeling of "not-feeling-at-home": technological developments such as the internet and low-cost travel create a real and virtual mobility that allows the multitude to move all around the world and to be everywhere at any time: "The exercise of power, hitherto localizable because it was based on territory, is moving to a space that is in constant flux".[85]

After the postmodern period in which vertical mobility was used to try to deconstruct the difference between high and low cultures, now it would be more about a horizontal mobility that drives us to distinct artistic and cultural experiences[86] and in which the world of art feels particularly implicated. Gielen refers to an artistic multitude that, although dependent on subsidies from national governments – at least in Europe – is finding a good number of alternatives both abroad and in the country of origin, which allows the escape from the "ghettos" of national governments: "It is precisely in this dependence on the many" – Gielen points out – "that the individual artist can afford even more singularity, and thus be absorbed together with countless peers into the murmuring multitude".[87] Following Pascal Gielen, who in turn shows his proximity to Virno's theories, the central quality of our days is: mobility, flexibility in work, communication and language, happiness, detachment, and adaptability. In other words, the immaterial worker can be connected in any place and at any time. And it would no longer be so much physical as mental mobility.

From rhizome to spheres theory

It is within the framework of the global, where what counts is another type of negotiation between the local and the global, in which a new model of the network was imposed that was closer to the concept of the sphere – as suggested

85 Pascal Gielen, *The Murmuring of the Artistic Multitude. Global Art, Memory and Post-Fordism* (Amsterdam: Antennae, Baliz, 2009), 16-17.

86 P. Gielen, *The Murmuring of the Artistic Multitude. Global Art, Memory and Post-Fordism,* cit., 17.

87 P. Gielen, *The Murmuring of the Artistic Multitude. Global Art, Memory and Post-Fordism,* cit., 17.

by Peter Sloterdijk in "Foreword to the Theory of Spheres" – than to that of the network.[88] Thus, while networks and their philosophical derivative, the rhizome, are good for describing unexpected long-distance connections from local points, spheres are useful to describe local atmospheric conditions, fragile and complex.[89] While networks are good for underlining borders and movements, spheres are good for matrices and coverings.

Beside the "anaemic and anorexic" character of networks, spheres are not anaemic but rather complex ecosystems in which life forms define their "immunity" by means of creating protecting walls, inventing elaborate systems of "air conditioning". And while both networks and spheres are indispensable ideas for understanding globalisation – an empty term that can be defined only from localities and through the connections that the global can generate – it is certain that, as Peter Sloterdijk argues, there is a clear connection between the phenomenon of globalisation and what the author calls spherology (*Sphärologie*) or the "theory of the spheres".

Following Sloterdijk in response to Jean-Christophe Royoux, the electronic and telemetric globalisation represents a third way in globalisation. It is the final stage of a process that began in the era of Greek cosmology. But, at the same time, it is the product of a radical disagreement thanks to which human beings had to abandon the privilege of inhabiting a true cosmos, which is to say, a comfortable and closed world. The cosmos, as conceived by the Greeks, was imagined in the form of a huge and symmetrical bubble. Aristotle and his disciples were responsible for this idea of the cosmos composed of concentric and celestial spheres of increasing diameter: a model of the world that would no longer be operational. With respect to whether the spherology proposed by Sloterdijk implies a reconceptualisation of space that would allow the improvement of relations between human beings and the whole, Sloterdijk defends the idea of contemporary man as a kind of "curator" who plans the exhibition space in which he himself will live. Each man or woman has become a curator of a museum. And, in this sense, we could conclude that the art of installation is the

88 According to Bruno Latour, "Some Experiments in Art and Politics", *e-flux,* available at: http://eflux.com/journal/view/217 (consulted 14 April 2014), who in turn cites Peter Sloterdijk, while the concept of the network presents the defect of being "anaemic" or "anorexic", the concept of "sphere" suggests a complex ecosystem in which different forms of life define their immunity thanks to the design of walls of contention and elaborate systems of "air conditioning".

89 See Peter Sloterdijk, "Foreword to the Theory of Spheres", in Melik Ohanian and Jean-Christophe Royoux (eds.), *Cosmograms* (New York and Berlin: Sternberg, 2005), 223-241. Available at: http://sed.manchester.ac.uk/research/marc/news/seminars/Latour/COSMOGRAM-INTER-G B_Spheres.pdf. (consulted 23 April 2014).

common profession that everyone is obliged to practise: the innocence of the traditional habitat is lost for ever. In the face of the destruction of so many things, every inhabitant – regardless of which apartment, city, or country he or she comes from – will end up becoming a kind of planner of his or her own space. Each person in this sense is not only born free and equal but is also condemned to watch the space in which he or she lives to ensure the inhabitability of his or her environment. And this goes for both private and public space.

And if the main error of phenomenology was to submerge the individual in the "universal pool" that is the world – following Heidegger's dictum – Sloterdijk wants to show that this same immersion can be reproduced on the small scale at the moment in which a new-born child enters into contact with a toy in his or her crib: "The toy already possesses this capacity to support the existential ecstasy of the newcomer. And that's all it takes to guarantee an initial opening to the world. The opening is at the same time always also a concentration, and this concentration necessarily possesses the qualities of a relative closing – a closing for which a reopening is promised. Being-in-a-sphere is exactly this movement; it's the formatted *ek-stasy* of being outside of oneself but never immediately in the Whole. In truth, human beings are not naked existences in a global ecstasy. We are always endowed with and surrounded by a certain number of objects, by references that stand out against a horizon, but the opening of this horizon shouldn't obscure the fact that it also produces for us a relative closing. The horizon is an open circle that allows me to live in a sort of ecstatic interior. It's a half-open container. And in my opinion this half-opening can be more convincingly expressed by a spherological discourse than in a phenomenological language".[90]

The sphere is then a "relative world", formatted by its inhabitants, a world riddled with islands that should be understood as models of worlds within the world, miniatures of the world: "In my opinion", concludes Sloterdijk, "all human beings are necessarily and above all island dwellers".[91]

The Compositionist Manifesto

From the theories of Peter Sloterdijk about spheres, the philosopher Bruno Latour developed a new concept, that of "composition" (from the Latin *compo-*

90 Peter Sloterdijk, "Foreword to the Theory of Spheres" (2004), in Melik Ohanian and Jean-Christophe Royoux, *Cosmograms,* cit., 12.

91 Peter Sloterdijk, "Foreword to the Theory of Spheres", cit., 16.

nere, to compose),[92] which would allow us to travel from spheres to networks in the sense of returning to put things together without losing their heterogeneity, sharing a certain common vocabulary, but without any hierarchy:

> It is my solution to the modern/postmodern divide. Composition may become a plausible alternative to modernization. What can no longer be modernized, what has been postmodernized to bits and pieces, can still be composed.[93]

As Bruno Latour argues, repeating some of the concepts developed in his essay *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes: Essai d'anthropologie symétrique*,[94] although a manifesto cannot be of great use in today's times, nonetheless the idea of writing the "Compositionist Manifesto" would consist in recovering an antiquated genre starting with something like: "A specter haunts not only Europe but the world: that of compositionism. All the Powers of the Modernist World have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter".[95]

The term "composition" would also tend to concern art, painting, music, theatre, dance, choreography, and set design and could be seen as a synonym of the word "constructivism", although the important thing, Latour explains, is not whether an object is constructed or not but whether it is well or badly constructed; and above all what remains after the deconstructive processes that have been so promoted by postmodern thinkers. Dialectic now functions between the processes of "decomposition" and "recomposition". And it is from this perspective that Latour seeks to "recompose" three of the great pillars that had sustained the discourse of modernism: that of criticism, that of nature, and that of progress. But perhaps the most interesting thing is how, through the concept of composition, Latour develops an alternative to both the modernism of unique truths and to the postmodernism that is plagued with rela-

92 Bruno Latour, "An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto'", *New Literary History* 41 (2010), 471-490. Latour expressed for the first time his theories in his acceptance speech for the Kulturpreis at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, "Can Nature Be Recomposed? A Few Issues in Cosmopolitics" (9 February 2010).

93 Bruno Latour, "Some Experiments in Art and Politics", cit.

94 Bruno Latour, *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes: Essai d'anthropologie symétrique* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991). In this essay, conceived as an "anthropology of science", Latour, after assuming that the modern discourse – and, with it, the idea of progress – has ended, tries to connect the natural and social worlds (separated during modernity) arguing that the modern distinction between nature and culture has never existed. Latour advocates a new "parliament of things" in which natural and social phenomena and discourses about them are not seen as motionless objects to be studied by specialists but as hybrids based on the public interaction of people, things, and concepts.

95 Bruno Latour, "An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto'", cit., 473.

tivisms. Composition would thus be an alternative to the critical spirit of modernity when it comes to discrediting prejudices, casting light on notions, and urging on minds, and also to its universalism. Within his particular philosophy, Latour advocates a new ontology in which universalism and relativism live together without hierarchies, in which discourses about sustainability and ecology cohabit with cultural discourses, in which the speculative gives way to the material, to the objective as the opposite of the subjective, aesthetic, excessive, and superfluous. The questions of change and agency are neither radical nor revolutionary, they are quotidian and often imperceptible:

> We need to have a much more material, much more mundane, much more realist, much more embodied definition of the material world if we wish to compose a common world. [...] forcing all of us – scientists, activists, politicians alike – to compose the common world from disjointed pieces instead of taking for granted that the unity, continuity, agreement is already there.[96]

Hence the need to resort to – as Marx had done in the *Communist Manifesto* – a new manifesto, the Compositionist Manifesto:

> Why do I wish to reuse the oversized genre of the manifesto to explore this shift from future to prospect? Because in spite of the abyss of time, there is a tenuous relation between the Communist and the Compositionist Manifesto. At first sight, they seem utterly opposed. A belief in critique, in radical critique, a commitment to a fully idealized material world, a total confidence in the science of economics – economics, of all sciences! – a delight in the transformative power of negation, a trust in dialectics, a complete disregard for precaution, an abandon of liberty in politics behind a critique of liberalism, and above all an absolute trust in the inevitable thrust of progress. And yet, the two manifestos have something in common, namely the *search for the Common*. The thirst for the Common World is what there is of communism in compositionism, with this small but crucial difference: that it has to be slowly composed instead of being taken for granted and *imposed* on all. Everything happens as if the human race were on the move again, expelled from one utopia, that of economics, and in search of another, that of ecology. Two different interpretations of one precious little root, *eikos*, the first being a dystopia and the second a promise that as yet no one knows how to fulfill. How can a livable and breathable "home" be built for those errant masses. That is the only question worth raising in this Compositionist Manifesto.[97]

96 Bruno Latour, "An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto'", cit., 487.
97 Bruno Latour, "An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto'", cit., 488.

This step from economy to ecology through a materialist and ontological lens and a new faith in a future which Bruno Latour defines as "prospective"[98] constitutes the theoretic base of a good number of recent theoretical projects, such as those of Alain Badiou, Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari, who start from Latour's approach to develop complex views of some sectors of contemporary thought, such as the philosophical movement called Speculative Realism, which has a growing presence in artistic discourse, and the philosophical current of New Existentialism,[99] tied to a renewed notion of objectivity, which add new reflections to the field of anthropology centred in a political appropriation of the notion of the Anthropocene.

The Speculative Realism movement took its name from a symposium held at Goldsmiths College at the University of London in 2007 which featured interventions from, among others, the French philosopher Quentin Meillassoux,[100] a disciple of Alain Badiou, and the US philosopher Graham Harman, closer to Bruno Latour, who, contrary to the dominant forms of post-Kantian philosophy, defended a new approach to objects from the revival of a metaphysics that understands the real as a new ontology in which even human beings become objects, together with fire, cotton, or a tree.[101] This symposium was followed by another held at the University of the West of England in Bristol in 2008 entitled "Speculative Realism/Speculative Materialism", the immediate antecedent of exhibition projects such as *Blowup: Speculative Realities* (V2 Rotterdam, 2012-2013),[102] which proposed discussions about the non-human, that

98 "What makes the times we are living in so interesting [...] is that we are progressively discovering that, just at the time when people are despairing at realizing that they might, in the end, have 'no future', we suddenly have many *prospects*. There is a strong, ever so modernist, temptation to exclaim: 'Let's flee as before and *have our past future back*!' instead of saying: 'Let's stop fleeing, *break for good* with our future, turn our back, *finally*, to our past, and explore our new prospects, what lies ahead, the fate of things to come.'" Quoted by Bruno Latour, "An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto'", cit., 486.

99 In April 2014, a symposium entitled *The New Existentialism* was held in the space The Kitchen in New York with the presence of Emily Apter, Patricia Falguières, Tristan Garcia, John Kelsey, and Patrice Maniglier, as a meeting ahead of the publication of the text *The New Existentialism* (Tim Griffin, ed.) (Paris: Les presses du réel, 2014).

100 Of Quentin Meillassoux, see *Après la finitude. Essai sur la nécessité de la contingence* (Paris: Seuil, 2006). In this text, the philosopher proposes a new term, "correlationism", based on the theory that human beings could not exist without the world, nor the world without human beings. According to this thinker's point of view, there is a kind of dishonest manoeuvre in the field of philosophy which allows it to evade the problem of how to describe the world as if it were anterior to the human being.

101 Regarding this, see Levi R. Bryant, Nick Srnicek and Graham Harman, *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism* (Melbourne: Re-Press, 2011).

102 *Blowup: Speculative Realities* (exhibition catalogue) (V2 Rotterdam: 8 December 2012 – 12 January 2013). This edition of *Blowup* examined the how and why of speculative realism, ontology oriented towards objects (Object-Oriented Ontology, OOO), and artistic practices. Artists such as Tuur van Ba-

which is beyond the human, and other aspects of the "new materialism"; and that held at the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel in September 2013, "Speculations on Anonymous Materials",[103] which tried to create a new ontology for objects in line with the "Object-Oriented Philosophy" (OOP) of Graham Harman, which seeks a new place for objects within "radical philosophy" and liberates them from their condition of being mere surface outside any in-depth approach to reality. The author reclaims the return of the object (all things, both physical and fictitious, would be equally objects) as a new form of realism, which beyond the factual and the thing-oriented, does not give up its speculative dimension. All that exists are real objects conceived of as autonomous realities or individual substances. There is no direct relationship but rather an absolute rift between knowledge and the real, and between the real and the real in itself, which leads Harman to call his ontology realism without materialism."[104]

In addition, the magazine *Texte zur Kunst* dedicated its March 2014 issue to the topic *Spekulation/Speculation*,[105] bringing together contributions from theoreticians such as Steven Shaviro, Armen Avanessian, Suhail Malik, and Sophie Cras, who put forward different assessments from the artistic, theoretical, and curatorial point of view about the rise of speculative models in philosophy, art, literature, and the market.

The modern and the liquid

After his analysis of globalisation, in which Zygmunt Bauman came to the conclusion that it was characterised as much by the freedom of movement of peo-

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len & Revital Cohen, Cheryl Field and Karolina Sobecka examined various aspects of this "object-oriented ontology" as a vision not centred on the human and on the limits of knowledge.

103 *Speculations on Anonymous Materials* (exhibition catalogue) (Kassel: Fridericianum, 23 December 2013 – 26 January 2014) . In this show, various international artists including Yngve Holen, Josh Kline, Timur Si-Qin, and Antoine Catala reinterpreted the "anonymous materials" created by the new technological transformations of the twenty-first century. Rather than point towards new paradigms in the history of art or in the ideology of the exhibition space, the artists presented object and constellations found in daily life, and did not aspire to create independent artistic worlds, but rather to highlight the richness of images, materials, devices, and communications which surround us, placing special emphasis on an interaction with the materials which structure our daily lives and showing a clear lack of interest in any type of interpretation.

104 See Graham Harman, *Towards Speculative Realism* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2010).

105 See Steven Shaviro, "Speculative Realism – A Primer", in "Speculation", *Texte zur Kunst* 3 (March 2014). Other texts included in this monographic issue are: Armen Avanessian, "The Speculative End of the Aesthetic Regime", Suhail Malik, "The Value of Everything", and Rainald Goetz, "Speculative Realism".

ple as the unrestricted mobility of capital,[106] the author advanced his thinking in a new text of 2000, *Liquid Modernity*,[107] in which he used the notion of fluidity[108] as a metaphor to establish the end of a socially stable world, a world marked by the revolutionary drive and the search for a constant order. According to Bauman, fluids and their facility to "run out", "spill", "splash", and "leak" would constitute the appropriate metaphor for understanding the actual phase in the history of modernity, overcoming all sedentary habits and opting for nomadism, the lack of a fixed address, and not belonging to a state: "We are witnessing the revenge of nomadism over the principle of territoriality and settlement. In the fluid stage of modernity, the settled majority is ruled by the nomadic andexterritorial elite".[109]

Hence the existence of a planet crossed in all directions by "information motorways" in the sense that nothing which happens in any single part can, at least potentially, remain in an intellectual "outside". Thus, in a planet open to the free circulation of goods and merchandise, anything that happens in one place has repercussions in others. Nothing remains in a material "outside". Nothing remains intact and without contact. A unity of humanity – alluding to the succinct expression of Milan Kundera – as that generated by globalisation means that "no one can escape anywhere".[110]

In place of settlements, national economies, or political entities, in place of the city as a symbol of containment of the transitory, in place of the necessary order and discipline, the liquid phase of modernity – which would be equivalent to postmodernity – would undraw frontiers, unmake boundaries, even arriving at the core areas of our experience: our perception of time and space, individuality, work, and community.[111] Liquid would also be an adjective that would reflect the effects of globalisation, migrations, nomadism, tourism, the internet, and mobile telephony: that is to say, the great possibilities offered by information technology. But also, for the sociologist Bauman, the move from the solid to the liquid begins with the end of the historical avant-garde

106 Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization. The Human Consequences* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

107 Of Zygmunt Bauman, see *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000) and *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006).

108 "Fluidity" is the quality of liquids and gasses, claims Bauman in the prologue to his book *Liquid Modernity*. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica,* what distinguishes them from solids is that they "cannot sustain a tangential, or shearing, force when at rest" and so undergo "a continuous change in shape when subjected to such a stress". See Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity,* cit., 1.

109 Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity,* cit., 13.

110 Bauman cites Milan Kundera in *The art of novel* (London: Faber&Faber, 1986), 21.

111 Griselda Pollock, "Modernidad líquida y análisis transdisciplinar de la cultura", in Zygmunt Bauman, *Arte, ¿Líquido?* (Madrid: Sequitur, 2007), 28-29.

and today's art, which he localises in a series of creators from the 1960s and 1970s: Gustav Metzger, an artist for whom the destruction of a work was already predicted in the moment of its creation, or Jacques Villeglé, with his works based on tearing, taking on the fact that history is a factory of waste. More than creation or destruction, learning or forgetting, in Villeglé's case, history would be a living proof of the futility of these distinctions: "Nothing is born here to live long and nothing definitely dies".[112]

And, as Bauman holds:

> [These artists] are representative artists of the liquid modern era. [...] Time *flows* – it no longer "marches on". There is change, always change, ever new change, but no destination, no finishing point, and no anticipation of a mission accomplished. Every lived-through moment is pregnant with a new beginning *and* the end: once sworn antagonists, now Siamese twins.[113]

From culture-world to bare life

It is from this perspective that we believe it necessary to work in a sort of cartography with new concept-places and their renewed relations with art, culture, and the economy; economy and culture as symptoms of the new times or of what Gilles Lipovetsky and Jean Serroy call the culture-world, the culture of techno-capitalism which assumes a planetary vocation and invades all sectors of society. As Lipovetsky and Serroy argue, the fixed cosmos of unity, of the final meaning, of hierarchical classifications is no more, replaced by that of networks, flow, fashion, the market without limits or a centre of reference: "In hypermodern times culture has become a world in which the circumference is everywhere and the centre nowhere".[114]

A culture-world in which the humanist universal gives up its leading role to the concrete and social universal (no longer the ideal of the citizen of the world but the world without borders of capital and the multinationals, of cyberspace and consumption) and in which the economy-world acts according to a single set of norms, values, and aims: the *ethos* and the techno-capitalist system. A culture-world that takes on questions and problems of global di-

112 Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity,* cit., 38.

113 Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity,* cit., 41.

114 Gilles Lipovetsky and Jean Serroy, *La Culture-monde. Réponse à une société désorientée* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2008), 8.

mensions such as ecology, the economic crisis, immigration, poverty, and terrorism; but also questions of an existential character, such as identity, belief, and the crisis of feeling, or personality problems: a world, ultimately, which becomes a culture, culture which becomes world, as Lipovetsky and Serroy assert. A culture-world without territorial, economic, or territorial borders which overflows in all its principles the limits of the cultures derived from classical humanism. A culture-world that is neither mirror nor reflection of societies but the principle that begets them, that constructs them, that models them, and that makes them evolve.

And if, in the modern era, the cultural sphere had been driven by the dynamic of individualist ideology with its demands for liberty and equality, in the hypermodern era – which would correspond to globalisation – it is the economy and its power which is imposed as the first instance of cultural production. And it is this "hyperculture" that abandons the traditional binary oppositions such as high/low culture, anthropological culture/aesthetic culture, material culture/ideological culture and opts for a planetary constellation in which techno-scientific culture, the culture of the market, and that of the individual intertwine, via the cultures of media culture, networks, and ecology. A constellation that would generate a new type of creator/recreator/manipulator/communicator of images which we continue to call – out of inertia or because we have not found an alternative name – an artist.

The artist who takes on this culture-world is defined as an inhabitant of the global world and a participant in this micro-world: an artist interested in social discourse – not of class but of territories – not so much the creator of images as the investigator of them, who brings together, creates, questions, relates, and exhibits iconic or other information about subjects of a universal character in a format that Western society or "we" has validated as "art". An artist who uses that information not as a single object of analysis but as one more instrument, but privileging its status "as art" in order to unmask and denounce things that are censored, humiliated, violated, or harmed in today's world: democracy, justice, otherhood, migration, rootlessness, and diaspora. Subjects which rarely or never concern forms of life but rather expendable life ousted from the world, reduced to survival, the "bare life" that Giorgio Agamben proposes in his theory of marginalisation,[115] a life relegated to the margins of the social, merciless in the political, the legal, and the biological; a life that alienates, when it does not eliminate, citizens, whom it deprives of their rights as

115 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1995) (Stanford: Meridian, Crossing Aesthetics, 1998).

such, whom it abandons in the filth of corrupt legal systems, which turns the human being into the *homo sacer:* into an exile from all order and all benefit of society, handed over to non-existent "gods", and whose mere presence "stains" society.[116]

The counter-globalisation perspective

A year before Hardt and Negri published *Empire,* which can be considered as the "Bible" of globalisation – and, according to Slavoj Žižek, as the "Communist Manifesto for the Twenty-First Century"[117] – the anti-globalisation movement was born and with it a cycle of protests and mobilisations was initiated, with Seattle at the head,[118] based on a model of a high intensity of social divisiveness that was going to dominate a whole decade. Manuel Castells is perhaps one of the theoreticians who has known best how to reflect faithfully these two faces of globalisation: the "utopian" (globalisation as an objective and multidimensional process that affects the economy, science, technology, culture, communication) and the "diatopical" (anti-system) which, facing the loss of social and political control over a globalised decision-making system, favours the emergence of the anti-globalisation movement, communicated and organised via the internet and centred on symbolic protests.[119]

Beneath this anti-system, anti-capitalist, and anti-state wish, one can discern a clear renovation with ideological ties to the anarchist tradition that would enter the twenty-first century with more energy than the Marxist tradition, tainted by the historical practice of Marxism-Leninism during the twentieth century. As Barbara Epstein[120] argues, many radical activists, above all those at the centre of the anti-corporative and anti-globalisation movements, describe themselves as anarchists although, more than anarchism per se, it would involve a certain "anarchist sensibility". Unlike the radical Marx-

116 See Anthony Downey, "Zones of Indistinction. Giorgio Agamben's Bare Life and the Politics of Aesthetics", *Third Text,* vol. 23, 2 (March 2009), 110.

117 See Slavoj Žižek, "Have Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri rewritten the Communist Manifesto for the Twenty-First Century?", *Rethinking Marxism,* vol. 13, 3-4 (2001).

118 In the series of demonstrations that took place in Seattle at the end of November and beginning of December 1999, radical young activists blocked access to the meetings of the World Trade Organization, confronted the police, and captured the attention of the media to a mobilisation that, had it not been thus, would have passed unperceived outside of the left.

119 Manuel Castells, *Redes de esperanza e indignación* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2012).

120 Barbara Epstein, "Anarchism and the Anti-Globalization Movement", *Monthly Review,* vol. 53, 4 (September 2001), 1-14.

ists of the 1970s who devoured the writings of Marx and Lenin, for the anarchist activists, anarchism is a decentred organisational structure, rebelling against hierarchy and authority, based on ad hoc groups and associations and on taking decisions by consensus. For them, anarchism is important, above all, as an organisational structure and as a commitment to egalitarianism: "It is a form of politics that revolves around the exposure of the truth rather than strategy. It is a politics decidedly in the moment".[121]

Starting out from the theories of Murray Bookchin,[122] it would be necessary to distinguish between "social anarchism" and "personal anarchism" (or "lifestyle anarchism"): the first would be tied to the socialist tradition and the search for a transformation of society towards a more egalitarian post-capitalist order, while the second presents the phenomenon of anarchy as a state of being that can and should be confronted by the individual here and now – with an unbridgeable gulf separating the two perspectives. And it is precisely this "personal anarchism" – which understands anarchy as a matter of creating anarchic spaces, even in a provisional way, within existing social structures – that would find an echo in the spirit of certain anti-globalisation activisms for which politics and the sense of classical organisation gives way to the imagination, desire, and ecstasy, towards a growing fascination with the everyday.[123]

Anarchism would thus be the perspective that would dominate the anti-globalisation movement, a movement made up of activists who have little to do with the theoretical debates between anarchists and Marxists that took place at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century and have more points in common with the libertarian socialism defended by Noam Chomsky than with the canonical writings of Bakunin. Today's anarchist activists would derive their ideas from a side of politics with a moral tint, committed to egalitarianism and anti-authoritarianism, and their anarchism would combine ideology and imagination to express its fundamentally moral perspective through actions that try to make power visible and undermine it. Hence the leading role played by small groups which combine forces on an ad hoc basis in what Naomi Klein[124] calls a "swarm of mosquitoes": a form of organisation that allows that the movement includes different

121 Barbara Epstein, "Anarchism and the Anti-Globalization Movement", cit., 2.

122 Murray Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm* (Edinburgh-Oakland: AK Press, 1995).

123 Murray Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm,* cit., 4.

124 Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2007).

styles, tactics, and aims, and that the internet is the medium par excellence to link up distinct groups. This renewed anarchist drive allowed Sidney Tarrow, in his text *The New Transnational Activism*,[125] to develop the concept of "protest cycles", which would explain the exhaustion of a model of unified global action (both in the field of "protest", where the biggest exponent was People's Global Action, and in that of the "proposal", where the reference was the World Social Forum) and would give meaning to a greater dissemination of collective action, of the global response (albeit diluted in diverse rebellious networks and in a wide repertoire of "transnational activism" in networks). Because, as Tarrow argues, we are witnessing the move from a classic model of anti-globalisation struggle to another more focused on the connections generated between thematic and geographical spheres of action.[126] An activism that permeates collective actions not only at the global level but also in their local struggles, through symbolic and material constructions that go beyond the nation-state. And which, according to Tarrow, would connect directly with the debate about a "rooted cosmopolitanism", related both to the availability of rapid forms of personal communication and cheap international flights and to a wide knowledge of the international language of English and new experiences of mobilisation gained through local activism.

According to Tarrow, the present time is characterised not so much by the fact of separating individuals from their own societies as by the production of a stratification of people who, in their lives and their activities, are able to combine the sources and the opportunities of their societies within transnational networks in what could be called "activism beyond borders". In this sense, transnational activisms emerge basically from local political and social activities, and only a small percentage of them become international. In fact, according to Tarrow, different case studies such as the Zapatista movement, indigenous peoples, radical Islamist groups, and labour activists would illustrate – from their places of origin – the relationship between transnational activism, national politics, and global changes.[127]

125 Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

126 Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism,* cit.

127 See Audie Klotz, "Transnational Activism and Global Transformations: The Anti-Apartheid and Abolitionist Experiences", *European Journal of International Relations,* vol. 8, 1 (March 2002), 49-76. In this text, the writer indicates that thanks to communication technologies one can envisage a new world where space and time take on new meanings. As a result of this, networks of non-state actors spread, which alters the functions of international organisations and create new pressures on states. And if in the past social activism attacked its agenda through and around national governments, now social forces and global norms affect states with vitality and independence.

And this would encompass both those that make activist use of new technologies, especially the internet, to position themselves in the anti-globalisation movements[128] and those groups that, following Rebecca Solnit,[129] turn activism into a terrain of immaterial action, based in the sphere of the symbolic, between political discourse and collective imagination. Drawing precisely on these symbolic and aesthetic uses of activism, Julia Ramírez Blanco[130] links a number of activist actions (such as those of Claremont Road, Reclaim the Streets, and the Ciudad del Sol) to a concept of utopia used in a double sense: as a reference to political action that results in forms of organisation and political action, and as a physical space that catalyses the forces of confrontation and collective hope.[131] From the analysis of difference places and communitarian practices, described as "utopias of revolt" in Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall between 1992 and 2011, phenomena such as the British anti-roads movement, the cases of the British group Reclaim the Streets, and the 11-M movement in Madrid are illustrative examples of these "aesthetics of protest" in which utopia is propagated as politics without renouncing the aesthetic. Or, as the author argues:

> Perhaps the sensation of political empowerment will be able to generate an expressive empowerment in those situations in which the possibility of shaping a different society is put forward. If for Joseph Beuys "every human being is an artist", I would add that we all have the potential to act, in our own lives, as creators of utopias.

128 See Sara López Martín, "Jóvenes, Internet y Movimiento Antiglobalización: usos activistas de las nuevas tecnologías", in "Jóvenes, globalización y movimientos altermundistas", *Revista de Estudios de la Juventud* 76 (March 2007), 183-200. Available at: http://www.injuve.es/sites/default/files/2012/32/publicaciones/Revista-76-capitulo-10.pdf (consulted 16 May 2014).

129 Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark* (Edinburgh / New York / Melbourne: Canongate, 2005), 5.

130 Julia Ramírez Blanco, *Utopías artísticas de revuelta. Claremont Road, Reclaim the Streets, la Ciudad del Sol* (Madrid: Cuadernos de Arte Cátedra, 2014).

131 Julia Ramírez Blanco, *Utopías artísticas de revuelta,* cit., 17.

EXHIBITIONS OF THE GLOBAL

Between *Westkunst* (Cologne, 1981), an exhibition that can be considered as the highest paradigm of the celebration of modernity according to the old Western and international system, and *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds* (Karlsruhe, 2011), a celebration of the "global paradigm", the world of exhibitions experienced one of the big epistemological turns that we could call "rites of passage", from a monocultural world to another world that was gradually becoming multicultural, intercultural, and globalised.

At the beginning of the 1980s, however, the world of exhibitions – outside the debates that were taking place in the postcolonial context – still seemed tied to the idea of proclaiming a single and universally valid idea of art. *A New Spirit in Painting* (London, 1981), *Zeitgeist* (Berlin, 1982) and, in particular, the ample anthology *Westkunst* continued to turn their backs on any kind of art that was not created in the great centres of power, very much keeping alive the discriminatory debate between centre and periphery. Specifically, the abovementioned show *Westkunst*,[1] curated by Kasper König, served to highlight – using a wide panorama of artistic practices inscribed in the Western map – the new German artistic identity that had been erased since the Second World War, in the sense that, although the exhibition covered an extensive period (from 1939 to 1981) and presented a wide representation of Western artists – many of whom would go on to infamous prominence in the 1980s (Borofsky, Daniels, Paladino, Salle, Schnabel, West, Chia, Cuchi, among others) – it acted as a standard-bearer for the generation of German artists, unknown beyond national borders, who had been able to connect their art to local roots.

1 Laszlo Glozer, *Westkunst. Zeitgenössische Kunst Seit 1939* (exhibition catalogue) (Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1981).

Beyond Western hegemony: 1989 as a starting point

In this chapter, we will analyse different curatorial projects that will help us rethink operations of exclusion/inclusion in relation to the notion of Western hegemony. Projects that will gradually give visibility to new players who start to appear, seeking to map the complex geopolitical and cultural environments of local surroundings. Paraphrasing the journalist Thomas Friedman, it is as if the world has become flat, taking the metaphor of a "flat world" to describe – with its benefits, its ruptures, and its contradictions – the new phase of globalisation[2] that shows how and why countries such as India and China, companies, communities and individuals, governments, and societies must adapt to the conditions of a world dominated by the increasing effects of new technologies and new communications networks. And what Thomas Friedman was really referring to when he alluded to the "flatness" of the world is that:

> The global competitive playing field was being levelled. The world was being flattened. [...] Clearly, it was now possible for more people than ever to collaborate and compete in real time with more other people on more different kinds of work from more different corners of the planet and on a more equal footing than at any previous time in the history of the world.[3]

Magiciens de la terre and its polemics

One of the first challenges in the curatorial field of making the visual arts a global phenomenon around cultures started with the exhibition project *Magiciens de la terre* (1989), an attempt by Jean-Hubert Martin to confront through artists both the Western and non-Western context, but without more connection between them than the fact that they form part of the same contemporaneity and with a distinct valuing of the artist in opposition to the magician. As Jean-Hubert Martin argued in an interview with Benjamin Buchloh, the exhibition was not composed so much of works of art as of "objects of visual and

2 Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat. A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2006).

3 According to Friedman, the "flatness" of the world would be the result of a series of factors such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the arrival of the Web, the irruption of new software, the strengthening of the groups Google and Yahoo!, and the emergence in the new multinational capitals of countries such as India and China. See Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat. A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century,* cit., 8.

sensual experience" coming from all kinds of cultures with the aim of incorporating "critical reflections" that current anthropology had proposed about the "problem of ethnocentrism, the relativity of culture, and intercultural relations".[4]

Considered in its time to be "ethnocentric",[5] as Thomas McEvilley held, it served to open the door[6] and start a process for which various curatorial discourses, both mainstream and peripheral, made visible and contextualised the artistic and cultural productions of "other worlds", both the so-called "Third World" and the "Second World" (the old countries of Eastern Europe). *Magiciens de la terre* retrieved all the eliminated part of MOMA's *Primitivism in 20th Century Art*,[7] an exhibition that celebrated "primitivism" and the colonial gaze of the "other" through the search for affinities between modern art and tribal art, and tried to show that "identified" artists (with name and surname) existed who could come to Paris, with whom one could talk, and who could be shown beside the stars or the most famous artists of Western art. In this sense, one hundred artists from five continents were invited, of which twenty were African, who stepped for the first time – others followed later – into the high places of contemporary European art. *Magiciens* thus proposed for the first time a direct confrontation between contemporary artists coming from all the cultures of the world – here international did not only designate Western Europe and North America but also the remaining three-quarters of humanity. In the Grande Halle de la Villette one could find unexpected juxtapositions, the fruit of staged comparisons which tried to provoke "visual shocks", necessary – in Martin's opinion – to stimulate thought and act as catalysts for future projects and research: a *povera* work by Mario Merz (*Untitled Sculpture,* 1989) and a floor piece by John Knight (*Leetsoii* ["Uranium"], 1987) behind a façade from New Guinea, or a large circular mural by Richard Long (*Red*

4 "The Whole Earth Show: An Interview with Jean-Hubert Martin-Benjamin H.D. Buchloh", *Art in America,* vol. 77, 5 (May 1989), 150-159.

5 As Johanne Lamoureux argues, in *Magiciens* it seemed that the invitation made to non-Western artists served to legitimise some of the most regressive factors of Western artistic practices: the idea of the artist as an innovator, the intrinsic quality of the object, and a conception of the exhibited artefacts as channels for the spiritual and the transcendent. As J. Lamoureux holds, the failure of *Magiciens* lies in the impossible relation between the first and the third of those aspects, between a certain conception of the subject-individual (the magician) and an unrecognised conception of the object (the fetish), terms with clear psychoanalytical roots. J. Lamoureux, "From Form to Platform: The Politics of Representation and the Representation of Politics", *Art Journal,* vol. 64, 1 (spring 2005), 68.

6 Thomas McEvilley, "Ouverture du piège: l´exposition postmoderne", in *Magiciens de la Terre* (exhibition catalogue) (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou and Grande Halle-La Villete, París, 18 May – 14 August 1989), 20-23.

7 William Rubin (ed.), *Primitivism in 20th Century Art. Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern* (exhibition catalogue) (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984).

Earth Circle, 1989) in front of painting on the floor by seven members of the Australian aboriginal community with three separate motifs: *Warna-Jardi-warnpa* (snake), *Ngapa* (water), and *Yarla* (bush potato). One could also see the seven coffins painted by Kane Kwei (*Mercedes, Onion, House, Lobster, Fish, Elephant,* and *Agle,* of 1988), who, although described as an artist by the curator, was in fact a carpenter who lived in Ghana and had died some years earlier. In the 1950s he made a first coffin in the shape of a boat for a family member who was a fisherman. Over the years, he continued to make coffins under commission, with different attributes that recorded some prominent element of the photograph of the deceased. Perhaps the most well-known is the coffin in the shape of a vehicle (*Mercedes*), destined for the proprietor of a taxi company who was buried in a car of this brand. This would be a typical example from *Magiciens:* confer the category of work of art on objects that were tied to their rituals of origin.

The works of the Zaire artist Bodys Isek Kingelez also stand out: seven extravagant, visionary, and imaginary architectural models made from recycled paper, carboard, and plastic for a city such as Kinshasa, which was shown in galleries without success until it was discovered by the curatorial team of *Magiciens*. Many critics have compared Isek Kingelez's architectures (*Croix du Ciel*, 1989; *Mausolée Kingelez*, and *La Mitterranéenne française*, 1989) with postmodern architecture, which the painter had never seen. Another example is Cyprien Tokoudagba, an artist from Benin completely impregnated with his tradition and religion – voodoo – who dedicated himself to decorating the shrines of Abomey with paintings and sculptures, distancing himself from local traditions and providing a very personal style: the characters of voodoo mythology were painted with black and pronounced shadows. Jean-Hubert Martin invited this artist to Paris to create a set of sculptures of voodoo goddesses for the Villete space *Vaudou Zangbeto Legba* (1989), which was situated beside a Toxossou temple decorated with murals of the attributes of the gods. And there he worked as he had worked in his own country: he made a sacred sculpture full of meanings. He also organised a voodoo ceremony and invited people from Benin who lived in Paris. Regarding his paintings, each one had a form that was codified in relation to voodoo liturgy or mythology (deities in the voodoo pantheon, genealogies of the kings of Abomey) that the spectator in Paris could not understand in all its depth and which captured only a formal level. But the meaning was there. And that was what counted.

Also tied to the voodoo religion was the work of Patrick Vilaire of Haiti, discovered at the time of *Magiciens* and who presented a set of armchair-thrones (*Fauteuil Trappe, Homme Fauteuil*, and *Fauteuil Président*, 1986), too big to be

able to sit in, and a surrounding bench of 1.2 metres and 1.3 metres high. These metal armchairs were related in some way to "voodoo". In *Fauteuil Président* the human form of a president was cut into the hollow of the rear of the chair. And each of these three works showed Vilaire's interest in the history and iconography of Haiti (he regularly published books and was an intellectual who could conceptualise his praxis at the same level as, for example, Daniel Buren could do).

One work which had a great impact was that of the Navajo native American Joe Ben Jr., an artist who had learned from his father, a shaman, the practice of healing linked to sand rituals and who maintained the two roles simultaneously: art and healing. For *Magiciens*, Joe Ben Jr. made a painting on the floor, *Sand Painting* (1989), with mineral pigments obtained by grinding minerals, based on designs which corresponded to a ritual appropriate to a type of disease. Contrary to what occurred in their original context – where the paintings lasted only for the duration of the ceremony and had to be destroyed in the twenty-four hours following its celebration – in Paris the work remained throughout the whole exhibition (in fact, the pigments were returned to the Navajo desert and dispersed across its vast surface).

Magiciens de la terre provoked controversies and hostile reactions from critics, art historians, ethnographers, and theoreticians, who considered this first exhibition of "world" contemporary art to be a phenomenon apart from conventional critical parameters. According to the detractors, a tacit "primitivism" had guided the representation of the non-Western artists, privileging those works which implicitly shared the footprints and the registers of tradition (colours, pigments, feathers) to the detriment of artists whose projects showed that non-Western societies did not live "outside of time", but were committed to change: modernisation and the urbanisation derived from it. Organisers were accused of offering an excessively static image of the artist who lived in Africa, Asia, or Latin America, impervious to technical, intellectual, and artistic modernity. It was also said that, despite the laudable attempt by Jean-Hubert Martin and his advisers to encourage a "non-hierarchical" meeting of Western contemporary artists and artists from marginal areas unknown in the circuits of contemporary art, it was no more than an ethnocentric and hegemonic operation that could not avoid the account of the "others" as primitives and in which the supposed collusion of opposed cultural codes was reduced to an aesthetic confrontation which presupposed at all times the superiority of Western culture in relation to the non-Western cultures (men against magicians).

Magiciens de la terre without doubt represented a "before" and an "after", a fundamental reference exhibition in this ethnological drift. McEvilley, in the catalogue text, argues for a transformation of the modern exhibition, which saw the other as exotic and as primitive, into the postmodern exhibition, which starts out from difference and allows the "other" to be him- or herself.[8] The postmodern exhibition would not articulate a unifying principle of quality, but many pluralist and relativised principles; neither would it articulate a unifying principle of the movement in general, nor of the artistic past, nor – of course – of history, nor of any defined hierarchy. Because, as McEvilley asserts:

> *Magiciens de la terre* hopes, ultimately, to offer an idea of the global state of contemporary art, with all its fragmentations and differences. Such an idea can, in turn, change the format of big international exhibitions that disdain the art of eighty per cent of the world's population.[9]

And in this way McEvilley concludes by recognising that perhaps the biggest problem of the show lay in handling an almost universal dimension of the exhibition without articulating universal principles and in avoiding Platonic affirmations of universal and eternal justification that could derive from any global approach that was too static:

> In its eagerness to avoid imposing categories and to create an opening, *Magiciens de la terre* defined the undefined or the contradictory variety and proposed an approach around contradiction, plurality, and the lack of essence, around an idea of the self that has to be relative, changing, with multiple aspects, which has to be, in other words, around a non-idea of the self, or an idea of the non-self. The difficulty of this project is proportional to its importance.[10]

In parallel with the show, both the magazine *Les Cahiers du Musée nacional d'art moderne* and *Third Text*[11] published monographic pieces about it. The critique of Rasheed Araeen stands out for its sharpness: in the text "Our Bauhaus Others' Mudhouse"[12] he proposed the question not so much of the "oth-

8 See Thomas McEvilley, "Ouverture du piège: l´exposition postmoderne", in *Magiciens de la Terre*, cit., 20.

9 Thomas McEvilley, "Ouverture du piège: l´exposition postmoderne", in *Magiciens de la Terre*, cit., 22.

10 T. McEvilley, "Ouverture du piège: l´exposition postmoderne", in *Magiciens de la Terre*, cit., 23.

11 See *Les Cahiers du Musée nacional d'art modern* 28 (spring 1989), and *Third Text,* vol. 33, 6 (spring 1989).

12 Rasheed Araeen, "Our Bauhaus Others' Mudhouse", *Third Text,* vol. 3 (spring 1989), 3-14.

er" but rather of how the "other" had subverted the actual assumptions in which "otherhood" is constructed by the dominant culture. The anthropological, according to Araeen, has played a decisive role in the concepts of *Magiciens de la Terre,* but we do not forget that the main concern of the anthropological continues to be interest in the primitive, in the "original other". And although recent work in anthropology has tried to correct some of the first assumptions – particularly the notion of the so-called primitive societies as static and of their artists as anonymous – this correction is in some way out of place. Furthermore, the act of placing attention to the anthropological discourse in the exhibition context in the foreground has distracted us from the fundamental aspect of the relations between the dominant Western culture and other cultures. And Araeen asks: why such an obsession with so-called primitive societies? Which are these societies? Are not the majority of them Third World societies which today form part of the global system, with a common mode of production and similar structures of development? And although countries such as India and Brazil have not enjoyed the same industrialised system as the countries of the West, it might be that the artistic production of the mainstream has formed part of what Jean Fisher calls the "paradigm of modernity". It is certain that there can be cultures that operate outside the limits of Western culture, but we can affirm that they are not affected by modern developments. Their marginality has more to do with the extreme of their exploitation and privation as a result of Western imperialism than with the character of their cultures. And the main struggle of most of these cultures is for the recovery of their land, and their entry into the modern world is part of this struggle in favour of a self-determination.[13]

The problem with *Magiciens* is that is does not match up to this ideological struggle, but rather should be understood from a position of cultural eclecticism in which the idea – up to a certain point postmodern – of "anything goes" is legitimised by the benevolence of the dominant culture, in a way that the other is accommodated in a "spectacle that produces an illusion of equality."[14]

In effect, *Magiciens* was a great spectacle with a huge fascination of the exotic, but it ultimately ignored aspects of a historical and epistemological nature. The curators forgot that the history of art could solve problems that had previously been entrusted to ethnology and sociology and in general to cultural questions, but without neglecting aspects related to human creativity, aesthetics, and art. In Araeen's judgement, it would be necessary to reclaim ob-

13 See Rasheed Araeen, "From Primitivism to Ethnic Arts", *Third Text* 1 (autumn 1987), 6-25.
14 Rasheed Araeen, "Our Bauhaus Others' Mudhouse", cit., 4.

jects of high culture produced by the "other" in its "postcolonial" aspirations to modernity:

> Of course, the conjuncture of postcolonial aspirations in the Third World countries and the neo-colonial ambitions of advanced capitalism has produced new conflicts and contradictions, which in turn have necessitated the emergence of a critical discourse that rightly interrogates modernism's utopian/broken promises. Modernism for the "other" remains a basic issue.[15]

What Araeen ends up questioning in a direct way is the absence of a theoretical and contextual framework that can justify the encounter of works that represent different historical formations:

> It is claimed that all the works, irrespective of their cultural origin, are presented "on equal terms". But is this "equality" not an illusion? How is this "equality" achieved, if not by ignoring the differences of different works? Of course, the differences have been allowed to enter into a common space. But what is the significance of this entry? Is it possible for "difference" to function critically in a curatorial space where the criticality of "difference" is in fact negated by the illusion of visual similarities and sensibilities of works produced under different systems, displacing the question of the unequal power of different works from the domain of ideology to cultural aesthetics. No wonder the common denominator here is a presumed "magic" of all works which transcends socioeconomic determinants.[16]

Thomas McEvilley himself, in a 1990 text[17] published in the magazine *Artforum,* in the monographic issue called "The Global Issue", indicates the difference in writing "before" and "after" the exhibition. After having seen the show, McEvilley partly takes the side of the detractors when he points to the presence of many disturbing signs of residual colonial attitudes. The title, McEvilley notes, suggests a romantic inclination towards the idea of a "native artist" not only as a magician (almost in a pre-rational state) but also as someone close to the earth (the title was not "magicians of the *world*" but "magicians of the *earth*"), as in a pre-civilised state of nature. The healers, McEvilley continued, were inexplicably motived by a desire not to use the word "artists" in deference

15 Rasheed Araeen, "Our Bauhaus Others' Mudhouse", cit., 5.

16 Rasheed Araeen, "Our Bauhaus Others' Mudhouse", cit., 10.

17 Thomas McEvilley, "Thomas McEvilley on The Global Issue", *Artforum,* vol. 28, 7 (March 1990), 19-21.

to a growing debate about whether the so-called "primitive people" had the ideology (in the purest Kantian style) that converted objects into "art". But it is true that the word "magician" had nothing to do with what artists such as Hans Haacke, Lawrence Weiner, Barbara Kruger, or even Chéri Samba and many other artists in the exhibition – both Western and non-Western – were doing.

But neither these nor many other reasons generated by the exhibition would seem to justify, in McEvilley's eyes, a reaction to it that was so negative and even vitriolic. Part of the hostile reaction of critics was related to the fact that *Magiciens* – which was conceived as a response to the controversy provoked some years earlier by the show *Primitivism* (and to which McEvilley[18] himself had joined in a clearly belligerent way) – could not be seen by the North American public nor its MoMA predecessor, *Primitivism*, by the European public. From this, McEvilley establishes a parallelism between the two shows, united by the act of presenting art of the First and Third Worlds in some of the most emblematic Western museums, to reach the conclusion that much had been achieved in *Magiciens* in relation to *Primitivism*. Thus, while *Primitivism* presented works without either date or author, *Magiciens* did so as if it involved Western pieces; while *Primitivism* had been Eurocentric and hierarchical, *Magiciens* levelled all type of hierarchy, leaving the works of art to appear without any fixed ideological framework; and while *Primitivism* presented the primitive works as "footnotes" to the modern Western imitations, *Magiciens* selected each work for its own value and not for the act of illustrating something outside of itself. Perhaps, reflected the critic, the key fact is that the two exhibitions embodied radically different ideas about history. And in this sense if *Primitivism* was still based on the Hegelian myth of Western cultures, *Magiciens* was clearly the epitaph of this myth and of the Kantian idea of universal value judgement.

McEvilley was also struck by the ideological-political origin of the terms of the debate provoked by *Magiciens*. While for conservative critics the show seemed to destroy modernity, progressive critics expressed a certain unease about its clear depoliticisation: they questioned the motivations of the institution and the idea of wanting to introduce artists into the Western artistic market, they criticised the imposition of individualist and bourgeois values on these artists who came from communal societies, and, finally, they were suspicious of the leadership of French cultural politics, which led them to demand a show of a global range beyond fin-de-siècle French colonialism.[19]

18 Thomas McEvilley, "Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chef", in *Art & Otherness. Crisis in Cultural Identity* (New York: Documentext. McPherson Company, 1992), 27-57.

19 Thomas McEvilley, "Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief", *Artforum* (November, 1984).

In the same year of 1989, the magazine *Art in America* – as well as publishing diverse opinions by both Western and non-Western artists about the global exhibitions, the relationship of nationalism versus internationalism, and its connection with other cultures[20] – dedicated an article to the *Magiciens* exhibition entitled "The Whole Earth Show"[21] in which, after presenting the show as the true international – or, better put, global – art, confirmed the new and prevailing fascination with the "other", which seeks to unite the heroic sublime and the primary self in the pantheon of some of the twentieth century's own myths. A fascination not exempt of paradoxes, which was echoed in the criticism: can something continuous exist between the paintings of Kiefer and the ceremonial masks of Benin? How can one make judgements of quality about objects completely foreign to our culture and experience? Is there any politically correct way to present artefacts from other cultures or should the business of museography question cultural exploitation?[22]

The 3rd Havana Biennial: Three Worlds

Also in 1989, the 3rd Havana Biennial took place, which, compared with the first (exclusively Latin American), and the second (engraved with the expectations of the Third Word), was presented as one of the great international events of global reach at the margin of the European and North American art system. Unlike the two previous editions, the curatorial team made up of Lilian Llanes, Nelson Herrera, and Gerardo Mosquera established a common theme, *Tradition and contemporaneity*. This heading covered a central exhibition at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes of Havana entitled *Tres Mundos* ["Three Worlds"] – with artists from countries of the Second and Third Worlds who worked in the context of the history of the Western art of the First World – and four *Núcleos* ["Nuclei"] which, against the monolithic structure of the central show,

20 See the article "The Peripatetic Artist: 14 Statements" (Alfredo Jaar, Zvi Goldstein, Elaine Reichek, Sergei Shuton, Gu Wenga, Perejaume, Lawrence Weiner, Betye Saar, John M. Armleder, Tadaaki Kuwayama, Orshi Drozdik, Alain Kirili, Marilyn Lerner, Ed McGowin and Claudia de Monte), *Art in America* (July 1989), 10-16.

21 Eleanor Heartney, "The Whole Earth Show", *Art in America* (May 1989), 91-94.

22 See Benjamin B. Buchloh's interview with Jean-Hubert Martin ("The Whole Earth Show: An Interview with Jean-Hubert Martin") which the magazine *Art in America* published in May 1989 (150-159 and 213), and the words of Michael Brenson published a few days after the opening in the *New York Times*: "What happens when many of the artists who make nonmarketable religious work go home and no Western art official calls again? Will they feel they have been exploited by a French curatorial vision?" Another version of the interview was published in *Third Text,* vol. 3, 6 (spring 1989), 19-27.

functioned as prisms that enabled a reading based more on difference than on comparison. *Núcleo 1*, with such artists as José Bedia, Ahmed Nawar, Roberto Feleo, and Roberto Diago, who incorporated hereditary myths and rituals or the legacy of national history, was concerned with the presence of traditional cultures in contemporary artistic languages. *Núcleo 2*, composed of three installations – "Bolivar in woodcarving", "Mexican dolls", and "African wire toys" – was described as a contribution to the richness of popular culture, sometimes expressed in an anonymous way and at other times by professional artists who took for granted the legacy of the old traditions from the parameters of arts and crafts. *Núcleo 3* consisted of seven shows, some collective, such as "The tradition of humour", and others monographic, such as those dedicated to Graciela Iturbide, Sebastião Salgado and José Tola, with works both in a critical and humorous key, related to specific political and social developments. And, finally, *Núcleo 4* included workshops, visits to studios, and debates open to artists, critics, students, professors, and researchers. As Gerardo Mosquera indicates, a significant change in relation to the earlier biennials was the inclusion of European and North American artists belonging to the diasporas, such as an Afro-Asian group from Great Britain and artists from the San Diego-Tijuana border, which opened up the geographical notion of the Third World, incorporating the porosities derived from migration and its cultural transformations. In total, five hundred and thirty-eight artists from fifty-four countries.[23]

But perhaps the most interesting thing about the Biennial was its possible parallelism with the metropolitan *Magiciens de la terre*, a parallelism which Luis Camnitzer set out in the magazine *Third Text*. According to Camnitzer, despite the vast difference in resources, the two exhibitions tried to be a forum for the art of the Third World, with the qualification that in the Havana show works were exhibited under the sole responsibility of the artist beyond any curatorial paternalism and artifice. While the two shows expressed the freedom to mix high art and popular art, the one in Havana ignored the fashionable concept of "otherhood" while the search for "otherhood" determined both the intention and the execution of the Paris event, argued Camnitzer. From the start, he continued, the title opened the door to exoticism, to an art that did not follow hegemonic norms, and which often did not define itself as art. The

23 As Mosquera relates, the team of curators travelled around different regions of the world which they divided into "zones". Mosquera himself visited seventeen sub-Saharan countries between 1987 and 1988, apart from many others in the Americas. Another important part of the curatorship was carried out in Havana with portfolios of artists. See Gerardo Mosquera, "The Third Biennial de La Habana in its Local and Global Contexts", in Rachel Weiss (ed.), *Making Art Global (Part 1). The Third Havana Biennial 1989* (London: Afterall books, 2011), 75.

possibility of possessing the category of "magician" shared by hegemonic artists helped to erase the bad conscience of the organisers. Havana was not a forum for otherness, concluded Camnitzer, but rather for "thisness", where this is what defines us and not how we are defined by others.[24]

From such considerations, we could agree with Rachel Weiss[25] that the Havana Biennial was one of the first contemporary art shows that consolidated the model of the global exhibition, both in terms of content and impact, and that it was the first to achieve this outside of the European and North American artistic system, which enjoyed, until then, the privilege of deciding what type of art had a global significance. Weiss claimed that, in a way distinct from the biennials of Venice and São Paulo, the Havana show centred its attention on art and artists outside the circuits of the system of Western art and – distancing itself from projects in New Delhi, Cairo, or Gabon – put its faith in travelling around its own region to explore artistic production on a global scale.

Presenting works of Third World countries in the context of the history of Western art,[26] the Biennial tried to break the centre-periphery scheme, suggesting that the global search for a new model of exhibition consisted in the inclusion of artists from all over the world without their being labelled as mainstream (which is to say, without forming part of neoliberal globalisation), but with a decentralised way of thinking of the global and of articulating it micro-politically. A form which referred directly, as Gerardo Mosquera suggested, to the "global south" in the sense that it included many European and North American artists involved in the diaspora movements of the Third World, such as black artists from Great Britain and artists from the frontier of San Diego and Tijuana (*Border Art Workshop*). This movement was crucial, argued Mosquera, to open the geographical notion of the Third World, incorporating the porosities derived from migration and its cultural transformations. It was also a first step in relation to the question posed by Luis Camnitzer that the Biennial was still anchored to an international model within a growing transnational market.[27]

24 Luis Camnitzer, "Third Biennial of Havana", *Third Text* 10 (spring 1990), 79-93.

25 See Rachel Weiss, "A Certain Place and a Certain Time: The Third Havana Biennial and the Origins of the Global Exhibition", in *Making Art Global (Part 1): The Third Havana Biennial*, cit.

26 As Luis Camintzer argues, one of the most polemical elements of the 3rd Havana Biennial consisted of the possible interpretations of "Third World" which led black artists from the United Kingdom (or, which was the same thing, all the non-white artists of that country) to complain about the "latinisation" of this term and the exclusion of the concept of the "postcolonial artist". Luis Camnitzer, "Third Biennial of Havana", in *Third Text* 10, cit., 79-93.

27 Gerardo Mosquera, "The Third Biennial de La Habana in Its Local and Global Contexts", cit., 77. See also L. Camnitzer, "The Biennial of Utopias", in Rachel Weiss (ed.), *On Art, Artists, Latin America and Other Utopias* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 225.

The Other Story: Diaspora Afro-Asian Artists in the mainstream

The year 1989 also saw two counter-exhibitions as a challenge to the modern Western gaze. In the first, *China Avant-Garde* (Beijing, 1989), considered to be the first official exhibition of the new Cultural Revolution, China played a leading role in the history of its contemporary art in showing artistic practices carried out on its soil during the 1980s for the first time in the spaces of the National Gallery.[28]

The second, *The Other Story. Afro-Asian Artists in Post-war Britain*,[29] followed the guidelines of the magazine *Third Text*. In place of seeking the exotic it showed contemporary artists of mixed cultural contexts resident in the United Kingdom, among them David Medalla, Gavin Jantjes, Keith Piper, Li Yuan Chia, Mona Hatoum, Rasheed Araeen, Ronald Moody, and Saleem Arif, artists with which it sought to note the absence of non-European artists in the history of modern art.

As Rasheed Araaen argued in the text of the catalogue, this is an exceptional history, about men and women who have fought for their otherness to penetrate the space of modernity from which they were barred, with the aim not only of proclaiming their historical demands but also of questioning the framework which defined and protected the limits. In Araeen's view, to try to tell this story is to pay homage to this defiance and he recounts how his own ef-

28 The exhibition was not exempt of polemic and reopened its doors after some days of censorship after which the artists Xiao Lu and Tang Song used a firearm to shoot their own work, called *Dialogue.* Some months after the end of the show, the Chinese government held the hypothesis that the exhibition had inspired the student protests in Tiananmen Square in June 1989. See Gao Minglu, "Toward a Transnational Modernity", in Gao Minglu (ed.), *Inside Out. New Chinese Art* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1998), 15-40.

29 *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain* (exhibition catalogue) (London: Hayward Gallery, 29 November 1989 – 4 February 1990). In an author's note for the French edition of the catalogue Araeen wrote: "One has to oppose ignorance with knowledge. If history contributes only to legitimising a particular point of view that perpetuates the hegemony of one human group over another, of one culture over another, then it is left at the service of power, to be that of ignorance. Throughout history, there have existed metropolitan centres at the heart of which knowledge is destined for the edification, progress, and development of all human beings. In Great Britain, continental Europe, and North America, the history of art is only the history of the masterpieces of white artists. This monopoly has not only produced an incomplete history of art, but has also transgressed the fundamental ethics of history, whose aim is and must be to represent the truth. It is for this reason that the exhibition *The Other Story* has as an aim the unveiling of what had been hidden by history, laying the groundwork for the production of a true history of art in Great Britain and, ultimately, for the creation of a model for revising all the history of modern art".

See Rasheed Araeen, "The Other Story", in Sophie Orlando (ed.), *Art et mondialisation. Anthologie de textes de 1950 à nos jours* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 2013), 80.

forts as an avant-garde artist, in the West, have been based on his becoming aware of these questions. Without this struggle, it would have been impossible for him to have recognised the importance of this history. There are other histories and it is essential, he argues, to try to find our place in history to tell *other histories* that distance themselves from the official narratives produced by the institutions of power.[30]

The presence in post-war Europe of postcolonial artists freed from colonialist slavery put in check the notion of Eurocentrism and, in Araeen's words, the only way to face this challenge on the part of the West was to ignore it. This was the trigger that moved Araeen to come up with *The Other Story* at a time when Western artistic institutions maintained their intransigence and continued seeing postcolonial artists as apart from the centrality of the history of recent British art. However, the "other artists", who in general came from the old colonies of Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean, could not be ignored for ever. They would have to be recognised as part of European society, but the fact of granting them the same category as white/European artists would have interrupted the "white" genealogy of the history of modern art. And the big question for artistic institutions was: how to recognise Afro-Asian artists without situating their work in the same historical paradigm as their white contemporaries and, at the same time, putting on record that the institutions no longer continued to discriminate against non-white artists?

The solution, according to Araeen, was to adopt a cultural theory that was brought to life in the magazine *Third Text* and in the text of the exhibition catalogue and which connected the work of Afro-Asian artists with their cultures and context, providing a common space for the circulation of their works in the circuits of a network shared by "white" and "non-white" artists. What is important is not to recognise only "cultural differences" as the basis of the practices of postcolonial artists, but rather to imagine a "third space": a mythical space between the periphery and the centre through which the postcolonial artist must pass before acquiring full recognition as a "historical subject". Hence the raison d'être of a new conceptual framework – multiculturalism – through which the "other artist" can remain outside the canon of the history of art and at the same time promote and celebrate his or her own cultural difference.

30 Rasheed Araeen, "Introduction: When Chickens Come Home to Roost", in *The Other Story. Afro-Asian Artists in Post War Britain* (exhibition catalogue) (London: Hayward Gallery, 1989), 9-15, in Sophie Orlando (ed.), *Art et mondialisation. Anthologie de textes de 1950 à nos jours,* cit., 80-81.

This would turn multiculturalism into a new strategy of "contention". A multiculturalism that is ultimately paradoxical, which places Afro-Asian artists in a new marginality, the marginality of multiculturalism itself, in which only expressions of cultural differences are seen as "authentic"; which is justified and legitimated on the basis of a desire by Afro-Asian communities to preserve their own cultural traditions in the West. A desire that is, furthermore, understandable, given the diaspora situation manifested by these communities. And Araeen asks: why should this mean that the individuals of these communities are necessarily trapped within this situation and not capable of experiencing the world beyond their own cultural borders? And here would lie the main problem of multiculturalism or the theories of cultural diversity, in the fact of not having known how to resolve art as an individual practice rather than as an expression of the community as a whole. And if thanks to multiculturalism many Afro-Asian artists have had the opportunity of gaining success in the market, it must also be affirmed that the Western institutions themselves have taken advantage of their cultural differences, using them as a shield against any attack on their artistic politics.[31]

Jean Fisher, in the special edition of the magazine *Third Text* of autumn/winter 1989, wrote that *The Other Story* was not an attempt to rewrite history, but presented the simple fact that historiography had been an exclusive construct that had removed from the history of British art the existence and the contributions of its "other artists".[32]

From postcolonial to multicultural in exhibition discourses

Cocido y crudo and *Inklusion/Exklusion*

Cocido y crudo ["cooked and raw"] (Madrid, 1994), the first exhibition in between the multicultural and the postcolonial presented in a Spanish museum institution – although bearing the signature of an American curator, Dan Cameron – was shaped in the slipstream of the failure of the "bomb thrown in the main square of the international community", which was how Dan Camer-

31 Rasheed Araeen, "The artist as a post-colonial subject and this individual's journey towards the center", in Catherine King, *Views of difference: Different Views of Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press and The Open University, 1999), 232-233.

32 "The Other Story. Afro-Asian artists in Post-war Britain", *Third Text Special Issue* (1989), 4. See also Andrea Buddensieg, "Visibility in the Art World: The Voice of Rasheed Araeen", in Peter Weibel and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.), *Contemporary Art and the Museum. A Global Perspective,* cit., 50-66.

on defined the exhibition *Magiciens de la terre,* which, in his judgement, canonised the otherhood of artists tying them to their places of origin as an organising principle and seeking to find something called "global art" from a curatorial perspective that tried to explore a "pan-cultural" constellation. A failure that can be explained by the fact that those responsible did not know how to resist situating the rhetoric of identity in a construction that was still dialectical between the home (the hyper-refined Western artists) and the foreign (the authentic, the genuine, the primitive).

In this vein, Dan Cameron started out from the text of the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss *The Raw and the Cooked* (1964),[33] in which, through studying different alimentary typologies, he equated the concept of cooked with the civilised and of raw with the primitive and, going beyond the colonial point of view, opted for an interchange and interactive barter of cultural situations between the "raw" and the "cooked" through an attempt to remove the hierarchy of the point of view of the speaker. And it is in this way that Dan Cameron justified the choice of the artists in the show: not so much by the country of origin, sex, ethnic bonds, or sexual preferences but by the idea that interesting art always succeeds in being local and universal at the same time:

> Contrary to the title on which it is based, *Cocido y crudo* seems to allude to the probability that these categories necessarily overflow from one into the other, that one of the concepts cannot exist without the proximity of the other.[34]

The idea of exchange between multiple cultural positions is a line of work closer to *Bride of the Sun* (Antwerp, 1992) than to *Latin-American Art of the 20th Century,* "a blatantly neo-colonialist overview" organised in Seville for the Expo of 1992 that became the *leitmotiv* of the show, which brought together fifty-five artists from twenty countries, a good proportion of them from Latin America and Spain, which defined their own voice according to their personal socio-cultural origins, deliberately seeking not to penalise representatives of ethnic, religious, or sexual minorities or whose points of cultural reference were situated at the margin of the alliances of the Euro-American axis.

33 The purpose of this book is to show how empirical categories, such as cooked and raw, fresh and rotten, burnt and wet, etc., defined by pure ethnographic observation and adopting in each case the point of view of the particular culture, can nevertheless serve as conceptual tools for giving up abstract notions and chaining them into proposition., Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The raw and the Cooked. Mytologiques,* vol. 1 (1964) (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1969), 119.

34 Dan Cameron, "Cocido y crudo", in *Cocido y crudo* (exhibition catalogue) (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 14 December – 6 March 1995), 47.

The artist of *Cocido y crudo* is defined as someone who first discovered and then recontextualised the materials, images, sources, and situations encountered. Recall that the exhibition started to be prepared in 1992, the year in which Spain celebrated the fifth centenary of the discovery of America, which would explain Cameron's need to incorporate artists (and hence the presence of Juan Davila, Eugenio Dittborn, Gabriel Orozco, Rosângela Rennó, José Antonio Hernández Díaz, Doris Salcedo, Rogelio López Cuenca, and Juan Luis Moraza) concerned with openly questioning historical aspects of cultural domination related to the discovery. Also present in the show were a good number of international artists (Janine Antoni, Xu Bing, Geneviève Cadieux, Mark Dion, Marlene Dumas, Martin Kippenberger, Paul McCarthy, Yasumasa Morimura, Pierre et Gilles, Allen Ruppersberg, Kiki Smith, and Fred Wilson) who at the time were involved in some of the most important multicultural exhibitions of the period, such as *The Decade Show. Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s* (New York, 1990), *Documenta 9* (Kassel, 1992), and the *1993 Biennial* of the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, 1993), which not only went into depth with manifestations of multiculturalism but which also reconsidered the professional work of minority artists. Compared with an almost contemporaneous show in the Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno in Las Palmas, *Otro país. Escalas africanas*[35] [Another country. African stops], which sought an unequal confrontation between advanced art and the cult of the West, and popular art, that which was close to the artisanal, and the naïf, *Cocido y crudo* rejected the concepts of popular, folkloric, primitive, aboriginal, local, exotic, and ethnic to reach out to the "avant-garde and radically contemporary" homogenisation between artists of the United States, Canada, China, South Africa, Latin America, Spain, Japan, Cameroon, Malta, etc.[36]

Cocido y crudo was the object of a rather unusual polemic within the panorama of Spanish criticism: apart from its high budget, it was criticised for the choice of artists, for the quality of the works presented, for the lack of radicalism in the proposals – more sensationalist and spectacular than rounded and creative – but above all the good intentions of the curator were questioned. As Iván de a Nuez argued in the pages of the magazine *Lápiz*:

35 *Otro país. Escalas africanas* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, 1994-1995) proposed the exploration of what African artists of the continent and those exiled in the Caribbean had in common. The title of the show comes from a novel by the Afro-American writer James Baldwin, *Another Country*, whose leading characters constantly dream of other places and create their own world. See Iván de la Nuez, "Otro país... y el mismo", *Lápiz* 114 (June 1995), 66-69.

36 See Anna Maria Guasch, *El arte del siglo XX en sus exposiciones, 1945-2007* (Barcelona: Ediciones del Serbal, 2009) (expanded, second edition), 403.

> This is the centre of the problem; if the mechanisms of inclusion tilt the balance in favour of decolonialising solutions or signify a postcolonial fact, a velvet colonialism: an impasse through which a disoriented West reconstructed – with the help of Third Word artists – its schemes of cultural authority [...] To the extent that the inclusions follow the line of the times, the Western critic or curator fetching and carrying, buying there to sell here, reintegrating the centre through a circular journey, then the benevolent gesture will not be able to change the perverse sense of a scheme that leaves the exhibition to the periphery and the critical consciousness of it to the West. An implicit perspective in which the margins appear to provide the "body" and the West the "discourse". The periphery, the "taste", the West, the "knowledge".[37]

The ethnocentric gaze of the colonising discourse which insists on emphasising the logic of the Western aesthetic model was, in turn, the cause of some criticism which came to describe *Cocido y crudo* as a "Hollywood super-production" and grandiloquent project:

> The grandiloquence of the space and the ambition of Dan Cameron – argued Bernardo Pinto de Almeida in the pages of the magazine *Lápiz* – does not seem to have been appropriate to the proposed aims. One feels the plurality of senses as dispersion, repetition, and not so much as the multiplication of products and sensibilities. Some works live from the literary justification in the programme which explains them to the public, others are scholarly and literal exercises in their relation of artistic work with social and political reality.[38]

This idea of eliminating difference was sustained by Carlos Vidal, who came to brand Dan Cameron as racist:

> Because ultimately any artist whom these new racists that satiate themselves with funds snatched from peripheral countries [...] that these demagogues go looking for in Surinam or Australia, will always be an artist without name and without individuality, because his or her role is to represent an art that is inferior [...] and lacking meanings and reflexivity, a representation of a non-existent culture following the parameters of the despotic universalism that is humanist, beatified, and pietistic.[39]

37 Iván de la Nuez, "Una cosa y la otra", *Lápiz* III (April 1995), 28.

38 Bernardo Pinto de Almeida, "De Cameron al *Decamerón", Lápiz* III (April 1995), 76.

39 Carlos Vidal, "Comentario sobre el «multiculturalismo» de los señores Jean Hoet, Bonito Oliva, Hubert Martin y Dan Cameron", *Lápiz* III (April 1995), 25.

A new milestone in this drive in favour of the concept of hybridisation in clear harmony with postcolonial thinking and with reclaiming the art of the exile as a magic formula for countering the still dominant concept of imperialism had its epicentre in old Europe, specifically in the symposium organised in Berlin under the title *The Marco Polo Syndrome. Problems of Intercultural Communications in art theory and curatorial practice,* which, starting from the thinking of Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993),[40] noted the interest of the centres towards the art of the periphery as the result of processes of globalisation, new demographics, and decolonialisation:

> The global world is also – in the words of Gerardo Mosquera – the world of differences [...] Decolonialisation has allowed a larger and more active intervention of previously totally marginalised voices [...] Today the strategy of power does not consist of repressing or homogenising diversity, but controlling it. The ethnocentric debate has become a political space of power struggles as much in the symbolic as in the social.[41]

The curatorial side of this symposium took place a year later in another city in the German-speaking world, in the Austrian city of Graz, which in 1996 embraced the show *Inklusion : Exklusion. Versuch einer neuen Kartografie der Kunst im Zeitalter von Postkolonialismus und globaler Migration*, curated by Peter Weibel,[42] which once again challenged the project of modernity from the concept of "neo-modernism", seeking to trace a cartography of art in the age of postcolonialism and global migration. In Peter Weibel's judgement,[43] in the course of its dissolution, Europe discovered that its imperialist expansion was carried out under the form of a universal civilising function in the name of modernism. The free and universal European society, in colonising other nations, only deformed their cultures in the name of progress, liberty, and technology. But, as shown by the developments in Eastern Europe, colonising of particular ethnic groups within multi-ethnic societies by agents of central

40 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993).

41 Gerardo Mosquera, "The World of Difference", *Universe in Universe,* http://www.universes-in-universe.de/magazin/marco.polo/e-mosquera.htm (consulted 10 August 2014).

42 *Inklusion : Exklusion. Versuch einer neuen Kartografie der Kunst im Zeitalter von Postkolonialismus und globaler Migration,* curated by Peter Weibel (exhibition catalogue) (Graz, Austria: Steirischer Herbst, 22 September – 26 October 1996) (Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1997).

43 We have consulted the English translation of the original German text. See Peter Weibel, "Beyond the White Cube", in Peter Weibel and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.), *Contemporary Art and the Museum. A Global Perspective* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2007), 138-150.

power was on the way out. These were some of the curatorial arguments that Weibel used in an earlier exhibition of 1993, *Kontext Kunst. The Art of the 90s*,[44] which also proposed a radical rejection of the "white cube" of modern art from the perspective of creating a common place between art and social practice.

The "white cube", and its reference to the neutrality of the space of the museum or gallery in the 1970s, constitutes a synonym for European and North American art which hides all difference – social, gender, religious, and ethnic – in the name of an aesthetic autonomy and a universal language of forms.[45] Depriving works of art of their historical context denies them the right to participate in the construction of reality. According to Brian O'Doherty,[46] the space of the gallery must be white and pure, which means excluding all experience that is not aesthetic, making any object, banal or not, a work of art. From the point of view of its artistic value, the artistic "text" then depends on the white and neutral space of the gallery. The suppression of the historical framework in which works of art have been created results in, according to Weibel, a poverty of the experience of the work, but above all in the denial of the right of art to participate in the construction of reality. And it was this reclaiming of the slogan "context becomes text" which became the *leitmotiv* of artists participating in the *Kontexte Kunst* show – such as Cosima von Bonin, Clegg & Guttmann, Mark Dion, Peter Fend, Andrea Fraser, Louise Lawler, Reinhard Mucha, Christian Philipp Müller, Adrian Piper, Stephen Prina, and Heimo Zobernig – who emphasised the existence of methods and practices based on contextualisation, in opposition to the classic didactic and ideological functions of traditional art.

This precedent of what a "postcolonial" exhibition in the context of continental Europe can be was useful for Weibel in *Inklusion/Exklusion* (1996) to insist on a type of practice that overcame the aesthetic discourse and embraced institutional criticism, always starting from the assumption that the deconstruction of the great logocentric narratives of modernity could be compared to the postcolonial project of dissolving the centre/periphery binary system of imperialist discourse. According to Weibel, the big post-structuralist concerns

44 Peter Weibel, *Kontext Kunst. The Art of the 90s* (exhibition catalogue) (Graz, Austria: Neue Galerie im Künstlerhaus, 2 october –7 november 1993). The exhibition, organised within the framework of the Steirischer Herbst festival, inaugurated in the 1990s an artistic movement which rejected in a radical way the "white cube" of modern art from the perspective of creating a place between art and social practice. See also, Peter Weibel (ed.), *Kontext Kunst* (Cologne: DuMont, 1994).

45 Peter Weibel, "Beyond the White Cube", in Peter Weibel and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.), *Contemporary Art and the Museum. A Global Perspective,* cit., 139.

46 Brian O'Doherty, "Inside the White Cube" (I part), *Artforum* (march, 1976).

– such as the critique of the Cartesian notion of the subject, the localisation of the subject in language, the study of discourse as masculine discourse or the discourse of power – present a different angle in postcolonial discourse: deconstruction and decolonisation share a same basis. Or, put in other words, the hybrid identity of the postcolonial author corresponds to the syncretism and eclecticism of postmodernism. In this sense, the "post" of postmodernism and postcolonialism condition each other mutually. Postmodernism helps instigate a postcolonial discourse. And, in turn, postcolonialism is no more than a politicised postmodernism. And it is postcolonialism which shares a critical gaze towards the effect of the forms of domination, or of societies, both colonial and postcolonial.[47]

With this reflection, Weibel undertook his exhibition project starting from the assumption that, after the end of colonialism and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the West continued constructing and protecting itself through border controls which, translated into the terrain of the museum, implied the continuity of the "white cube" model as a synonym of the perpetuation of art created by Christian, white, and European men with the corresponding exclusion of the art of other religions and other peoples, of artists who did not belong to the masculine gender, and who were belittled by the museums of modern art. And to combat the idea according to which the "white cube" had become a synonym for exclusion, Peter Weibel brought together more than fifty artists originally coming from the Third World (Félix González-Torres, Gabriel Orozco, Vik Muniz, Nedko Solakov, Mona Hatoum, Miguel Hernández Ríos, Guillermo Kuitca, Huang Yong Ping, Iké Udé, Carrie Mae Weems, Doris Salcedo, and Kendell Geers)[48] although they lived and worked in the West. Weibel's thesis was the following: within the Euro-American frame of reference, the art system first decides what kind of practices and products have to be considered art and, secondly, what kind of non-Eurocentric products and practices will be included in the Euro-American system. Western culture draws borders between itself and other peoples, cultures, races, and religions. And at the same time excludes the "other" – whether they are women, people of a different skin colour, children, old people, homosexuals, etc. – within its own culture. Social space is thus purified to the point at which no dispute is possible.

47 On this occasion, we have consulted the French edition, in Peter Weibel, "Au-delà du «cube blanc»", in Sophie Orlando (ed.), *Art et mondialisation. Anthologie de textes de 1950 à nos jours,* cit., 165.

48 For a descriptive and at the same time critical approach to the exhibition, see Okwui Enzewor, "Inclusion/Exclusion: Art in the Age of Global Migration and Postcolonialism", *Frieze* 33 (March-April 1997), 87.

The voices and the knowledge of the "other" are in this way relegated to the margins or excluded.

The "white cube" is a synonym of exclusion:

> The pure space of the gallery or the museum is pure not only from an aesthetic point of view but also it has been purified from the point of view of ethnicity, religion, class, and gender, in such a way that what we see in museums reveals mainly works of art created mainly by men, Christians, whites, Europeans, and North Americans. The art of other religions and other peoples is excluded from the museums of modern art. Is not modern art only a European invention, as Jimmie Durham argues? And it is thus here that the exhibition is located, in the necessity of not only deconstructing the "white cube" but also of deconstructing "white art" as a field of practices of domination, rejection, and exclusion. The map of culture must be decolonialised in the interests of a genuine global culture.[49]

The exhibition thus became a new "atlas of the world" in the era of global migration. An atlas motived, in the words of the curator, by a kind of frustration with the gap between the rhetoric of inclusion and the European Union's politics of exclusion. As Hans Belting pointed out, the central question of the show did not deviate excessively from what *Magiciens de la terre* – the project labelled ethnocentric – could have been. Many artists appeared in both exhibitions – Chéri Samba, Yinka Shonibare, Fred Wilson, Rasheed Araeen, Joe Ben Jr., Frédéric Bruly-Bouabré, Huang Yong Ping, and Bodys Isek Kingelez – and the question remained: to what extent is Western art western? Contemporary art, as Belting notes, has involved artists of non-Western origin since, at least, the 1970s. We could rather speak of a slow transformation of so-called Western art, in which the institutions are more Western than their visual grammar or their multiform average. The question is more a matter of structures than of borders, says Belting. The Western artistic scene has easily absorbed new leading roles and new local objectives, which in turn exclude any return to a purified Western profile in art. We often first have to read the biographies of artists to be able to identify their origin.[50]

49 Peter Weibel, "Au-delà du «cube blanc»", in Sophie Orlando (ed.), *Art et mondialisation. Anthologie de textes de 1950 à nos jours,* cit., 168.

50 Hans Belting, "Art in the TV Age: On Global Art and Local Art History", in Birgit Mersmann and Alexandra Schneider (eds.), *Transmission Image. Visual Translation and Cultural Agency* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 1999), 180.

The Johannesburg biennials and continentalism

In the article "Modernity and Postcolonial Ambivalence", Okwui Enwezor,[51] after establishing four ideas or dominant categories about the way to understand modernity (supermodernity, andromodernity, specious modernity, and aftermodernity), argues that the category which best fits Africa is the last of these: aftermodernity. Africa, in Enwezor's words, would share part of the disdain for its non-modernity with the Muslim world, although Islamic societies would enjoy a greater respect because of the existence of a classic Islamic past which the black continent lacks. And if Africa does not possess any historical conscience and lacks "spirit", as Hegel argued, how can its experience of modernity be reclaimed if not through the master narrative of high modernity? And it is thus how Africa would be relegated to an epistemology of non-existence, according to which it would never have been modern, using one of the more well-known *dicta* of Bruno Latour.[52]

One of the first exhibitions, in this case a biennial, to really reflect these considerations of the "African" was the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale of 1997,[53] which, like the 1st Biennale (*Africus*, 1995),[54] was presented as great universal exhibition in which the "new South African art" was shown not only to an international audience but also to South Africans themselves. Both biennials showed local art through works of different African countries and from other parts of the world, with the intention of situating South African art in a global context. According to the guidelines of its two curators, Christopher Till and Lorna Fergusson,[55] and with a total of more than sixty artists, *Africus* tack-

51 Okwui Enwezor, "Modernity and Postcolonial Ambivalence", *South Atlantic Quartely,* vol. 109, 3 (summer 2012), 5-12. Text included in the catalogue *Altermodern* (Nicolas Bourriaud, ed.) (London: Tate Publishing, 2009).

52 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

53 *Trade Routes. History and Geography. II Johannesburg Biennale* (exhibition catalogue) (Cape Town: The Electric Workshop, Museum Africa, The Johannesburg Art Gallery, and The Rembrandt van Rijn Gallery, Johannesburg and The Castle and The South African National Gallery, 12 October – 12 December 1997).

54 *Africus: Johannesburg Biennale* (exhibition catalogue) (Johannesburg: Transitional Metropolitan Council, 28 February – 30 April 1995).

55 Organised in two thematic areas: "Volatile Alliances", curated by the South African artist Kendell Geers (which involved only international artists with no local representative), and "Decolonising our Minds" which, as Ngugi wa Thiong'o pointed out, starting from Africa as a "focus" highlighted the global repercussions of colonialism, understanding self-representation and identity from the historical experience of apartheid, of how this impacted art and culture, black and white South Africans, and the country's relationship with the rest of the world. As Lorna Ferguson, one of the exhibition's curators, affirmed, the Biennale had to be understood as a barometer to measure the effects of isola-

led the question of "inclusivity", education, and democratic structures. Ten exhibitions of work by South African artists sought to show the diversity of local production aimed at closing the gap and correcting the imbalance resulting from a long historiographical tradition based on social prejudices, independently of whether the works came from self-taught artists, artisans, black artists, creators from disadvantaged economic environments, or groups. Works that lived together with paintings, sculptures, and installations from recognised white artists such as Clive van den Berg (*The Mine Dumps Project*) and Jane Alexander, in harmony with one of the articles published in the catalogue, that by Thomas McEvilley ("Here Comes Everybody"), which reflects concern for "inclusivity" and "radical definition" of the canon of South African art.[56]

But the image of the "new South Africa" that the political ideology of the recently elected national-unity government wanted to impose and its interest in reconciliation and the celebration of African cultural heritage – which was the driving spirit of this 1st Johannesburg Biennale – clashed openly with the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale, *Trade Routes: History and Geography* (1997),[57] whose discursive project was not prepared in Johannesburg but in New York, in many meetings in apartments and bars in Brooklyn and Manhattan.

In effect, clearly getting away from the rhetoric of the post-apartheid phase which coincided with the 1st Biennale, the second event was openly designed to expand the recently forged network of international links and to example "the history of globalisation", exploring those modes of opposition, analysis, and interpretation with which contemporary artists faced questions of colonialisation, migration, and technology. Okwui Enwezor, a Nigerian based in New York, and his team of six international curators, familiar with the way in which the work of Jean-Hubert Martin in *Magiciens de la terre* (1989) had been ques-

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tion, a barometer that could not be ahistorical. She argued that the past needed to be reviewed and that the Biennale would perhaps assist in discovering the extent to which South Africans had isolated themselves. The elections of April 28 of that year opened a period of national catharsis, Ferguson noted, which would allow the end of South Africa's self-imposed isolation. Lorna Ferguson, "Reflections on the question: Why a Johannesburg Biennale?", in *Africus: Johannesburg* (exhibition catalogue), cit., 10.

56 Sabine Marshall, "The Impact of the Two Johannesburg Biennials on the Formation of a New South African Art", *Social Dynamics,* vol. 25, 2 (1999), 119-137.

57 *Trade Routes* exhibited the work of more than one hundred and sixty artists coming from sixty-three countries, in six different locations – four in Johannesburg and the other two in Cape Town. Six exhibitions in six different places were presented and curated by a team of international curators made up of Colin Richards, Octavio Zaya, Gerardo Mosquera, Kellie Jones, Hou Hanru, Yu Yeon Kim, and Mahen Bonetti.

tioned, challenged the validity of national borders and the concept of nationalism, which was translated into the removal of the "Third World lists", that is to say, of artists with national labels. The conventional organisation in national pavilions was abandoned and all the works were gathered under the theme of "global trade routes", exploring aspects related to identity and territory within the "global village", a concept which reflected South Africa's own idiosyncrasy, which was debated between opening and isolation and a desire for internationalisation without falling, however, into the inclusivity and regionalism of the 1st Biennale. In *Trade Routes*, there was considerably less selection of South African artists than in 1995, and artisanal and community works were dispensed with in favour of works of a high standard, although always with the declared intention of integrating South African art into the international global context and, specifically, of relocating South African art in Africa itself.[58]

Okwui Enwezor not only presented these open lists of artists but also a theoretical discourse that was well decked out with concepts taken both from ethnography, such as that of "contact zones" from James Clifford's *The Predicament of Culture* (1988), and the postmodern discourses of difference, notably that derived from the thesis of Michel Foucault. The 2nd Johannesburg Biennale ceased to be a uniquely visual manifesto in order to promote the "production of knowledge" and – above all – to enable "contact zones" between artists, intellectuals, social and political situations with the aim of seeking alternatives to the tensions between the local and the global. What was cutting edge about a biennial that featured some of the most prominent metropolitan and peripheral creators of the late 1990s?, asked Enwezor. And the answer was "the degree to which artists pose durable questions". According to Enwezor, artists should be seen as operating at high levels of research in the philosophical, political, phenomenological, and social processes of our time. They speak of culture in an era in which culture is a concept that is questioned and of history at a time in which history is no longer subjected to a question of authority. They weave complex and disturbing political narratives in the midst of a context of chaos and destruction.[59]

As Okwui Enwezor claimed in an interview with Pat Binder and Gerhard Haupt:

58 Sabine Marshall , "The Impact of the Two Johannesburg Biennials on the Formation of a New South African Art", cit., 130.

59 Okwui Enwezor, "Introduction Travel Notes: Living, Working, and Travelling in a Restless World", in *Trade Routes. History and Geography,* cit., 1997, 7-8.

> We wanted to look at issues related to border crossings, but not border crossings in the classic sense of a celebration of hybridity. We wanted to see if people actually do cross those borders as we always believe that they have. At the edge of very extreme nationalisms, we want to explore what the role or what the situation is of being a citizen in the particular context of shifting political landscapes. We want to explore national violence, as well as the question of the national souvereign [*sic*] subject as presently constituted around this idea of a nation. We are not so interested in how some of these questions are set in and around themselves, but how they flow in and out of each other, often times producing quite legible disfigurations. I think that the most important thing about "Alternating Currents" is how it assumes that, in the context of globalization, there are new temporalities that enter into our frame of thinking, and it looks at how those things are taken into account.[60]

As an example of what was without doubt one of the dominant themes of the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale, that of diaspora – a diaspora understood as an attempt to escape both national cultures and Western modernity and as a key word for constructing personal identity – one would have to cite the work of the New York-based Nigerian Olu Oguibe, who was present in Johannesburg. Olu Oguibe, using conceptual art as a lingua franca – other artists used the lingua franca of minimalism and derivatives – did not renounce narrative, metaphor, symbolism; and thus his whole production, as Okwui Enwezor claims, is charged with the memory of the loss of alienation, abandonment, the violence of representation, which projects onto the "undesirable other". The wound that exile involves is always, in Oguibe's work, vulnerable and moving, and his ideas regarding emigration are also valid for citizens of many European countries: gypsies, Turks, Bosnians. Theirs are works that ultimately underline the never-resolved and ambiguous state of the marginalised, but at the margin of all folkloric or excessively localised reference.[61]

Olu Oguibe's strategy, together with those of other African artists settled or not in the metropolis, such as Bili Bidjocka, Iké Udé, and William Kentridge, was a model in this respect: instead of encouraging the concepts of tradition, authenticity, and originality, it worked on the contrary for a displacement of the centre or of history. And his images could be described as diasporic, which is to say, intertextual or intervisual with the possibility of multiple visual

60 Pat Binder and Gerhard Haupt, "Okwui Enwezor – Interview", in http://www.universes-in-universe.de/car/africus/e_enwez.htm (consulted 3 March 2014).

61 Okwui Enwezor, "Entre dos mundos. Posmodernismo y artistas africanos en la metrópolis occidental", *Atlántica* 12 (winter 1995-1996), 9-26.

and intellectual associations both within and outside the production of knowledge.[62] And it was thus confirmed by a distinguished group of international critics (not the majority of local critics, who saw in the show a sign of elitism, inaccessibility, and irrelevance) who considered the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale the most important exhibition of the 1990s. As Dan Cameron argued in the pages of the magazine *Artforum*, *Trade Routes: History and Geography* was the first global exhibition that transformed the promise of a postcolonial theory within a tangible reality, completely exorcising the ghost of *Magiciens de la terre* of 1989.[63]

The 2nd Johannesburg Biennale situates us in a territory that is no longer postcolonial but basically global, where we find ourselves with a notion of contemporary African art dominated by a globalisation that negotiates the national and the transnational, the regional and the universal, the cosmopolitan and the continental, the sense of place and the discourse of displacement, seeking a new dialectic between the artists of the diaspora and those who opted for the continent. It is in this negotiation between home and exile where we can inscribe a new concept, that of "continentalism" in relation to cosmopolitanism and transnationalism, which O. Enwezor put forward in the text *Contemporary African Art Since 1980* (2009). A continentalism that would have to be understood as a form of resistance to a way of defining African art from the exterior, both by foreigners themselves and by diasporic artists with access to institutional power. What is important is to find resources within the artistic networks of a continent uprooted by the institutional deficit, and only thus can new cartographies be produced that value artists who build their careers in Africa; from the local to the global, from the national to the transnational, from the continental to the transcontinental: all crossed by affiliations, networks, routes, borders, and trajectories within the landscape occupied by African artists who have lived since 1980 on the continent or outside of it.

In his attempt to articulate a genealogy of the continental, Achille Mbembe, the Cameroonian philosopher based in Paris, in his text "Afropolitanism",[64] insists on the flow of worlds, so rooted in the African condition, but not only from "dispersion" (or diaspora) but also from "immersion", specifically from a renewed concept of continentalism and the proud authenticity of an artist

62 See Michael Bronson, "The Curator's Moment: Trends in the Field of International Contemporary Art Exhibitions", *Art Journal,* vol. 57, 4 (winter 1998), 16-27.

63 Dan Cameron, "October 15, Johannesburg", *Artforum* (December 1997), 22.

64 Achille Mbembe, "Afropolitanism", in *Africa Remix. Contemporary Art of a Continent* (exhibition catalogue) (Johannesburg: Johannesburg Art Gallery, 24 June – 30 September 2007), 26-31.

who, "living and working" in Africa, does not renounce his condition as a global subject.[65] Taking a step forward in a work with a political standpoint, *De la postcolonie* (2000)[66] – originally published in the *Le Messager* newspaper in Duala (Cameroon) – Mbembe expanded his ideas in the terrain of cultural life and aesthetic creativity (Afropolitanism as an aesthetic and a kind of poetics of the world). In "Afropolitanism" (a sum of the words "Afro" and "cosmopolitanism") Mbembe proposes in a non-political way how discourses about Africa, from both academic and popular points of view, are biased by a variety of clichés tied to Western fantasies and fears. For instance, Africa is seen by the West as a headless figure threatened by madness and still innocent regarding notions of centre, hierarchy, or stability, as a vast, dark cave where each point of reference and distinction combines in total confusion, and, finally, as a tragic and unhappy human story. Africa would be a model of intertwining between here and other places, or of the presence of those other places in the here, or of what Achille Mbembe calls a relativisation of roots and primary belongings and a way of embracing the strange, the foreign, and the distant and of recuperating the footprints of distance in the near, of domesticating the unfamiliar, of working with what has the appearance of opposites. Mbembe goes on from here to refer directly to the term "Afropolitanism", a mix of cultural, historical, and aesthetic sensibility which is not to be confused with either pan-Africanism (a political and social movement that promotes African brotherhood) or the phenomenon of negritude: it would be rather a third way between anticolonial nationalism and pan-Africanism. It would also be the adoption of a political and cultural posture in relation to nation, race, and the question of difference in general. Because, as Mbembe argues, more than sanctifying the concept of nation or race it is necessary to reanimate the spirit of Africa and, in this way, revitalise the possibilities of an art, a philosophy, and an aesthetic that can provide something new and significant to the world in general. What is important is not so much to measure oneself against the people next door but against the wider world. And this is the case when referring to Africans who live outside of Africa (with the experience of diaspora in many cases), to others who live freely on the continent but not necessarily in the

65 The term "Afropolitanism" was coined by Achille Mbembe to describe the lives of Africans and the way in which they crisscrossed cultural and geographical borders, being experts in the experience of sharing various identities without ceasing to be essentially Africans. See also Jennifer Wawrzinek and J. K. S. Makokha (eds.), *Negotiating Afropolitanism: essays on borders and spaces in contemporary African literature and folklore* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011).

66 Achille Mbembe, *De la postcolonie. Essai sur l´imagination politique dans l´Afrique contemporaine* (Paris: Karthala, 2000).

country which saw their birth, and still others who have had the opportunity to live in various worlds without ceasing from coming and going and developing through this movement an incalculable wealth of gazes and sensibilities. And he concludes that it is a question of people who can express themselves in more than one language and who are developing, sometimes without knowing it, a transnational culture which he defines as "Afropolitan".[67]

São Paulo and anthropophagy

The act of getting rid completely of all national representation in favour of a thematic structure was also strengthened in another of the historical biennials, created in 1951 in Brazil. We refer to the São Paulo Biennal whose 1998 edition, under Paulo Herkenhoff and Adriano Pedrosa, assumed that the long tradition of using the show to explore the Western cutting edge was over and, at the moment when contemporary art was arriving in Brazil, to serve as a platform so that artists from Brazil and other Latin American countries could have international visibility.

The event of 1998 also satisfied this need to work within the format of the "international biennial", pointing clearly to a non-Eurocentric and transnational approach to global art. Herkenfoff used the notion of anthropophagy (cannibalism) and its historical significance from the perspective of cultural formation in Brazil. Starting from the *Manifiesto antropófago* (*Cannibalist Manifesto*), published in 1928 by the Brazilian poet Oswald de Andrade, and the polemical concept of anthropophagy, which defined Brazilian culture as "devouring" all foreign values to create its own identity, the curators saw in the concept of anthropophagy a symbolic practice – real or metaphorical – of devouring the "other", in this case, both European and indigenous influences, to forge a unique postcolonial cultural identity, and even the need to import the models of the European biennal.

To take on the constant factor of "appropriation" and "contamination" in Brazilian art in relation to Europe was the great challenge to the curatorial team directed by Paulo Herkenhoff, which split the Biennal into four nuclei, each one with its own curatorial parameters: "National representations", "Contemporary Brazilian art" (subdivided into two parts, "Um e Outro" and "Um e Outros", with artists such as Ernesto Neto, Rivane Neuenschwander,

67 Achile Mbembe, "Afropolitanism", in *Africa Remix. Contemporary Art of a Continent* (exhibition catalogue), cit., 29-31.

Cildo Meireles and Beatriz Milhazes) "Historical nucleus", and finally "Roteiros" [routes]. Of these the most developed of the four was "Historical Nucleus: Anthropophagy and Histories of Cannibalism", which presented a reconsideration of the history of global art in the framework of anthropophagy, with works from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century, and which included sections such as Europe's being confronted by the discovery of cannibalism in America and the introduction of artistic genres in the colonisation of the continent. Taking as its main starting point a series of works by the seventeenth-century Dutch painter Albert Eckhout, full of references to allegorical representations of cannibalism, the curators sought at all times to integrate specific aspects of Brazilian culture in relation to Western art. Hence the confrontations of the Baroque Brazilian sculptor Aleijadinho with two representatives of Brazilian modernity, Tarsila do Amaral and Alfredo Volpi, or the works of Géricault, Goya, Van Gogh, and Rodin with those of Ana Mendieta, Hermann Nitsch, Damien Hirst, Lygia Clark, Hélio Oiticica, and Cildo Meireles, in a clear example of how, from cannibalism understood as a symbolic practice, one could understand relations of "otherhood" and reclaim anthropophagy as a strategy of cultural emancipation.[68]

In the nucleus entitled "Roteiros, Roteiros, Roteiros, Roteiros, Roterios, Roterios, Roterios", a word repeated seven times in Oswald de Andrade's manifesto, the curator divided the globe into seven geographical areas or "continents" (Caribbean, Africa, Latin America, Asia, Canada, United States, Europe), as an expanded version of the allegories of the four continents developed in European art of the seventeenth century, and invited non-Brazilian curators to present art of these different regions following the same model of "cultural dialogue". The plural name also involved numerous points of view, implying that what was important was not the old practice of dedicating spaces to great masters nor that of presenting exhibitions by regions, as occurred in the 1996 Biennial under the title *Universalitis,* but rather the idea of a show made up of multiple exhibitions of the world's regions: to integrate, from a transnational imaginary, various points of view, to articulate criteria, and to define a focus. And if, for instance, Mercator oriented cartographic representations in line with the most advantageous position of the European gaze, in "Roteiros" the ensemble did not seek to reduce the world to a universalist or globalised vision, nor each region to a gaze that covers it all. "Roteiros" could rather define

68 Paulo Herkenhoff, "Historical Nucleus: Antropophagy and Histories of Cannibalisms", in *24th Sao Paulo Biennial* (exhibition catalogue) (São Paulo: Pavilhao Ciccillo Matarazzo do Parque do Ibirapuerta, 3 October – 13 December 1998).

itself as a work of mappers of the cosmos (the curator as cartographer) who seek a gaze "of" or "about" their own region. And always starting from the same methodology: a return journey. The curators should in effect construct their own routes ("Roteiros") by means of the experience of travelling the territory for a recognition of their art. After all, the key had been provided: "Against cabinets, the cultured practice of life", as Andrade had affirmed in 1928.

The consolidation of the global

Documenta 11. The Platforms of Kassel and their critical reception

Documenta 11 (Kassel, 2002) would have to be situated as an antidote to *Magiciens de la terre* and as the continuation of the work carried out in Johannesburg in 1997. It was a discursive exhibition project which proposed overcoming the postcolonial and the multicultural with the global. Thus, while *Magiciens,* as Enwezor showed in the catalogue,[69] fed the notion of distance and the perception of exoticism, Documenta advocated an "anthropology of proximity"; while *Magiciens* legitimised its curatorial choices by means of the cult of individual expression as an example of artistic excellence, Documenta gave voice to the multitude, a concept taken in this case from Frantz Fanon and *The Wretched of the Earth*; and while *Magiciens* insisted on the fact of the place of origin (with small maps to locate the country from which each artist originated), Documenta valued the vagrancy of hybrid producers: there was no longer a point on the map for each creator, only histories and trajectories, and it was impossible to take stock of them.

Documenta 11 was the culmination of a period of expansion beyond Europe and North America and consisted of five successive events ("five journeys of experience and methods of thinking about the global") held in five continents over the course of eighteen months, understood as a "map of the circuits of contemporary knowledge" about art, theory, science, culture, ecology, spatiality, and temporality, urban systems, locality, globality, institutional formations, etc.[70] Because, as Enwezor argued in the introduction to the catalogue:

69 Okwui Enwezor, "Introduction. The Black Box", *Documenta 11 Platform 5: Exhibition* (exhibition catalogue) (Cantz: Ostfildern-Ruit, 2003), 42-55.

70 *Documenta 11* incorporated five "platforms": Platform 1 took place in Vienna and Berlin with the theme of "Democracy"; Platform 2 in New Delhi on "Justice and Reconciliation"; Platform 3 in St.

> Although preparation and research began nearly four years ago, it is nonetheless permissible to say that the discursive drive of Documenta 11 will never see its conclusion in the spectacular spaces filled with art projects that the exhibition offers to visitors to Kassel. The exhibition, despite its ambition, scale, and complexity, and the sheer heterogeneity of the forms, images, and positions that encompass its far-reaching vision, is not to be understood as a terminus for understanding the wide-ranging disciplinary models spelled out in the first four Platforms of conferences, debates, and workshops that preceded it in five locations: in Europe (Vienna and Berlin), Asia (New Delhi), the Americas (St. Lucia), and Africa (Lagos).[71]

Standing out among these debates were, for instance, those which took place in New Delhi – "Experiments with Truth: Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation", in which questions were posed such as what happens through the violence and collapse of the state? And where does one find the horizon of culture and civilisation after the impunity of the state and the end of any kind of authoritarianism? – and in St. Lucia (Platform 3), which approached "creolisation", a dominant modality in contemporary practices thanks to the phenomena of migration and displacement and which was configured as a process of emergence of a world culture conceived from the perspective of a radical flow, both cultural and situational: "Creole societies have their roots in the institutions of slavery and colonialism and mark the intersections where modern subjectivity and historical processes meet".[72]

And finally, and in relation to Platform 5 ("Passages through the construction of an exhibition"), the show held in Kassel,[73] Okwui Enwezor, after establishing the lack of legitimacy of certain policies of museums and large-scale exhibitions when recognising their complex *topos* in the new global community, referred to this not exactly as an exhibition but as a "constellation of public spheres", and proposed, on the one hand, a restatement of the historical formation of Documenta in which art is imposed through models of representation and narratives of autonomous subjectivity and, on the other hand, by a

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Lucia, tackling the question of "Creolization"; Platform 4 in Lagos, debating "Urban Africa", and Platform 5, presented as an "encyclopaedia in construction", in Kassel.

71 O. Enwezor, "Introduction. The Black Box", cit., 49. Enwezor defines a "platform" as an encyclopaedia open to the analysis of late modernism, a network of relationships, an open form of organising knowledge, a non-hierarchical model of representation, and a compendium of multiple voices.

72 O. Enwezor, "Introduction. The Black Box", cit., 51.

73 O. Enwezor, "Introduction. The Black Box", cit., 53.

new way of understanding the exhibition more from the discursive than from the museographic:

> *Documenta 11*'s paradigm – Enwezor argues – is shaped by forces that seek to enact the multidisciplinary direction through which artistic practices and processes come most alive, in those circuits of knowledge produced outside the predetermined institutional domain of Westernism, or those situated solely in the sphere of artistic canons.[74]

Hence the exhibition presented the dialectical intersection between contemporary art and culture and alluded to it as a "diagnosis", which involved the rethinking of the limits between the postcolonial, the end of the Cold War, post-ideology, the transnational, the deterritorialised, the diasporic, and the global. Understood as a receptacle not so much for consumer objects as for a "multiplicity of voices", *Documenta 11* allowed for questions of translation, interpretation, subversion, hybridisation, creolisation, identity, subjectivation, displacement, and *reassemblage*, questions that were not only approached by artists by also by a series of meetings between institutions, disciplines, genres, generations, processes, forms, communications media, activities. And all this under concepts culled from specific authority or cult figures, such as Giorgio Agamben and his concept of "aterritoriality", the main order of current instability, insecurity, and uncertainty, an order under which all notions of autonomy are revoked; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri and their new concept of "global sovereignty", which is no longer defined by conservative borders of the old scheme of the nation-state; even Jacques Rancière when he defines the political in the relations between the "singular" and the "universal", the "local" and the "global"; without forgetting the Indian-American anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, for whom the permanent displacement of people, images, and products transforms the planet into a vast space where the old local/global dichotomy has been challenged by new types of flows of people and technologies.

In effect, O. Enwezor used *Documenta 11* to make his own commentary about the significance and function of art in a global, postcolonial, and interconnected world, a world dominated by the "end of history", by the dream of "cultural hybridity" from the approach of deterritorialisation, which is to say, in a democratising levelling that includes a significant participation by racial minorities and by artists at the margin of the system of galleries and institu-

74 O. Enwezor, "Introduction. The Black Box", cit., 54.

tions. To embody his ideas, Enwezor focused simultaneously on different lines of work: that of the archive, the documentary, politics, anthropology-ethnography, and expanded cinema; to highlight the "ethnographic line", in harmony with otherhood and the need to create references with the consequent displacement of art towards anthropology and geography, understanding both as a subgenre of the history of art. Anthropology provided a contextual work (that is not say, not autonomous) that brought many artists to conceive of ethnographic projects as fields of work inscribed in the everyday, in the synchronic, and in the horizontal, and based – in most cases – on participatory observation, although without renouncing the interpretive and the search for the allegorical or the symbolic, depending on the cases involved. And what did geography provide? An interest in place, not so much physical places as places of identity: place as a field of knowledge, a zone of exchange or of cultural debate. A "discursive place" which also brings us a new modality of the artist: the artist not as the maker or producer of objects but as the "progenitor of meanings".

This ethnographic turn could be seen in the video work of the filmmaker and feminist Chantal Akerman who, in the video installation with nineteen monitors *From the Other Side* (2002), tackled the subject of exile and immigration not at the abstract level but on the Mexican-US border (Arizona), referring to the crisis situation of hundreds of Mexicans who try to emigrate to the United Sates and who even at night are detained and treated as prisoners of war, or even killed by ranchers with rifles on their shoulders and Magnums in their hands, who decide to impose their own laws with total impunity. Images were transmitted live over the internet of what was occurring minute by minute at different points of this border.

Kobena Mercer, in his commentary on *Documenta 11*,[75] compared the effort of its curator to convert the exhibition into an intellectual enterprise with similar efforts by Catherine David in *Documenta 10* (1997), although he indicated the step forward taken by Enwezor in correcting the old exclusions on the part of "Westernism". Jean-Paul Martinon described the show as "exhaustive", [76] an exhaustiveness that did not come from the exhibition itself – a curatorial project of great correctness – but from the attempt to present something totally incomprehensible, which the critic characterised as the immanent threshold of the present. In this way, the critic concluded, the exhibition succumbed to the latest utopia, which captures the immanent threshold of the infinite complex of the passing of time on the Earth, which is made evident in

75 Kobena Mercer, "Documenta 11", *Frieze* (September 2002).
76 Jean-Paul Martinon, "Capturing the Present", *Journal of Visual Culture* (2002).

the curatorial use of terms that being with the prefix "trans" (transitions, transformations, transnational, transgenerational, transmigratory, transdisciplinary, etc.), a manifestation that what is imposed in *Documenta* is that which is permanently displaced to another place. For his part, Stewart Martin[77] did not hesitate in considering *Documenta 11* to be one of the most radical events in the history of postcolonial practice, although he pointed out that its radicalness had little to do with the historical avant-garde movements and their promises of a profound transformation in the sphere of social relationships. In his judgement, the novelty of *Documenta 11* would be more curatorial and, ultimately, a milestone in the development not only of postcolonial discourses but also of postcolonial artistic practice.

And as Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie[78] observes from another point of view, *Documenta 11* transformed the critical and curatorial practices of contemporary art by investigating the possibilities of political action in the era after the "end of art". Ogbechie described this action as "politics of identity", understood as a wide range of political activities based on the experiences of injustice shared by members of certain social groups with a double intention: first, to escape from the circuits predetermined by the Western canon and, second, not to put the accent – as *Magiciens* had done – on questions related to ethnicity. And always within an inclusive discourse that confronted the ethical with the limits of Western power and its impact on the contemporary discourses of globalisation. It could be concluded, in Ogbechie's view, that Enwezor's real contribution was not only pinpointing "a spectacular difference" but also doing so on an intellectual and ethical level, converting the exhibition into a literal documentation of different types of trauma. Hence the justified presence of projected images: films, videos, and digital installations, with the common denominator of posing questions about the nature of contemporary reality, of detecting the place of marginalised groups within the new world order, and of making a sort of chronicle of the degradation of political and cultural life in communities in a state of siege. Many of the projected images included markers of fragmentation and conflict, with images of armed men and women, dislocated populations, and places devastated by violence.

As Ogbechie argues, *Documenta 11* used these images of conflict to theorise about disorder as the new norm of contemporary existence through a series of

77 Stewart Martin, "A New World Art? Documenting *Documenta 11*", *Radical Philosophy* (November – December 2003).

78 Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie, "Ordering the Universe: *Documenta 11* and the Apotheosis of the Occidental Gaze", *Art Journal,* vol. 64, 1 (spring 2005), 81.

artistic works dedicated to the literal documentation of all the various facets of human experience with spaces occupied by an overlap of detritus coming from urban culture, which implies for many of the artists present at Documenta a clear commitment to a social vision nourished by justice and ethics, although shown, in a clinical manner appropriate to the exhibition spaces of the First World. And what is clear is that, beyond the issue of whether Documenta was or was not a new "appropriation of the Other" by the West, it is certain that many of the works exhibited clearly questioned Western ethnocentrism, opposing its extensive spheres of influence. Numerous works, for instance that of Jeff Wall, seemed to claim that many structures of oppression, although operating on macrolevels, could nonetheless have very local consequences. In the case of Jeff Wall's photograph *Invisible Man* (2000), based on the novel of that name written in 1952 by the US author and literary critic Ralph Ellison (1914-1994), a text narrated in the first person by the leading character, a nameless Afro-American who considers himself to be socially invisible, basically because people see him as a stereotype and not as a real person. Wall, basing himself on the Jim Crow law, which discriminated against black people, recreated in minute detail the subterranean dwelling of the main character in Ellison's novel, a space where he survives surrounded by more than a thousand lightbulbs, illuminated thanks to electricity stolen from a state company. We recognise the power of the underground tenant, but we are horrified by the racism which keeps him underground, reinforcing still further the idea of his invisibility. The lightbulbs, switched on all the time, reflect a drive on the part of the main character to narrate his own experience to thereby ensure a precarious existence that can be erased for good if the company discovers his theft and cuts off the electricity supply. As Ogbechie argues, in the same way that Ellison's novel is riddled with metaphors and references to the jazz of Louis Armstrong or the blues music of the singer William Bunch (who, in the 1930s adopted the name of Peter or Peetie Wheatstraw), Wall's installation is an excellent metaphor of the condition of non-Western subjects in the discourse of globalisation.[79]

After *Documenta 11*, and parallel to the peripheral biennials, it seemed that the art world was basically focused on two big questions: on the one hand, the new geographical journeys which closely followed the concepts proposed by Immanuel Wallerstein in *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing*

79 Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie, "Ordering the Universe: *Documenta 11* and the Apotheosis of the Occidental Gaze", cit., 85.

World System (1991)[80] and, on the other, questions relating to migration, culture, and identity immersed in the new ways of inhabiting the places of the metropolis from multiple peripheries, in what Mary Louise Pratt[81] calls "contact zones", zones whose cultures and populations are separated by geography, by history, and by belonging to a human group or an ethnicity, but which are obliged to cohabit – always in a context of forces of inequality – and, consequently, to establish relationships of translation between each other.

The Kassel constellation

From the model of *Documenta 11* in Kassel, the first really global exhibition and one of the pioneers in the field of "identity exhibitions",[82] the art world has seen how large-scale exhibitions have proliferated everywhere not only to provide the public with a greater knowledge of artistic movements though the symbolic use and the exchange of forms and ideas of an advanced international art, but also to disseminate a certain willingness of global art not to hide the asymmetrical power relations in institutional practices. And in doing this, these exhibitions seek not only to incorporate the peripheral spaces of cultural production (see the peripheral biennials) but also to be a faithful reflection of the complex social and cultural maps of all the globalised societies, while providing the spectator with a new space, not of art and nationalist culture, but a space that is open for replies and debates.

It is not strange, in this regard, that after *Documenta 11* various cities at opposites ends of the globe – such as Singapore, Linz, Graz, and Vancouver, in the exhibitions *Site + Sight, Translating Cultures*,[83] *Der globale Komplex/The Global Complex*,[84] and *Home and Away: Crossing Cultures on the Pacific Rim*[85] – presented specific aspects of a perception of the global world and of a glo-

80 Immanuel Wallerstein, *Geopolitics and geoculture: Essays on the Changing World System* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

81 See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

82 See Reesa Greenberg, "Identity Exhibitions: From *Magiciens de la Terre* to Documenta 11", *Art Journal* (spring 2005), 90-92.

83 *Site + Sight, Translating Cultures* (cat. exp.), Earl Lu Gallery (Singapore, 7 June – 26 July 2002).

84 *Der globale Komplex/The Global Complex* was presented in two centres in Austrian cities, in the O.K. Centrum für Gegenwartskunst of Linz, with the theme "The Incompatibility of Viewpoints" (28 May – 12 July 2002), and in the Grazer Kunstverein in Graz (5 June – 5 July 2002), with the topic "Continental Drift".

85 *Home and Away* (exhibition catalogue) (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 23 October 2003 – 18 January 2004), 10-11.

balised society. The exhibition *Site + Sight: Translating Culture* made Singapore the centre (*the site*) and invited twenty-six artists from ten countries from across the world to express, through site-specific installations, their interpretation, their view (*the sight*) of globalisation, posing the following question: will globalisation lead to the assimilation of cultural identities within a single and homogenous whole or will cultural identity be appreciated and developed because of a fundamental need for difference? For its part, *Home and Away: Crossing Cultures on the Pacific Rim,* presented at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2003, joined this "spirit of the times" with a selection of thirty-one works (large installations) by six international artists: the Indonesian Fiona Tan, the Korean Do-Ho Suh, the Chinese Yin Xiuzhen, the Korean Jin-me Yoon, the American Sharon Lockhart, and the Japanese Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, of different backgrounds, places of origin, and personal histories, who lived and worked in territories that bordered the Pacific Ocean (Pacific Rim) and who raised concepts such as those of home and nation, cultural identity, diaspora and interchange, maintaining a live dialogue with the world across the Pacific. A good example of this was the two-screen video installation *Saint Sebastian* (2001) by Fiona Tan, which recorded an ancient coming-of-age ceremony in which the artist adopted an identity in conflict: part tourist, part documentary filmmaker, part artist. And also Sharon Lockart's film and series of related photographs, *Teatro Amazonas* (1999), whose link with the traditions of ethnography, documentary film, photography, and conceptual art produced, as in the case of Fiona Tan, a work which posed fundamental questions about the changing nature of cultural identity.

According to the show's creator Bruce Grenville, one of the main challenges for artists who live in global settings is to maintain the sense of oneself tied to the place of origin, without ceasing to evaluate critically the mobility and fluidity that characterise our times. The images and objects of this exhibition arrive at a critical period, when we are all witnesses to the fact that the scale of the global has changed the sense of meaning of "home" and "abroad". And if on occasions these terms can be aligned with other notions of being, for example "I and the other", "real and false", "whole and part", the idea of the singular, of the movement from a place or condition to another now seems more and more remote. Much has been written of this *in between* space, a space of hybridisation, a third space that is a space of translation and negotiation; however, as the curator suggests, the works of the exhibition suggest other modes: each artist offers an image, a raising of awareness of something new that appears to us but which cannot be contained by the traditional concepts of home and abroad. This image is a phantasm which pursues the memory of the artist and inhabits

the space of the gallery. Its presence is marked by a duplication, a repetition, an uncanny presence that links home and abroad through desire and terror.[86]

For its part, in the double show which took place in two Austrian cities, Linz and Graz – *The Global Complex* (2002) – the curators Christa Schneebauer and Rainer Zendron sought to create an analogy between the term "complex" – as something complicated, multicontextual, and conjunctive – and globalisation as a code of the *zeitgest*. The result? This "global complex" as an amalgam that encourages the meeting between bombastic gesture towards world society in both a serious and an ironic form. Hence not so much opting for emphasising the question that everything is interconnected, as the need to present a set of unique and segmented aspects of the modern perception of the world, beyond any bipolar dichotomy (I/other, victim/perpetrator, East/West, civilised world/peripheral world).[87]

With the presence of Florian Pumhösl, Jun Yang, Silke Wagner, Simon Starling, and Superflex at the Grazer Kunstverein in Graz, the reference to "continental drift" alluded directly to the German geophysicist Alfred Wegener, who in the 1920s came up with the theory of "plate tectonics" (from the Greek τεκτονικός, *tektonicós*, "the one who constructs"), a geological theory which explains the form in which the lithosphere (the coldest and most rigid external part of the Earth) is structured, and which the Graz curators used as a metaphor to refer to the enormous energy that divides the world into first, second, third, and even fourth worlds – almost as many worlds as continents – as a result of the unequal and unjust distribution of sources and resources.

And it is precisely this incapacity to confront changes and shifts that is the theme of the Graz show, with artists such as Simon Starling, who, driving an old Fiat 126 (with parts produced in Turin and others in Poland in 1972) to and from Turin and Poland, sought to demonstrate the altered strategies of economic production. While the formation of cultural identity is developed in a place, the process of work is contracted to countries with low wages. Paradoxically, nationalist interests are displaced to the foreground just at the time when borders lose their meaning, at least from the point of view of economic production, as Naomi Klein recognises, according to which the big corporations continue to be interested in multinationality, simply so that some national states can confront each other. The country that offers the most advan-

86 Bruce Grenville, "Home and Away: Crossing Cultures on the Pacific Rim", in *Home and Away* (exhibition catalogue) (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 23 October 2003 – 18 January 2004), 10-11.

87 Christa Schneebauer and Rainer Zendron, "The Global Complex", in *The Gobal Complex,* cit., 11-20.

tageous conditions, the lower taxes, and the lowest social benefits is an attractive place for the production sites.[88] From another point of view, from a historical investigation, Florian Pumhösl, in the work *Humanistic and Ecological Republic* (2000), after investigating the prerequisites and the meaning of the vocabulary of modern art in its spatial installations (for instance, designs of architectural plans described as utopian), sought to cast light on strategies of colonisation and on the interests of the colonisers that are hidden behind them.

For its part, the exhibition in Linz, *The Incompatibility of Viewpoints,* with the presence of artists such as Anne and Patrick Poirier, Cildo Meireles, Danica Dakic, Jun Yang, Peter Friedl, and Renée Green, put forward globalisation in its pure contradictions: an official level dominated by transnational corporations in constant expansion and a subterranean level formed by a network of unofficial contacts and meetings. In this context, one work that stands out is Renée Green's video installation *Wavelinks* (a work in progress started in 1999) which, from the interactions between people and electronic music, penetrated the terrain of cultural theory and media and communications theory to echo those contrary meetings within globalisation. Current electronic culture seems to promote the act of resorting to sound archives and proto-electronic genres in the same way that histories of the past are more and more frequently the object of digital manipulation. However, globalisation also produces other levels of resonance: the permanent demand of new, external, and fresh productions accelerates the emergence of peripheral scenes, which are equal to the old metropolises in terms of image and production. *Wavelinks,* in this mix of sound and activism, definitively traces the numerous and intricate connections between the most diverse levels of resonance of sound, not as a noble phantasm of globalisation, but rather as a way of anchoring it geographically and historically.

The global contemporary

As has been shown, globalisation and its effects in all areas of society have been the *leitmotiv* of a good number of curatorial projects in the first decade of the twentieth-first century. Of these, without doubt, *The Global Contemporary,* held at the ZKM/Center for Art and Media in Karslruhe in 2011[89] (with an ep-

88 Eva Maria Stadler, "Preface", in *The Global Complex,* cit., 9.

89 Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg and Peter Weibel (eds.), *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds* (exhibition catalogue) (Karlsruhe: ZKM/Center for Art and Media, 11 September 2011 – 5 February 2012) (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press 2012).

ilogue in Berlin in 2013)[90], is the one which has apparently provided an initial conclusion that contemporary artistic practices have experienced the "effects" or the "perceptions" of a globalisation that seems to have achieved – at the hands of different leading figures in the art system and its institutions – the crisis of the Western concept of art, seeking new audiences for art, some of them within local traditions that had never been filtered through the Enlightenment of the modern era.

The Global Contemporary assumed a present in which not only a spreading of biennials across the whole world had changed for ever the contemporary geography of art, or a new generation of artists proclaimed a common age in a global "common language" (*koiné*) of art, but also a present for which art was presented to itself as "contemporary" in a chronological, symbolic, or even ideological way. And in this sense, beyond a single art world, following the reflections of Marc Augé,[91] the emergence of "multiple art worlds" which coexisted and competed as a result of the "global practice" of contemporary art was imposed. And, as Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg pointed out in one of the catalogue texts:

> The global reality is, in fact, no longer synonymous with the all-encompassing term "world", but is composed of a multiplicity of worlds. This conclusion is not only valid for societies and cultures at large, but also includes the newly established art worlds. The resulting multiplicity of art worlds is in part explained by the observation that *art* production is turning increasingly into *culture* production, especially in such places where art is still a new experience and needs the support of local traditions of visual production.[92]

Taking for granted that globalisation had created a new map of art, what was now imposed was the need to know how this map should be drawn and what should be indicated in it. Hence the proliferation of new regions of transnational character, such as Asia-Pacific or Middle East, of new biennials in which travelling curators operate as global agents and show a mix of regional and international art to a cosmopolitan audience, and of new leading players that the exhibition charges with showing in documentary format as well as through texts and objects in the three macro sections into which they are di-

90 We refer to the show *Nothing to Declare? World Maps of Art since '89* (exhibition catalogue) (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1 February – 24 March 2013).

91 Marc Augé, *An Anthropology of Contemporaneous Worlds* (Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 1999).

92 Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg, "From Art World to Art Worlds", in *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds,* cit., 28.

vided and in the corresponding catalogue: the *Room of Histories,* with documentation of global art; epistemological production, which specifically involved various texts included in the catalogue that tried to consolidate the figure of the curator as ethnographer; and, in third place, the presentation of the visual production (*Eight Views from an Exhibition*) by a series of artists chosen basically for their contributions to the thematic units into which the exhibition itself was broken down and which included aspects related to translation, borders, the new economy and the new markets, with curiosity cabinets and biographical stories.

In this sense, the show implied a considerable renovation of exhibition displays in mixing the aesthetic-contemplative with the pedagogical-informational. Chronologies, maps, cartographies, information panels, and maps of statistics – which is to say, graphic media – made up the so-called *Room of Histories,* a chronicle of artistic institutions, expositions, and markets of the last twenty years which used the documentary format to visualise the changing conditions of the expanded geography of art. The hundred or so new biennials that, challenging the old binary model of centre/periphery, consolidated a polycentric world articulated in supranational "regions of art" (Asia, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Middle East, Africa, Australia) were documented in the section *Mapping. The Biennials and New Art Regions*. The appearance of new artistic fields, community museums, alternative spaces, as well as the role of the museum in other cultures (such as those of Abu Dhabi or Hong Kong), were gathered in the section *Art Spaces. A Museumscape in Transition*, a "displaced" concept of the global museum. Taking as its starting point the year 1989 and its crucial role in the meeting of the West with non-Western artistic production, such as *Magiciens de la terre* and *The Other Story* (both 1989), the section *Documents. Exhibitions and the Global Turn* presents abundant documentation about the influential and controversial exhibitions in the definition of the "global turn" in the period 1989-2011. *Branding. New Art Markets and Their Strategies* gathered together various studies about the new alliances between the financial and artistic markets, as well as the strategies of auction houses in the promotion of contemporary art in new geographical locations (China, India, Arabia, Iran) where it did not exist previously. And the conclusion was that not only art fairs but also the biennials were entering into the system of the market in the same way that the market performed a leading role in the development of the new artistic regions and in the public presence of artists from remote regions of the world of art.

One of the most interesting sections of this *Room of Histories,* which on the other hand sealed the complicity between global capital and global art, was

the work *trans_actions: The Accelerated Art World 1989-2011,* commissioned by the organisers from the team composed of Stewart Smith and Robert Gerard Pietrusko, a work shown on a panoramic screen which represented the temporal and spatial development of the "biennial system" and the "global art market" through a set of data whose animated visualisation and whose immersive experience offered an image of the dense network that simultaneously and through sophisticated computer programmes provides information about both the growth and the chronology of international exhibitions (including biennials) since 1895, the year of the first biennial, that of Venice, until the present day, and about the mobility of artists (their complex journeys from one biennial to another), art fairs, economic growth, and the importance of auctions at the global level.

The inclusive selection of artists illustrated some of the big questions and challenges that are also of a "global" scope (as a change from the concept of an international movement), such as, for example, the question of living in a planetary world that finds its metaphor in the airport and, more specifically, in the transit zone, an in-between place where, more than finding permanence, one waits for a new departure. As demonstrated by the works of Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Adrian Paci, Hito Steyerl, and – in particular – the Raqs Media Collective with its work *Escapment* (2009), an installation of twenty-seven watches corresponding to cities with their respective time zones, among others, the notion of time maps and compresses global space in experiencing a different time that escapes from the twenty-four time zones of the clock when our bodies move in space. It is for this reason that many of these artists use the image of the airport as a metaphor to illustrate the global condition which is familiar to each passenger as a paradox that is at the same time liberty and closure.

Another group of artists in the show, such as Bani Abidi, Rasheed Araeen, Kader Attia, Meschac Gaba, Pieter Hugo, Agung Kurniawan, and Pavel Pepperstein, use the mass media, such as television and cinema, and the consequent circulation of images all over the world to cross the borders of real worlds and expand visual consumption of popular culture everywhere, whether projecting the new global images that connect different cultures with each other, whether disrupting distinct ethnic typologies, whether adopting local narratives in a set of storyboards, or illustrations showing sequences understood in the style of guides in order to capture a certain history, as occurs in Pieter Hugo's work *Nollywood* (2008), a series of forty-three photographs taken in Nollywood, the Nigerian film industry, which stars professional actors and recreates filmic scenes using stereotypes that belong to this cinema or which represent popular myths that subvert the old colonial identity.

New sections, such as "The curiosity cabinet in post-colonial times" (with artists such as Neil Cummings and Marysa Lewandowska, Christian Jankowski, James Luna, and Nástio Mosquito), "The practice of art after modernity" (Miao Xiaochun, Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, and Sean Snyder), "Networks and systems: globalization as subject" (Yto Barrada, Ursula Biemann, Com & Com, IRWIN and NSKState.com, and The Xijing Men), "Art as commodity: the new economy and the art markets" (Melanie Jackson, Liu Ding, Superflex, Stephanie Syjuco), and, finally, "Lost in translation: new artists' biographies" (Francis Alÿs, Erik Bünger, Mona Hatoum, Martin Kippenberger, and Xu Bing), situate us in front of a show which highlights as its main premise the importance of a global practice which, as Terry Smith says, is not only a reaction to globalisation but also an audacious and positive reflection on the desire to liberate the "cultural self" towards the "other", working in favour of collaboration within the framework of a productive "cosmopolitanism".[93]

The phenomenon of biennialism

Fundamental to this progressive strengthening of the new map of art, in which limits and borders are every day in a state of flux, was the process of the so-called "decolonialisation of the map", in clear allusion to Graham Huggan's essay "Decolonizing the Map: Post-Colonialism, Post-Structuralism and the Cartographic Connection"[94] or, in other words, the opening to a polycentric world articulated in supranational regions and the gradual strengthening of what is known as the "biennial system" or the "new global salon". This materialised in the organisation of a large number of international biennials that moved from promoting the concept of the nation-state and that of nationalism to become symbols of new liberal strategies in which cities resorted to these events with the desire to become "creative cities" in the framework of new global networks.

The Venice Biennale, founded in 1896, together with Documenta in Kassel, created in 1955, were strengthened during the years of the avant-garde movements and of high Eurocentric modernity as the most influential international

93 See Terry Smith, "Contemporary Art: World Currents in Transition Beyond Globalization", in *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds,* cit., 191.

94 Graham Huggan, "Decolonizing the Map: Postcolonialism, Post-Structuralism and the Cartographic Connection", in Ian Adam and Helen Tifflin (eds.), *Past the Last Post: Theorizng Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

exhibitions that not only gathered together all Western art but also art shown in the main galleries and museums of the West.[95] With the "post-modern turn" and the displacement of interest from the centre to the margins, as well as with the transformations at the heart of the art world (the increase in the number of art fairs and art magazines, the creation of courses for curatorship, and the general interest in "delocalised" contemporary art), the idea that any city, whatever its location on the geopolitical map, could act as an international hub started to become a recurring theme. Hence from the end of the 1980s (Havana, 1984; Istanbul Biennial, 1987) the accent started to be put on the phenomenon of the expansion of cultural debate in the so-called periphery, which only multiplied in shows that were not only geographically non-Western but also took place in non-Western cultures.

The peripheral biennial as a new global salon

The exposed *supra* explains the boom in the so-called peripheral biennials or, at first, Third World biennials,[96] many of which were created as a reaction to the lack of any kind of support by local institutions to the most experimental contemporary production. Biennials such as Dak'Art (Senegal) and Taipei (Taiwan), founded in 1992, Sharjah (United Arab Emirates) in 1993, Gwangju (South Korea) in 1995, Johannesburg (South Africa) in 1995, Shanghai (China) in 1996, Busan (South Korea) in 1998, and the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale (Japan) in 1999 emerged in the face of the need to create their own version of cultural diversity against metropolitan tastes or, in other words, as the pragmatic alternative to museums or as the ways through which local cultures had the possibility of proposing their own local tastes, and not only in their neighbourhood but around the world. Today it is no longer necessary to go to Paris, New York, Kassel, or Venice to discover the "other", the margins, to find ourselves with diversity against metropolitan tastes and so that these can be sanctioned and validated by the structures and institutions of the official "canon".

95 A clear example of this is the São Paulo Biennial, created in 1951, which from its beginning until well into the 1990s continued to explore the Western "cutting edge", without forgetting to put a certain emphasis on Latin American art (as in Havana 1984). This is also the case of Sydney 1973, which, although it was interested from the start with Australian artists and the Aborigines, was basically a Eurocentric exhibition.

96 See Thomas McEvilley, "Arrivederci, Venice: The Third World Biennials" (1993), in Elena Filipovic, Marieke Van Hal and Solveig Ovstebo (eds.), *The Biennial Reader* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cant Verlag and Bergen, 2010), 407-408.

And, as we can read in the text "Biennialogy", if in modernity it was the museum through which art was known, now, under the postcolonial condition, it is the "biennial" format which has become the medium through which a good part of contemporary art is disseminated, to the point that it is the biennials that – in just two decades – have become one of the most important and visible places not only for contemporary art but also for the production, distribution, and generation of a public discourse around it.[97]

Many of these biennials found, in turn, their origin in contexts of profound political and cultural transition, as is the case of the Gwangju Bienniale, created in 1995 coinciding with the democratisation of South Korea after years of military dictatorship, the Johannesburg Bienniale (with only two editions, 1995 and 1997) after the end of apartheid, or *Manifiesta: European Biennial of Contemporary Art* (Rotterdam, 1996), as well as other biennials of the two Europes (Berlin, 1998; Tirana, Albania, 2001; Moscow, 2005), organised as a new phenomenon of the unified Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Charlotte Bydler, one of the first historians to analyse the phenomenon of the biennials in relation to globalisation, citing René Block, suggests a "biennial typology" that seems to be the common denominator in a good number of biennials: 1) the Venice model, a large format, global exhibition with national representations; 2) the Sydney model, which represents small-scale biennials organised around a theme defined by the curator and in which the invited artists depend on external financial support; 3) the Gwangju model, according to which the biennial selects artists independently of the countries represented; and 4) the Manifiesta model, which represents a changing model in relation both to the location and the curatorial team.[98] Together with these four categories, Bydler proposes a new categorisation, going wider into the cultural terrain, which allows the examples of diverse models, dates, and places. Thus one could classify the biennials in three large groups: 1) the philanthropic capitalist businesses born between the end of the nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century, many of which have been created by great philanthropists (Venice Biennale, Carnegie International, São Paulo Biennale, and that of Sydney); 2) manifestations arising in the post-war period and marked by the politics of blocks or by the reaction (from the Third World)

97 See "Biennialogy", in Elena Filipovic, Marieke Van Hal and Solveig Ovstebo (eds.), *The Biennial Reader* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cant Verlag and Bergen, 2010), 15.

98 René Block, "Biennials in Dialogue", Kassel Documenta, 2000. Cited by Charlotte Bydler, *The Global ArtWorld Inc. On the globalisation of contemporary art* (Stockholm: Figura Nova Series 32, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Uppsala University, 2004), 150-151.

to any alignment of this type (Documenta in Kassel, the Venice Biennale after the Second World War, the Havana Biennial, Dak'Art); and 3) flexibility of production in the 1990s and 2000s (the biennials of Istanbul, Gwangju, Sharjah, and Manifiesta).[99]

In this sense, the Manifiesta project stands out, a pan-European and nomadic biennial (hence the subtitle *European Biennial of Contemporary Art)* which, from the year of its foundation in Rotterdam in 1996 until the 2014 edition in St. Petersburg,[100] has kept faithful to its slogan of transgressing the existing regional, social, linguistic, and economic barriers in Europe to allow young artists – particularly from Eastern Europe and the periphery of the continent – to help turn the new Europe into the most exciting and cultural diverse place in which to live, as one could read in one of its foundational texts.[101] The educational programmes, discussion fora, seminars (the so-called "coffee breaks"), and publications constitute a reference point for new curatorial models exploring the geographical and psychological territories of Europe in search of a true interface for international intellectual and artistic debates and the idiosyncrasy of local situations and the minority groups of each city-context.[102]

The biennial as post-institution

In the midst of a panorama gradually dominated by the neoliberal model of globalisation, which refers to production both cultural and economic, and by the fusion of the digital revolution and technology, the idea was imposed that globalisation opens the doors to a greater understanding of contemporary art in Europe, North America, Asia, Africa, and Latin America which consolidated the figure of a transnational public beyond the traditional circuits of institutionalised production and reception. And, without doubt, the international biennials performed an important role in the shaping of these "new cultural

99 Charlotte Bydler, *The Global ArtWorld Inc. On the globalisation of contemporary art,* cit., 151-152. See also Sabine B. Vogel, *Biennials – Art on a Global Scale* (Vienna and New York, Springer), 2010.

100 Manifiesta 1 took place in Rotterdam, in the summer of 1996. It was followed by Manifiesta 2 (Luxembourg, 1998), Manifiesta 3 (Ljubljana, 2000), Manifiesta 4 (Frankfurt, 2002), Manifiesta 5 (San Sebastián, 2004), Manifiesta 6 (Nicosia, Cyprus, cancelled), Manifiesta 7 (Tyrol, 2008), Manifiesta 8 (Murcia, 2010-2011), Manifiesta 9 (Ghent, 2012), and Manifiesta 10 (St. Petersburg, 2014).

101 Sabine B. Vogel, cit., 90.

102 http://manifesta.org/biennials/about-the-biennials/ (consulted 18 March 2014).

geographies" and of what Enwezor calls "systematic integration into mobile sites of discourse".[103]

Enweor asks how can the curator of contemporary art express his intellectual agenda within the state of "permanent transition"? How can the curator work both within canonical thinking and beyond it? How can an exhibition reflect not so much the ontological nature of art and the search for artistic creativity as its condition as an active agent in a disperse, fragmented, and asymmetric state of economic capitalism, endemic in all the global systems that touch the horizon of art?

This is what explains how, in most cases since the start of the twenty-first century, many biennials that have been born with a "peripheral" intention or to represent the so-called "margins of the art world" have felt the need to "formalise" the canon of innovative art, seeking a dialogue between the homogenising forces of globalisation and the specific context under a common denominator: opting for globalisation more than for Westernisation, for diversity more than uniformity. And always trying to offer not so much a panorama of recent art as a site-specific project based on a new way of understanding artistic production as a negotiation between the local and the global and of imagining possible alternatives in the face of the gradual homogenisation and acceleration of late capitalism.

This double determination to subvert at the same time Eurocentrism, through the counter-narratives and exhibition counter-models, and the museum as an institution was the common denominator of a series of curatorial projects from Okwui Enwezor, Massimiliano Gioni, and Nicolas Bourriaud in the Gwangju biennials of 2008, 2010 y 2014; from Dan Cameron, Charles Esche, and Hou Hanru in the Istanbul biennials of 2003, 2005, and 2007; from Charles Merewether, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, and David Elliott in the Sydney biennials of 2006, 2008, and 2010; from Dan Cameron in the Tapei Biennial of 2006, Henk Slager in the Shanghai Bienniale of 2008, and Nicolas Bourriaud in the Tapei Biennial of 2014.

As Okwui Enwezor argues, the quest of many large-scale peripheral initiatives is not necessarily to offer a more extensive understanding of the local through the symbolic use and exchange of forms and ideas of advanced international art but rather to propagate a certain desire and impetus of globality. And it is thus how these exhibitions seek to embed the peripheral spaces of

103 Okwui Enwezor, "The Postcolonial Constellation: Contemporary Art in a State of Permanent Transition", in Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor and Nancy Condee (eds.), *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2008), 228.

cultural production in the trajectory of international artistic discourses and to produce a new type of space, a discourse of "open response" which concerns not only resistance but also an ethic of dissidence. Enwezor writes that in its discursive proximity to the modes of Western thinking, post-colonial theory transforms this dissent into an agent of historical transformation that allows the exposition of some of the limits and epistemological contradictions of the West.[104]

Biennialisation under debate

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the phenomenon of biennialisation has been its capacity to awaken a lively controversy, as illustrated by the monographic edition of the magazine *Open. Cahier on Art and the Public Domain* (2009), dedicated to the "biennial as a global phenomenon", or the anthology of significant texts for the theoretical development of the phenomenon of biennialism, entitled *The Biennial Reader* (2010) and published for the celebration of the *Bergen Biennial Conference* in the Norwegian city of Bergen in 2009.

Considering the biennial to be an "unstable identity" situated between exhibition and institution – which presents itself in a state of constant flux and which is difficult to articulate in terms of continuity or as something more than the sum of its editions over time – is the cause for reflection by Maria Hlavajova. Hence the need to debate the place of the biennial in relation to other artistic institutions and, in particular, to measure its role and significance beyond the rigid, static, immobile, and hegemonic character of the art centre and the museum: "This perspective is indispensable to the attempt to articulate the space in which the biennale could bring something to the table that *isn't there already* and *would not exist otherwise*".[105]

In the article "Mega-Exhibitions and the Antinomies of Transnational Global Form",[106] Okwui Enwezor locates the phenomenon of the "mega-exhibitions" (and among them that of the biennials and in general the institution-

104 Okwui Enwezor, "Mega-Exhibitions and the Antinomies of Transnational Global Forms", *Documents* 23 (spring 2004), 3.

105 Maria Hlavajova, "How to Biennial? The Biennial in relation to the Art Institution", in Elena Filipovic, Marieke Van Hal, and Solveig Ostevo (eds.), *It's here! The Biennial Reader. An Anthology on Large Scale Perennial Exhibitions of Contemporary Art* (Bergen, Hatje Cantz & Bergen Kunsthall, 2010), 297.

106 Okwui Enwezor, "Mega-Exhibitions and the Antinomies of a Transnational Global Form", *Documents* 23 (spring 2004), 2-19.

al discourses that boost the circulation of cultural goods) in a new vision of a total globality and in a new concept of modernity which dissolves the old paradigm of the nation-state replacing it with the logic of spectacular capitalism and the neoliberal market. Enwezor proposes the fact that the biennial, like the rest of the international mega-exhibitions, does not seek so much to provide a wider understanding of artistic movements to local audiences through the symbolic use and exchange of ideas and forms of an advanced international art as to spread a certain desire for globality, which would be based on a negotiation of local sites (nation-state) and transnational efforts.[107] The mission of these large-scale exhibitions (such as the biennials) should thus be to embed the peripheral spaces into the trajectory of the international artistic discourse; in a word, to promote the periphery as the genuine destiny of artistic modernity. And Okwui Enwezor ends up posing the crucial question about this phenomenon, asking: is globalisation of the cultural sphere a development towards the inclusion of artistic practices beyond the West? Or, on the contrary, does it represent the promotion of a new Western hegemony for art, for exhibition models, curators, and audiences? In other words, is the so-called biennialism evidence of an inclusive, transnational, multicultural, and counter-hegemonic project?

Or, as argued by George Baker, one of the most important voices of the group *October*, in his reply to Enwezor, is it rather about a mere consolidation of the dominant bourgeois culture, which is at the same time archaically nationalist and explicitly occidentalist?[108] Baker starts his reflection about biennials with an autobiographical reference: his resistance to the "cultural biennial" as a synonym of the "Grand Tour", festivalism, or parody of a forced migration that is none other than a new form of Western imperialism and cultural hegemony. And he not only questions the role of the mega-exhibitions that suffer from a gigantism that echoes and serves the interests of the global economy, but also that of the audiences, in considering that these imply a violent assault on the one hand on the traditional notion of an art audience and on the other on the idea that art in general needs an audience or public. And if it is true that the biennials favour access to artistic culture by local audiences, it is nonetheless necessary to recognise that this mediation ends up preventing access to these

107 Okwui Enwezor, "Mega-Exhibitions and the Antinomies of a Transnational Global Form", cit.,16.

108 Okwui Enwezor, "Mega-Exhibitions and the Antinomies of a Transnational Global Form", *Documents* 23 (spring 2004), 2-19 and George Baker, "The Globalization of the False: A response to Okwui Enwezor", *Documents* 23 (spring 2004), 20-25.

audiences in favour of cadres of experts and professionals. Thus, one can deduce that the mega-exhibitions are tied to the question of exclusion. And in relation to Enwezor's reference to the biennials as the facilitators of transnational meetings between artists, art markets, institutions, and different kinds of professional, Baker insists that such meetings only exclude the audience as traditionally conceived, which no longer seems to have a place in this new space. And, finally, he asks if the mega-exhibitions or the biennials start from a bourgeois public sphere that was previously enshrined in the museum or whether they are signs of the total break-up of the public sphere within the rigid passivity that belongs to the spectacle. And his answer, taking a stand against the mega-exhibition, is:

> [...] to urge us to doubt that global biennials prove that the society of the spectacle was a European, imperial phenomenon. An anti-imperialist spectacle might now be envisioned, but I would not see this as a mode of freedom or criticality, nor as the mode in which the projects of the diasporic subject would prosper; rather we must be aware and resist a situation that Debord actually knew and wrote about and warned against as, in his words, a "globalization of the false" that could only lead to a "falsification of the globe".[109]

For his part, the curator and writer Simon Sheikh[110] addresses the phenomenon of biennialism from the point of view of its economic potentialities, which is to say, as an industry, a market for business and tourism, and an aspect of the "experience economy" within contemporary global capitalism. In Sheikh's judgement, a need is imposed in the biennials to create a "niche market", a specific identity, a reputation, and a prestige which places them both on the map of the world and on that of the field of art. And when he refers to a "niche market", he does so in relation not only to the symbolic capital that implicates the discourse of the international world of art but also the local political and economic demands directed at reaching a certain cultural supremacy: the singularity of "this" culture, "this" country, or "this" place.

Starting out from David Harvey's thesis in *Spaces of Capital* (2001),[111] which uses the Marxist category of "monopoly rent" to analyse the ties between glo-

109 George Baker, "The Globalization of the False: A response to Okwui Enwezor", cit., 21.

110 Simon Sheikh, "Marks of Distinction, Vectors of Possibility: Questions for the Biennial", cit.,151-163. Article published originally in Jorinde Seijdel and Liesbeth Melis (eds.), "The Art Biennial as a Global Phenomenon: Strategies in Neo-Political Times", *Open* 16 (2009), 68-79.

111 David Harvey, *Spaces of Capital. Towards a Critical Geography* (London: Routledge, 2001).

balisation, the market of the city, and the commodification of culture, Simon Sheikh understands the biennials as part of the "experience economy" in which merchandise is constituted not so much by the works of art as by the experience of the city and the exhibition. From the study of the biennials of South-East Asia, the author indicates how one of the priorities of the biennial is the act of creating a brand that will always be bidirectional. On the one hand, the city as an attraction must provide something to the biennial; on the other hand, the glamour and prestige of the biennial bestow a brand name on the city, in view of which the biennials take on a double task: to highlight the singularity of a place, a region, and its culture as a form of cultivating a national public and of seducing another, international public, and to convert the citizens of the country into international users of and experts in culture.

The image of a biennial as a "global village" not only implies this interconnection between the local and the global but also shares important financial implications that lead us to speak directly of an economic logic that generates income for tourism and of a financing that is the result of the interconnection. And it is thus that certain artistic methods end up functioning as a model for globalisation in terms of the production of capital:

> Any place can become a production site and then, once abandoned as such, a tourist site [...] In this way, biennialisation becomes a synonym of the financing of the globe.[112]

And this would bring us to speak, in line with the theories of Saskia Sassen in *The Global City* (2001),[113] of globalisation not as a cultural project but as an economic concept with effects on the waves of migration, labour markets, and the production of culture.

The sociologist Pascal Gielen speaks in similar terms: far from recognising in the phenomenon of biennialism a willingness to promote the nation-state under what he calls a "political agenda", he sees in the biennial structure a kind of global competition between cities or, in other words, a marketing strategy by the so-called creative cities that necessitates a certain dose of cynicism and opportunism to be able to continue operating in the global art system: "If we observe the discourse presented by most globally operating curators and artists on the one hand, and their actual actions on the other, we repeatedly come up

112 Simon Sheikh, "Marks of Distinction, Vectors of Possibility: Questions for the Biennial", cit., 159.

113 Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

against a yawning gap between the two. As a result, operating cynically turns out to be functional within the global network of the biennials", concludes Gielen.[114] A system is postulated, then, in which different actors (artists, curators) benefit from the generalised economy of the neoliberal market.[115]

This is the reason why Gielen critically locates the phenomenon of biennialism in the full emergence of the context of "post-Fordism" (and its individualisation, removal of routine, flexible working hours, and the production of immaterial work that, in Hardt's and Negri's words, constitute the hegemony of all forms of production) and, specifically, in the context of a post-institution that in its challenge to the "classic institution of modernity" takes on – or, better said, flirts with – the terminology derived from the thinking of Gilles Deleuze: rhizomes, networks, nomadism, non-hierarchical forms of organisation, escape routes, words with which the biennials have presented their own operations in the last two decades, rejecting the "white cube" and the museum as one of the institutionalised entities that faces increasing pressure.

And it is at this point where, drawing from sociology and the idea that cultural practices are maintained thanks to a powerful social hierarchisation of values and norms, Gielen contrasts the biennial as a post-institution with the museum. While, for example, the institution (the museum) incorporates historicity and dialogue with the past (in the sense that it has its own history and often uses it to preserve or even legitimise its existence and activities within contemporary society), the excessive boom in biennials leaves little room for historicity: "Occasional visitors to biennials are regularly confronted, for example, by structural amnesia, the negation of the local context and superficiality, usually with a lack of concentration".[116] These questions point to the new direction taken by the artistic biennial of the last decade, which would explain the "schizophrenic longing" that is debated between opening, horizontal mobility, the figure of the nomadic creator of the biennial as a post-institution, and the search for public memory and the durability that is offered by the classic modern artistic institution (the museum). And, as Gielen concludes, the problem lies in how to rearticulate the locality of the biennial and how to reconcile the authenticity defended by the museum institution with the infinite variability and diversity demanded by the global neoliberal system: "It is to be

114 Pascal Gielen, "The Biennale: A Post-Institution for Immaterial Labour", in *The Murmuring of the Artistic Multitude. Global Art, Memory and Post-Fordism* (Amsterdam: Antennae/Valiz, 2009). This text was republished in "The Biennial as a Global Phenomenon. Strategies in Neo-Political Times", *Open. Cahier on Art and Public Domain* 16 (2009), 10,

115 Pascal Gielen, "The Biennale: A Post-Institution for Immaterial Labour", cit., 12.

116 Ibid., 16.

hoped that they will someday generate the necessary 'inertia' and 'glocality' as a counterpoint to the all-encompassing global competition hysteria in which today's biennials increasingly find themselves".[117]

In conclusion and as evidenced by the holding of the symposium *Biennials. Prospect and Perspectives* (2014),[118] the worldwide phenomenon of biennialism can be seen as a mirror of the process of transformation unleashed by globalisation, a mirror approached from different discourses and concepts. One of these was entitled "Biennials and Public Space", which discussed the notion of art as a public domain and new definitions of the public. Another section, "Biennials as the motor of social change", noted the impact of the biennials on the transformation of society and politics. Other topics covered were the dynamics of the biennials and the role of their actors (curators, artists, organisers, public) and their possibilities and limitations in the context of policies of commercialisation, and finally different alternative models were discussed which tried to find new futures for the biennials.

117 Ibid., 17.

118 International Conference, ZKM/Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe (27 February – 1 March 2014). The symposium conceived by Andrea Buddensieg and Elke aus dem Moore forms part of a series of debates named "Biennials in Dialogue", which since 2000 have been presented in cities such as Kassel, Frankfurt, Singapore and Shanghai.

At the start of the twenty-first century, the contemporary implies a clear desire to affirm a type of art that is expanding across the globe, challenging old geographical borders, and reclaiming narratives of place and displacement; in other words, new cultural practices that transfigure the relationship between the global and the local, and articulate the discourse of difference.

Being in the place of here and now, working with others in simultaneous and specific practice, and contemplating the production of work in the experience of connection means raising the value of the performative aspect of practice and displacing the reflective role of cultural production.

In the new cartography of this multifarious global art, the author, who combines theoretical and curatorial discourse with creative practice, defines how global concepts circulate from the critical analysis of transnational contemporary art to the global.

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