THE MANIFESTA DECADE

Debates on

Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennals

in Post-Wall Europe

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The MIT Press

A ROOMADE BOOK
Since the mid-1990s, Manifesta, European Biennial of Contemporary Art, has in hand-without pretentious itinerary exhibitions, has made critical reflection on its own principles and practices an important concern. This was the case shortly after it was launched in 1995, when the curatorial team of the first edition organized what were called Open House debates. During these gatherings, curators and artists in cities around Europe were asked to determine some of the issues explored in the exhibition based on what they deemed important with regard to local artistic production. This was also the case in the years that followed, when four subsequent editions of Manifesta, like seeds sprouting shoots, both renewed its quest for transparency and reinvention, all the while extending and strengthening it.

After a decade, however, it seems only appropriate to ask how well the European biennial has achieved its original aims. This is especially relevant now that Manifesta has begun to ask itself how it might provide broader access to the knowledge it has accumulated over the years. In 1999, after two successful biennial editions, the former Foundation European Art Manifestation was restructured into the current International Foundation Manifesta (IFM) in order to oversee the overall organization of the successive biennial editions as well as its related theoretical programs. In addition, the IFM serves as the catalyst for the broader Manifesta platform, which includes maintaining a permanent archive. Making this archive more widely accessible brings with it a host of questions. Should, for example, the archive, which comprise all digital, photographic, and documentary material pertaining to previous Manifesta editions, travel from host city to host city as the exhibitions do or remain grounded in one place and available for public consultation? How can the archival and research material that constitutes one part of Manifesta’s memory serve its future? To answer these and other larger questions, we felt the need to review and critique the course we have pursued until now, in part because along the way Manifesta grew, perhaps unavoidably, ever more institutionalized. Its original structures and parameters were there to be reinforced, rather than de-institutionalizing Manifesta, we opted instead to refresh its role. Now, in place of a largely open-ended body, it has become a more substantial instigator and mediator, offering new methods to connect curators, art practitioners, and the wider public.

In effect, this repolishing of Manifesta turned a large-scale art event into a more diverse project with a theoretical substructure that could support the research derived from exhibitions and, in the process, open new unexplored avenues for contemporary art. In its more prototypical form, Manifesta will be better equipped, we hope, to address not only the rapid-fire changes of the last ten years, but also those still to come. Already Manifesta has enabled the IFM, since 2003, to cooperate with more than four hundred young professionals, both known and up-and-coming, as well as twenty organizations, including the Cecilia Traubisches Program at the De Appel Center for Contemporary Art in Amsterdam, the Center for Contemporary Arts in Vilnius, the Institute of Contemporary Arts in Sofia, the Center for Contemporary Art in Tallinn, the Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art, and the National Center for Contemporary Art in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Formalizing this practice of exchange and partnership, the IFM created a series of initiatives in 2002 co-funded by the European Commission’s Culture 2000 program and known as the New European Contemporary Art Network (2003-05), which grew out of the multilactated theoretical framework I developed. These initiatives were intended to further critical analysis of the larger Manifesta project as well as establish the IFM as a formal platform for information and exchange. To advance the latter objective, the IFM archives and knowledge, amassed over years of activity and experimentation, were harnessed in order to assist the public in gaining a stronger foothold in the Manifesta topography. This online resource incorporates publicly accessible databases, including digital and analog archives, organized in conjunction with Basque Allen, seminars and meetings, such as the Coffee Breaks organized in conjunction with the Liverpool Biennial.

Decoding Europe, a series of discussions, presentations, and screenings that have taken place at the Manifesta at Home Space in Amsterdam; roundtable discussions organized in conjunction with the International Association of Art Critics (AICA); and MU - Manifesta Journal, the first periodical for young curators and writers devoted to curatorial reflection and published in conjunction with the Moderna galerija Lubljana. All these activities could only have been realized in close collaboration with partner organizations throughout Europe, for whom invaluable assistance and support I want to express my warmest gratitude.

The Manifesta Decade is one of the projects developed within the New European Contemporary Art Network and for which the IFM, in conjunction with the Brussels-based contemporary art organization Roomane, commissioned Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic to conceive and edit a book, drawing from the IFM’s archives and tracing Manifesta’s development from the 1990s to the present. Vanderlinden and Filipovic approach this history in a way that has proven to be both distant enough from the subject to be objective and critical, yet close enough to understand Manifesta’s specific objectives and parameters. They alone determined the book’s focus, selected the contributors, and performed the editorial work. Desiring to ensure their independence and to facilitate their critical approach, the IFM confined its role to initiating and funding the publication as well as to making available unpublished visual material and assorted documents from its archives. The result is an invaluable research tool and resource, a repository of ideas from which we can draw to work to chart a course for the future. What that future holds is, of course, largely unknown to us, but with the insight afforded by this study and other initiatives of the IFM, we hope to be able to approach its challenges with greater focus.

If the future of Manifesta remains to be written, its past is an open book. Recorded in its successive programs and recounted over the course of its exhibitions, its general history has achieved the status of a collective experience. Many of the factual details of this history are presented in this publication. But its true strength lies in its ability to stimulate Manifesta in its context, both cultural and political, and to enlarge our understanding of its history with the aid of previously unpublished information. This book, therefore, can be seen as a multifaceted guide that, among its other virtues, establishes how Manifesta developed against the backdrop of a changing Europe and assesses how successful it has been in achieving its original goals.

Given that the cultural topography at the end of the last century—out of which the European biennial emerged—has been irrevocably altered, The Manifesta Decade is all the more essential. Not only have important artistic events been created in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, but the discourse within which they circulate has shifted from a Euro-American orientation to a global one. Worldwide, growing numbers of biennials, triennials, and other periodic exhibitions, each representing specific perspectives, now play active roles in the contemporary art world, a phenomenon which contributes to what Lara Buchbinder, in a board meeting in September 2004, called “the globalization of the domestic and the domestication of the global.” How Manifesta situates itself among such mega events is one of the many questions now being posed. Part of the answer, to be sure, will be based on a longstanding certainty. We do not want Manifesta’s identity to be defined in terms of its representation and ranking among comparable events, all of which are secondary to our involvement with contemporary art and ideas. After all, Manifesta aims to question current strategies and hierarchies of art—to foster transparency, in other words—and remains wary of fulfilling unquestioned expectations. It strives to involve artists and audiences in every stage of its ongoing development. Manifesta looks to invent new means rather than focus on past approaches and has positioned itself outside of conventional strategies through its itinerant character and its economic autonomy. Whether it has succeeded in making the transition from its earlier avatar as a Pan-European contemporary art event to a more broadly transnational and mutable one, we cannot yet say, but it retains the willingness and openness of its earlier self to discard assumptions, ask questions, resist hidebound practices, and take risks—and always will.

In answer to the question of what comes next for Manifesta, I would say that it will be an extension, more or less, of what has always been the case. Manifesta intends to continue its commitment to multidisciplinary programs promoting interdisciplinary programs keyed to the notion of cultural diversity as well as other educational programs. These are part of an ongoing effort to understand the practices of a changing Europe, and, as curators, are directly focused on the notion of Europe, both with and without its geographical borders. Manifesta relishes its ability to update and redirect its strategies and, because it wishes to remain self-critical, it is careful to ensure that its principles do not become dogmas. As a result, its next decade, like its first, so thoroughly documented in The Manifesta Decade, will be a veritable open book.
Even more than most books, this one emerged from the thoughts and suggestions of a group of individuals. The origin of The Manifesta Decade lay in many discussions, most notably that which took place during the International Foundation Manifesta (IFM) board meeting held in 2002 in Frankfurt at the opening of Manifesta 4. It was there that questions regarding the memory of Manifesta—how to archive a potential exhibition as well as the relationship of such an ephemeral event to history—were first raised. In this, Hans-Ulrich Obrist’s persistence in bringing these issues to the fore was an important catalyst for envisioning this book on the subject. His encouragement and ideas have accompanied us throughout.

The present collection was first formulated as a project to be carried out within the framework of the New European Contemporary Art Network, a program the IFM set up in 2000. We owe immense gratitude to Hedi Flijjen for having conceived such a project and for her relentless commitment to it. We thank her, the IFM board members, especially its chairman, Hervé Miguy, Hughes, not only for their active support of this project, but also for their belief in our independent approach, all of which enabled the book’s broad reach and critical perspective.

Longstanding commitments to Ruth Leemann and Pascal Gielen at the Catholic University Leuven’s Centrum voor Cultuurfilosofie and curatorship of the Middelheim Foundation’s International Biennial for Contemporary Art paved the way for our thoughts through the multiple approaches this book takes.

The Coffee Break meeting in Liverpool in 2003, where Chris Dercon led one of the first formal discussions about how to critically reflect on Manifesta, further stimulated this process.

As the project developed, we became increasingly aware of the importance of embedding our terrain of study to also include the wider context from which Manifesta emerged.

The fact that so few publications grappled with the recent history of large-scale exhibitions and their imbrication in contemporary world events astonished us and fueled our determination to further develop the book in that direction. This would not have been possible without the generosity of the authors who contributed to this volume, enriching it along the way, as well as the readers and respondents who engaged in lively debate in its pages, many of which are contributions by Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic, and administrative bodies for the Department of Contemporary Art and Museums supported Roomaade and encouraged it to take on a new role in order to be involved in publishing and overseeing the project. We thank the officials and board members, particularly Bert Anciex, Hans Flijjen, and Hans Martens. We also thank the members of the coast, especially its president, Wilfried Eerens, who volunteered much of his time and energy to it. We found remarkable support in Roger Conover from MIT Press, whose enthusiasm for the project carried us every step of the way. The commitment and rigor of Paul B. Frankl in copy editing the ever-growing manuscript never failed to impress us. Anita Mateusovic and Jason Halber at Wonder Inc. inventively transposed our quite particular ideas on to the printed page, making it even better than we could have hoped. At the IFM office, Hedi Flijjen and Mariska van Hal, aided by Sasiaia van der Krooy, helped us find our way through the numerous documents and images that the IFM has collected of the Manifesta project. We are indebted to them all. We also warmly thank Lisa Reves and Janet Ross at MIT Press, Laure Fabre at the Casino Luxembourg, as well as Basim Magdy and Marlo Stanford for their assistance.

The traces of innumerable discussions, both recent and long past, can be found throughout the volume. For those we are especially grateful to the Boris Belousov, Eweness, Louise Nei, and Vivan Rhingbom, as well as Arias Boys, Sophie Berbel, Bart Casman, Catherine David, Bart De Baere, Dorothy Dietrich, Paul Dujardin, Hal Foster, Franciss Horr, Gabriel Kair, Thomas Y. Leen, Molly Neddle, Carle Pack, Dieter Roehstrobe, Catherine Robbrechts, Dick Snauwaert, and Rinko Tawara.

As ever, our greatest debts are to those individuals who supported us daily and made such a project possible, including Karel Bockeckan, Marie-Francoise Belay, Andrew Belichesky, Marlene Belichesky, Zoh Louise Ebtez, Blagrodna Filipovic, Milosar Filipovic, and Francine Van Abbékom. As this project reached its final stages, Igor Zabel, one of its contributors and a model for us of sensitivity and intelligence in curating, tragically died. This book is dedicated to him.

Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic

At a moment when shifts in the global landscape have dramatically transformed contemporary artistic practices and the forums for their public presentation, the issues discussed in this anthology seem more urgent than ever. Certain events in 1989 irrevocably precipitated such changes. In that year, the first blows to apartheid and the violence in Tiananmen Square coincided with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent redrawing of Europe’s geographical and political maps. While the period that followed these epic events will be remembered for the global reconfiguration of power and empire that occurred, it will also be remembered for the vast cultural transformations that took place. 1989 also marked the opening of Magiciens du temps. For all of its flaws (and most critics would tell you there were many), Jean-Hubert Martin’s exhibition catalyzed vital discussions regarding the need for contemporary art exhibitions to reflect the true multiculturalism of the world. The cultural repercussions of Magiciens du temps, and, more broadly, the events of 1989 were perhaps felt most deeply in the context of a very particular kind of event that began shortly thereafter to proliferate exponentially around the world. Often termed “biennials” or “large-scale international exhibitions” and bearing earlier names like Documenta or Manifesta, European Biennial of Contemporary Art, or names mentioning the host city, such as the Venice Biennial, these recurrent events have increasingly become the locus for contemporary culture’s most far-reaching debates and host to some of its most thought-provoking artworks, both reflecting the cultural diversity of global artistic practices and calling into question the inertia of institutions too slow or unwilling to respond to them. In the years since 1989, the number of such events has grown well into the hundreds, with many emerging in countries outside North America and Western Europe. Surprisingly, critical analysis of these “mega exhibitions,” despite their sheer number and growing importance, has been scattered. And while the “biennial phenomenon” has been the subject of much discussion and numerous recent symposia, few publications have brought together original, in-depth analyses of the specificities and implications of recurring mega exhibitions.

The Manifesta Decade takes as its subject the shifting parameters that characterize such exhibitions over the course of the “long decade” between 1989 and the recent popular rejection of a European constitution, which arguably marked the end of an era of post-Wall optimism. The impetus to
focus on paradigmatic exhibitions—their locations, forms, discursive narratives, reception, or ideological limits—these discussions also inevitably relate to the art practices featured in the exhibitions, or those that have evolved alongside them. We hope, therefore, that through the examination of presentation platforms, the intense dialogue between the development of art and exhibition making will become apparent. Moreover, any reading of biennials implicates a large network of institutions, cultural policies, art markets, and practices, making these large-scale events useful optics through which to examine the consequences of contemporary history and culture.

Central to our project was the desire to construct a forum for dialogue and debate, in hopes of addressing various possibilities—and problems—of so-called mega exhibitions. Even though breakthroughs, the discussions, criticisms, and engagements that arise from the ideas expressed in their component parts usually emerge only after they have been published. In an attempt to rectify this situation, and to establish the present volume as a locus for debate, we sent out all the essays to readers who were asked to write short responses to them. This unusual practice enabled us to involve many more thinkers from diverse fields, whose perspectives we sought out in each case in order to juxtapose the reflections of contrasting generations, positions, backgrounds, or experiences. What began as an exploratory undertaking, underscoring the complexity and intellectual stakes embodied in many of the essays. The resulting statements, printed in the margins of the book alongside the texts to which they refer, often offer alternative readings of the essays or pose questions about the issues discussed.

Equally important to the conception of this project was the desire to underscore the political, historical, and cultural events that marked the epoch. It was with some hesitation, however, that we first contemplated compiling a chronology. We were interested in questioning the historiographic version of art history and exhibition making that too easily traces neat continuities and linear progressions without accounting for rupture, discontinuity, or alternate chronologies. Imagining a timeline with one entry following another seemed contradictory. Yet, since no existing source had previously documented the complex ways in which exhibitions, institutions, and other cultural events of the period emerged from, responded to, or may even have anticipated political, historical, or other changes, we felt compelled to find a way to point to the imbrication of cultural events—including biennials—with other incidents that transformed the world. This seemed all the more necessary because the incredible global transformations that transpired during the period in question (1989–2005) arguably affected culture as much as politics. We collaborated closely with Rafal Niemojowski on this enormous undertaking, his contribution to the research and discussions, and thus to the critical and doctoral candidate studying the proliferation of biennials, were invaluable. “One Day Every Wall Will Fall: Select Chronology of Biennials, 1989–2005” resulted, and, for better or worse, adheres to a chronological structure, even if we hoped all along that in its layering, density, and cross-referencing, it would reveal itself to be a nervous topology of many of the events against which this book as a whole might be read.

In the section “Shifting Art and Exhibition Conditions,” we felt it important to reprint Bruce W. Ferguson, Rens Greengberg, and Sandy Nairne’s early 1990s essay “Mapping International Exhibitions,” which explored international perennial exhibitions at the very moment these events had begun to proliferate. They discuss the notion of a “politics in the locality of an exhibition” and trace the ways in which such manifestations historically have perpetuated themselves as models of national self-presentation, as exemplified in nineteen-century France’s fairs. From our perspective, this text reminds us of how central such issues as national identity, with its accompanying inclusions and exclusions, remain to biennial practices today. Approaching the problem of an aesthetics of “locality” from a different direction, Hou Hanru’s “Towards A New Locality: Biennials and ‘Global Art’,” written in 2000, examines how biennial host cities grapple with the bell curves to represent their localities and to remain truly global in reach and influence. Also in this section, Elena Filipovic questions the persistent use of the white cubes in biennials and other mega exhibitions around the world, despite the fact that the “naturalness” of this display frame has long been debunked. Her examination of several key examples reveals the ideological underpinnings of this most classical of Western exhibition formats. The related exhibition of an ancient South Asian frieze in Paris triggered Raqs Media Collective’s juxtaposition of a vast series of seemingly disparate facts, places, and practices, drawing attention to the parallel expansion of such things as the Internet and the increasing number of pinrails and related art events. They argue that the shifts in global communication within contemporary art have transformed the roles of authorship, creativity, and intellectual property for artists and curators. Also addressing the question of authorship, Boris Groys contends that the artwork is no longer the result of any one individual practitioner; rather, it is the product of a multiple, shared authorship between artist, curator, and any number of other collaborators, its meaning contingent on its exhibition context. From the rise of the biennial to the dispersion of the author, the various themes explored in this section delineate the ways biennials and mega exhibitions more generally reflect upon and contribute to our increasingly global culture.

"Europe" with all the myths and projections that accompany it, is ambiguous and contradictory, to say the least, and the section “Which Europe?” aims to examine this instability. In a volume largely preoccupied with very recent history, it seemed pertinent to interrogate the historical sediment from which today’s questions about Europe have emerged. In his interview with Hans-Dirch Obrist, medieval historian Jacques Le Goff suggests how ancient history might determine the geopolitical outlines of that “thing” we call Europe. An excerpt from Obrist’s interview a month earlier with Jean-Pierre Vernant, a historian of antiquity, accompanies it. While not a response in the proper sense of the term, Vernant’s position offers an important counterpoint to Le Goff’s ideas. In another interview with Obrist, architect- theorist Rem Koolhaas looks at Europe through the lens of his 2004 Image of Europe exhibition and research project, disclosing what such an undertaking tells us about the complex construction that is Europe. In his essay, Boris Budin demonstrates how Plato’s myth about the origin of love and Freud’s theory of Eros can help us understand Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Extending Jürgen Habermas’s provocative claim that 1989 was more a “belated revolution” than an ultimate and thus revolutionary event, Budin points to the essentially conservative character of what many expected to be a victorious, transformative moment.

Budin’s discussion of the cultural impact of imagining 1989 differently sets the stage for the section “Negotiating Art in Europe, Cold War to Post-Wall” in which contributors discuss how the reception, interpretation, and fate of art, affected exhibition practices. Given that the cultural opportunities and practices following European unification were built on the embers of cold war policies, we decided to reimport the 1999 essay “When East Was East and West Was West: Art Attitudes in the Cold War” by Henry Meyric Hughes. In this text, Hughes documents the reception of a number of seminal exhibitions in the West featuring artists from Eastern Europe, and vice versa, in the period that led up to the fall of the Wall. In so doing, he outlines how political policy impacted exhibition practices following World War II. Moving forward in time, María Hlavajova discusses the reaction to and process of “normalization” that Western institutions advanced in the former East. She looks closely at three very different initiatives—the private foundation of an American industrialist-turned-philanthropist, an Internet-based artist network for the biennial, and Glane Tawadros maintains that Europe, despite the political and economic expansion of its borders, remains unwilling to engage with what she describes as its “complex cultural and historical contingency.” Taking two contemporary art exhibitions from the last decade as examples, she confronts the refusal of European institutions to either respond to the current multicultural reality of Europe or to represent Europe as anything less than the central player in the development of global culture. Otwal Ewezow also focuses on European social and cultural policy, employing the metaphor of Lord Tishbi’s nationalistic “cricket test” to question Europe’s persistent intolerance and exclusionary policies. Turning his attention to the institutional discourse and self-construction of Manifolds in relation to Europe, he contends that the biennial perpetuates some of the very same principles and limits.

Speaking of the disciplinary borders that have largely kept studies of Eastern Europe cordoned off from other studies, scholars have identified a “conceptual iron curtain that still divides the continent more than a decade after the dismantling of the Berlin Wall.” One could just as easily speak of the existence of a cultural iron curtain, which has continued to hang neatly in place since the fall of the Wall. An awareness of this situation was foundational to the conception of Manifolds, European Biennial of Contemporary Art, a recurring, itinerant event aimed at constructing networks of exchange and platforms for presentation for a new generation of artists and curators that emerged in Europe in the face of the tumultuous changes of 1989. Opening in a
different European city every two years since its first edition in 1996, this biennial has attempted to respond to many of the recent shifts in exhibition practices, while initiating discussions regarding the impact of issues central to the 1990s—such as the network, collaboration, or center versus periphery—on art making in the period. The final section of the book, "For Example, Manifesta," takes this biennial as a case study. More than providing an isolated history, the interview, essays, and collection of documents featured here raise questions about Manifesta that shed light on large-scale exhibitions in general. Furthermore, the implications of these queries extend far beyond the decade this biennial covers. In fact, the ten-year period cited in the book's title is an elastic one. It refers to the long decade since the fall of the Berlin Wall as well as to the epoch since Manifesta's founding in 1993 and its first edition in Rotterdam three years later. In choosing the title for this volume, we did not mean to evoke a ten-year stretch that "belongs" specifically to Manifesta, or even an era the biennial principally shaped. Rather, we intended the title to gesture toward a decade during which a number of ambitious projects and events, of which Manifesta is a notable example, were initiated and evolved.

The period under consideration was one of volatile transformation in many realms, and "For Example, Manifesta" addresses how the shifting ideologies of this landscape of transition and reconstruction shaped one institution in particular. This section comprises a group interview with several individuals involved with Manifesta in its earliest years. Their valuable, if sometimes conflicting, reminiscences accounts document the origin and evolution of the institution, exposing the remarkable idealism and inevitable challenges that underlay the initial conception of the project. In addition to the interview, several essays late Manifesta's main subject. They evaluate the divergent perceptions and expectations of such a project and, in so doing, remain true to the Manifesta's own stated commitment to critical reflection. In envisioning this section, we felt that if the visible form and expressive potential of an exhibition lay in a mix of both conceptualized intentions and chance events (censure, oversight, failure, impossibility...), an exhibition's discursive self-presentation is the ground on which an understanding of its purpose must also be founded. This is not to suggest that exhibitions are always, or even frequently, commensurate with the discourses that accompany them. Space, time, and language necessarily separate them. But rhetoric is constructed in presenting an exhibition to a public, and it remains one measure of an exhibition's objectives, however contradictory. In a volume taking Manifesta as its case study, it seemed more than necessary to encourage the examination of the rhetoric that the various founders, advisory board members, and curators forged to construct the public representation of the biennial as an institution and event. Camiel van Winkel's essay takes Manifesta at its word, literally. The results reflect how one possible reading of Manifesta's words might be understood in relation to what might otherwise have been said, what might have been done, and what might have been privileged instead of words. In his text, Thomas Boutoux investigates another kind of biennial rhetoric. He looks specifically at the prem- ise of such events to have a lasting effect on their localities and reports his findings based on research in Rotterdam and Ljubljana, host cities of two editions of Manifesta. Informed by anthropology, his observations provide insight into a recurrent question regarding biennials and their responsibility to locality. While Manifesta is the ostensible subject of Van Winkel's and Boutoux's texts, the readings they offer of the history and this particular institution invoke criteria by which we can judge the accomplishments or failures of cultural projects more generally. Finally, the sixth section comprises an extensive textual and pictorial archive devoted to Manifesta. Compiled and narrated by Barbara Vanderlinden, it begins with her essay discussing the importance of exhibition documentation as a resource for curators, artists, and other art-world professionals. The archive brings together material related to curatorial research, exhibition venues, catalogues, scandals, symposia, as well as short texts describing some of the parallel projects that lent an individual character to each edition. Above all, the archive attempts to reconstruct the complex narratives at the heart of Manifesta's five editions. Privileging the artists that contributed to these, it enables a more thorough analysis of how their objects, performative acts, or explicitly political gestures responded to many of the most vital issues of their day and presents the opportunity for new readings of Manifesta in general. Just as the various essays in this volume portray and examine a specific epoch, the diversity and originality of the artworks pictured and described here also contribute to reconstructing this historical moment. The archive thus testifies to how artists concretely grappled with the world and how large-scale exhibitions responded to the main- stroms of their times.

With a vast chronology, over a dozen essays, several interviews, more than thirty responses, and a case study of a single biennial project, The Manifesta Decade is something of a hybrid publication. Such hybridity seemed indispensa- ble. In a period of so many "posts" (post-history, postcolonialism, post-communism, etc.), which marked the end of some of the twentieth century's most potent ideologies as well as the insistent rise of global capitalism—all of this reflected in the evolution of biennials toward greater cultural diversity but also, arguably, toward the marketplace—it felt imperative to bring together different reflections on the roles and responsibilities of large-scale international exhibitions in this landscape. Thus, while this book sketches the develop- ment of the critical languages of exhibition making that characterized the 1990s and the first years of the twenty-first century—that long decade from which we have only recently emerged—it also strives to look forward, inciting a continuing critical reflection on curatorial roles, exhibition practices, and cultural histories for the decades ahead.

Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic

NOTES
1. The 1990s saw a surge of academic studies on the historical and ideological import of the museum and its exhibition forms, including such seminal publications as Douglas Crimp's On the Museum's Ruins (Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 1993); Tony Bennett's The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics (London: Routledge, 1995), and Reena Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne's anthology Thinking about Exhibitions (London: Routledge, 1996). These publications have in many ways been models and resources for us, but a serious study of the forms, goals, and influences of the biennial as a specific exhibition paradigm seems overdue in our present decade.
2. Our notion of the "long decade," defined here as the period from 1989 to 2005, derives from Eric Hobsbawm's conception of the "long nineteenth century" and the "short twentieth century" outlined in his historical writings. If locating the political contours of the "long decade" since 1989 seemed signifi-
cal for the reasons outlined herein, in the artworld, 2005 was the year of another kind of symbolic end: the death of Harold Szeemann (1933-2005), experimental exhibition maker, the first "independent curator," and a vital catalyst for the redifi-
tion of curatorial practices.
ONE DAY EVERY WALL WILL FALL: SELECT CHRONOLOGY OF ART AND POLITICS AFTER 1989

Elena Filipovic, Rafał B. Niemiołowski, and Barbara Vanderlinden

"Irgendwo fällt jede Mauer." German for "One day every wall will fall," was scribbled on the Berlin Wall before it fell. The poetic, premonitory announcement in the form of graffiti promised that with time all edifices, even the most seemingly imposing, would reach their end. In this chronology, we wanted to chart the passage from that "one day" forward, pointing to temporal and other connections between the falling of all sorts of walls—whether of communism or apartheid, political regimes or national borders—and concurrent developments in thinking and culture, exhibitions and institutions.

As it was impossible to trace all the significant developments of the period, this chronology is highly select one. The result is not an encyclopaedic representation of the period so much as an admittedly arbitrary but deliberate effort to map out the development and repercussions of globalization alongside the evolution of biennials and international exhibitions. For the sake of coherence and space, it traces events around the world but concentrates its attention on Europe and those international events that most affected European policy and practices in that exciting, troubling time that began around 1989. It includes entries for biennials and large-scale perennial exhibitions, new cultural institutions and platforms, world political and cultural events, and landmark publications. Even within the scope of our limiting criteria, exclusions were necessary and stem from the desire to create greater focus for such a chronology, linking the events it charts more closely with themes explored throughout the book. For example, entries marking seminal publications were limited to those that did not emerge from within the artworld yet undoubtedly contributed to the debates and theorization of art and exhibition practices of the period. And, while a great effort has been made to trace the recent evolutions of even the oldest contemporary art biennials, triennials, and mega exhibitions across the globe as well as the steadily increasing number of new ones that emerged in the 1990s, the chronology does not include small-scale or regional events nor those that were limited to showcasing art or artists of a single medium, age group, or nation. When we could find the information, we mention the dates, curators, venues, and themes of all editions of all qualifying recurrent exhibitions, reserving longer descriptive entries for those editions that marked the institution, otherwise transformed the exhibition's form, or addressed post-Wall global transformations. Amongst the other exhibitions documented are those that specifically addressed the changing landscape of Europe or the impact of globalization. However, if an exhibition's historical scope or focus strayed from these issues, even if the show happened to mark the epoch, it was excluded. This meant leaving out, amongst others, many exhibitions that were nonetheless influential for the issues they introduced or the content they captured. One might think of Traffic (1996) at the CAPC, Musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux, and Laboratorium (1999) organized by Roomade and Antwerp Open, or those that radically rethought existing exhibition models, including Do It! (ongoing since 1993), or any number of other curatorial experimentations. The chronology also excludes artists' solo exhibitions. Furthermore, despite the incredible related development between 1989 and 2005 of many new art initiatives, galleries, art fairs (Art Basel Miami, Art Moscow, the Glasgow Art Fair, Frieze Art Fair, etc.), art prizes, and international art magazines (Revue noire, NKA, Art Newspaper, Contemporary Art from the Islamic World, Art Asia Pacific, Frieze, the short-lived Russian version of Flash Art, to name only a few), not to mention highly relevant films, literature, theater, and other art projects, these are all beyond the scope of the present chronology. To have included them would have amounted to another, different document (and no doubt an even less tidy one), a certainty that underscores that there is not one true or factual depiction of the period, but many, and ours makes no pretense of being an objective or exhaustive one. Rather, it is meant to be a tool, a resource, even while it is inevitably subjective, briddled by the particular and limited experiences, perspectives, locations, and histories of its three compilers. Surely we have overlooked many relevant texts, events, and exhibitions. Even with such lacunae and, one might say, precisely because of them, a complex narrative emerges from the information provided, one that evidences the temporal and geographic intersections between politics, culture, and exhibition-making across the globe, from 1989 to our present.
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Habermas's (1985) work provocatively proposes to include the political participation of ordinary citizens in decision-making processes to ensure democratic accountability. This view of democracy has been influential in the development of new democratic forms and institutions.

France

In France, the political landscape has undergone significant changes since 1989. The Socialist Party, with François Mitterrand as its leader, came to power in 1981 and remained in government until 1995. Mitterrand's policies included nationalization of industries, social welfare reforms, and the establishment of a more interventionist economic approach. However, the Socialist government faced challenges in managing the country's economic crisis and the high levels of unemployment that persisted throughout the 1990s.

The 1995 presidential elections saw the return of a conservative government led by Jacques Chirac. Chirac's policies focused on reducing taxes, modernizing the economy, and improving the country's international standing. He was re-elected in 2002, and his government continued to implement market-oriented reforms in the economy and society.

In the cultural sphere, France has maintained its position as a leader in the arts and sciences, with a vibrant cultural scene and a strong presence in the world's cultural institutions. However, the country has also faced challenges in dealing with cultural diversity and the integration of its immigrant population.

Germany

After unification in 1990, Germany faced the challenge of integrating the economies, societies, and cultures of East and West Germany. The country embarked on a program of rapid transformation, known as the "Wende," which aimed to bring the two Germanies closer together and to address the economic and social challenges of reunification.

The first German government of the reunified country was led by Helmut Kohl, who served as chancellor from 1990 to 1998. Kohl's government focused on economic reunification, social welfare reforms, and European integration. The country's position in the European Union increased, and Germany became one of the leading economies in Europe.

In political terms, the 1998 elections reflected a shift in the country's political landscape. The Greens, a party committed to environmental issues, gained significant support and became a major player in the political arena. The party's success reflected growing societal concerns about environmental protection and sustainability.

In culture, the reunification process had a profound impact. While preserving the cultural heritage of the former GDR, the country worked to integrate East German literature, art, and music into the broader national culture. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification process marked a significant moment in the country's history, symbolizing the end of the Cold War and the opening of new possibilities for political and cultural development.
stand the historical events in Eastern Europe (and elsewhere) in the disorienting light of modernism are far reaching, countering the overwrought and misguided language of nationalism that followed the events of 1989.

As a result of the Tansui-based crackdown, experimental postmodern activity in China de-collapses dramatically. January, authorities close the contemporary art space Fine Arts in China, which housed a centre for new media art. In September, the most popular art journal, Art Monthly, is re-staffed with conservative critics. Numerous publications and websites are shut down.
Art and Politics after 1989

9 DECEMBER 1989 - Battle of Trafalgar Downs. Road protests clash with the police at the construction site of the M23 bypass from London to Southampton, challenging the U.K. government's £23 billion road-building plan. These protests are seen as a direct action against the widespread advent of global and local social-economic change throughout the globe in this period.

10 DECEMBER 1989 - Oskar, Suzanne. 1st Biennial of Contemporary African Art. Secretary general of the biennial: Amari Mba. Lubanibwa Kaggwa. The exhibition aims to present a new range of African art and provides an area for international art to shift focus with subsequent editions to become a forum for art of the African continent. It highlights the activists' political will to present a culture of food at the heart of development strategies.

11 DECEMBER 1989 - Daniel Czerepok, curator of the Centennial. The exhibition marks the centennial of World War I and the revolutions of 1917.

12 DECEMBER 1989 - The first edition of the Financial Times is launched.

13 DECEMBER 1989 - Roland Reiss, curator of the exhibition. The exhibition marks the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the International Centre of Documenta.

14 DECEMBER 1989 - The first edition of the Financial Times is launched.

15 DECEMBER 1989 - The first edition of the Financial Times is launched.

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27 DECEMBER 1989 - The first edition of the Financial Times is launched.
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1.23 NOVEMBER 1995 — The Dayton Agreement is the name given to the agreement reached at a meeting of the Dayton Peace Conference in Dayton, Ohio, to end the war in the former Yugoslavia. Here, the main participants — Serb President Slobodan Milosevic, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, U.S. General Wesley Clark, and the U.S. negotiator Richard Holbrooke — declare upon the present political division of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its structure of government. The accord mandates international supervision, Robert Rotberg, reporting in the April 1996 National Security Council Implementation Plan (NSCIP). For the first time in history, 3.5 debates taking place in political cartographies are used to determine the borders in an official treaty.

4 NOVEMBER 1995 — A Jewish extremist assassins Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin.

4 NOVEMBER 1995 — Gilian Dicks, French philosopher, takes his life in the age of 70.


9 NOVEMBER 1995 — Donetsk, Russia. 2nd Biennale of Contemporary Art. General curators: Yevgeny Vuchetich, Olga Strelkova, and Andrei Rodionov. The inaugural issue of an Eastern European biennial of contemporary art that proposes to make visible to the world the unique cultural movement in Eastern European art. Exhibiting is the work of young artists and curators from East and West, the brightest stars of the art world. Exhibiting is the work of young artists and curators from East and West, the brightest stars of the art world.


19 NOVEMBER 1995 — The Dayton Peace Agreement for the former Yugoslavia is formally signed in Paris.


24 NOVEMBER 1995 — David and Jean-François Chevrier who accompanies the exhibition, catalogues covering the show and instead laid out a critical foundation for the interpretation of art at the close of the twentieth century.

27 NOVEMBER 1995 — End of the 21st Century. Curators: Kees van Dongen, Gottfried Seitz, and Anna Katharina Scherl. The third edition of this major international sculptural exhibition in Europe since the two previous shows in situ by 60 established and younger artists. Breaks with line of previous events for art in public spaces.

27 NOVEMBER 1995 — The B.getJSONArray(54)earlcome and gallery in Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and South Korea, raising a major financial crisis in the region. The consequences are soon experienced in Europe, especially in the former Eastern bloc countries where Asian companies held very large investments.

27 NOVEMBER 1995 — The S.U.R. committee founding of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China.

27 NOVEMBER 1995 — The Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland are invited to join NATO.


ART AND POLITICS AFTER 1800


JULY 1999 – 31 AUGUST 1999 – Venice, Italy. Venice Biennale 1999: The Millennium of Venice. An exhibition on the cultural and artistic heritage of Venice, with a particular focus on the works of famous Venetian artists such as Giovanni Bellini and Tintoretto.

SEPTEMBER 1999 – 30 NOVEMBER 1999 – Tate Modern, London. The History of Art: 19th Century. An exhibition on the development of art in the 19th century, with a particular focus on the works of famous artists such as Vincent van Gogh and Claude Monet.

1 JANUARY 1999 – 31 DECEMBER 1999 – National Museum of Chinese History, Beijing. 19th Century China. An exhibition on the cultural and political history of China in the 19th century, with a particular focus on the works of famous Chinese artists such as Zhang Daqian and Qi Baishi.

1 MARCH 1999 – 30 JUNE 1999 – Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. 19th Century European Art. An exhibition on the development of European art in the 19th century, with a particular focus on the works of famous European artists such as Edgar Degas and Edouard Manet.

1 JANUARY 1999 – 31 DECEMBER 1999 – British Museum, London. The History of Art: 19th Century. An exhibition on the development of art in the 19th century, with a particular focus on the works of famous artists such as Vincent van Gogh and Claude Monet.

1 SEPTEMBER 1999 – 31 OCTOBER 1999 – Berlin Wall. An exhibition on the history and impact of the Berlin Wall, with a particular focus on the political and social issues that arose during the Cold War.

1 JANUARY 1999 – 31 DECEMBER 1999 – National Library of Australia, Canberra. 19th Century Australian Art. An exhibition on the development of Australian art in the 19th century, with a particular focus on the works of famous Australian artists such as Arthur Streeton and Charles Conder.


1 JANUARY 1999 – 31 DECEMBER 1999 – National Gallery, London. 19th Century British Art. An exhibition on the development of British art in the 19th century, with a particular focus on the works of famous British artists such as J.M.W. Turner and John Constable.

1 SEPTEMBER 1999 – 31 DECEMBER 1999 – Museum of Modern Art, New York. 19th Century European Art. An exhibition on the development of European art in the 19th century, with a particular focus on the works of famous European artists such as Edgar Degas and Edouard Manet.
ART AND POLITICAL AFTERMATH


7 NOVEMBER – 5 JANUARY 2001 – Shanghai, China. Zai Shanghaji. Curators: Han Hanry, Toshimi Shiino, Lu Li, and Zhang Ed. The third round of the 7th Biennale (2000) is open to international participants and curators, after 2 editions reserved exclusively for Eastern and Western curators and artists (technical preparations in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, and, in European), The transformation signifies the realization of Shanghai's potential as a gateway between Asia and the West as it becomes the growing importance of China. While the third edition remains relatively conservative in its choice, their international emphasis and artistic innovation opens the biennials to new and more international curators and exhibitions.

6 NOVEMBER – 4 DECEMBER 2000 – Zapeka'Gallery, Warsaw, Poland. Interesting. Curators: Jacek Kojeda and Kvarda Dyla. This exhibition of new young artists includes the artists associated with the association of a younger art genre in a focused way following the war.


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ART AND POLITICS AFTER 1989

4 AUGUST - 7 DECEMBER 2003 - Porto Alegre, Brazil. 30th Biennial de arte visuais de Minas (Museu Bienal de Visual Arts)
Contemporary Architecture. Curator: Nelson Aguiar

11 OCTOBER - 25 OCTOBER 2003 - Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany. Back from the Future: Neo-Expressionism in East Germany resulting from the large research project known as the Post-Confessional Art, curated by Urs Stahel. With its scope the 2003 Schirn exhibition is the second in a series of post-confessional art shows in Europe, and as such is part of the larger, international effort to examine the connections between post-confessional art in East Germany and other venues throughout Europe as well as the differing conditions in which cultural changes in the East occur.

6 MAY 2004 — Popular right-wing Dutch politician Willem Jan Peters (Pim Fortuyn), known as Pim Fortuyn, is assassinated by a supporter of immigration, during a national election campaign. Fortuyn was the face of the opposition to immigration and his anti-immigration policies. Shortly after delivering his final speech, Fortuyn's party wins the election.

7 MAY 2004 — Estée, Senegal. 4th Biennale of Contemporary Art from Eastern Europe. Curator for the event: Oroncoumboeuf. Wolf: President of the selection committee and international jury: Sami Shinwari


4 JUNE 2004 — Mexico City. Museo de arte contemporaneo de Roma (MACRO). Roma, Italy. Mediterranean. Curators: Zidane Badawi, Arbel Bas, Dafina Gjasu, Gabriel George, Abt Ali Ebadi, Wolff Kortun, Gianfranco Mazzola, Sandro De, Tallulah Snitka. For this art project; curators from 14 Mediterranean countries select about 45 artists to trace the profound political, social, economic, religious, natural, cultural, and aesthetic themes. (Mediterranean, Africa, Asia and 3 major religions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism).

11 JUNE — 30 JUNE 2004 — Dresden-San Sebastian, Spain. MUSEO, European Art. "Art with the Heart. Curator: Natalia Kuznetsova and Marielle Gani. The fifth edition opens in a new exhibition space of the officially changed Bauhaus region. The show mixes contemporary works by over 50 emerging artists with several established names and is divided into 5 venues and several outdoor spaces. The curators' collaboration with artists presents an unusual panorama of Europe's history from wars, climate, totalitarianism, and scars that time the exhibition's visit. It travels to Hanoi, the Czech Republic.

7 JUNE — 25 JUNE 2004 — Sevres, France, Austria. 3rd Biennale Vienne. Curator: Andreas Moser. "Austria: three stages and a vision of Europe". The exhibition explores Austria's role in contemporary art from 1950 to the present. The show focuses on the work of 100 artists from Austria, Germany, France, and Switzerland. The exhibition includes 7 exhibitions, an exhibition catalog, an exhibition of artworks, and a discussion of various artistic activities held throughout Europe in the visual arts context of the Thinking Forward culture program. The project takes the form of a collaborative assignment for the EU and focuses on its thinking in changing Europe.


1 OCTOBER — 30 OCTOBER 2004 — Los Angeles, LA. 1st Biennale. Curator: Steven Ansell and Gregory Mosei. The Los Angeles biennial continues the traditional role of events once organized as a part of Construction in Phoenix, the city's series of art exhibition and cultural exhibitions, the International Art of Mexico. Its first edition is based on a new idea of the local, national, and international.


2 NOVEMBER 2004 — 21 SEPTEMBER 2005 — Confucius Institute. "Confucius: Beijing, New York, and the Symbol of Chinese Culture". The "7 art" exhibition. Some of the curating according to the curators must also be regarded as a 7 art exhibition, which is the same cultural or cultural exhibitions. Taiwan, Shanghai, Chipan, Marseille, ceylon, business, non-professionals, and for the West.

16 JANUARY 2005 — Tokyo, New Delhi, India. 11th Triennale. Curator: Shumpei K. Hida.

16 JANUARY 2005 — Tokyo, New Delhi, India. 1st Biennale of Venice "Biennale d'Arte". Art exhibitions (organized by the International Biennial Art Fair). It is a group of local critics, curators, and artists, organized by the Ministry of Culture and the Arts.


25 DECEMBER 2004 — 25 JANUARY 2005 — New Delhi, India. 1st Biennale of Venice "Biennale d'Arte". Art exhibitions (organized by the International Biennial Art Fair). It is a group of local critics, curators, and artists, organized by the Ministry of Culture and the Arts.

25 DECEMBER 2004 — 4 APRIL 2005 — Moscow, Russia. 1st Moscowskaya biennales kontemporarykh izobrazitel'nykh iskusstv (Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art). Curator: Boris Mikhailovich. "Moscow Biennial. The exhibition includes the works of 100 artists from various countries, and an exhibition of various exhibitions in Moscow which present emerging and new-established figures in Russian art.


4 APRIL — 6 JUNE 2005 — Sharjah Museum of Art and Capo Centro, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. 7th Sharjah International Art Biennial. Director: Hala Alyan; curators: Jack Persekian, Ron Libbey, and Tirdad Azizian. The international conference, artistic, and art exhibitions as a parallel program of exhibitions in various museums in Moscow which present emerging and new-established figures in Russian art.


1 MAY 2005 — The European Agency for External Borders is launched in Venice. Its objective is to enhance cooperation between national border authorities, the EU, and other international organizations.

5 MAY 2005 — The French rejected the proposed European Constitutions in a popular referendum. Three days later, on 1 June, voters in the Netherlands make the second country to vote "no", thwarting its EU integration plans.

5 MAY 2005 — Karlis Hall, Prague, Czech Republic. 2nd Prague Biennale. Artistic directors: Giorgio Cipolla and Helene Ronka.

12 JUNE 2005 — Venice, Italy. 51st Biennale di Venezia (Venice Biennale). Art exhibitions (organized by the International Biennial of Venice). For the first time in its 110 year history, the Venice Biennale appointed women to curate the international exhibitions at the Arsenale and the
ITALIAN POLICE:

Each curator of a distinct but related show, exhibiting about 50 artists from countries with an international presence, will take place in the fall.

14 JUNE - 11 SEPTEMBER 2005 - Prague, Czech Republic
1st Nezbedský Leden soukromé umění (International Biennale Contemporary Art [IBCA]), A Second Stage. Director: Milan Kralik, chief curator: Tomáš Vacek. As a result of the division between the Prague National Gallery and Czech Art, the organizers of the 1st Prague Bienale, the former decided to make its own potential, large-scale international show, bringing together some 50 curators and 400 artists.

7 JULY 2005 - Nine suicide bomb explosions in the London underground transport system kill 52 people, including the 4 suspected bombers, and injure 200. The bombings coincide with the opening of the U.K.'s GB railway and a day after London was chosen to host the 2012 Summer Olympics. A second series of bombs left in the London underground and on a bus two weeks later fail to detonate properly and cause only one injury.

2 AUGUST - 10 SEPTEMBER 2005 - National Museum of Art, Okinawa, Japan. Positioning: In the New Reality of European Art from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Hungary. The first exhibition of post-1989 art from Central and Eastern Europe over to be organized in Japan. It brings together works that reflect the emergence of Eastern Europeans with their post-communist reality as well as their struggle to adapt to the West transformation. Organized by the Japan Foundation as a part of Japan-EU Year, the exhibition travels to Hiroshima and Tokyo.


1 SEPTEMBER - 20 NOVEMBER 2005 - Kunsthalle Freiburg, Kassel, Germany. 80 Jahre/80 Ausstellungen, 1935-2005. Curator: Michael Grewe, the archive exhibition brings together 55 of the over 2,000 works shown in the various editions of the half-century old institution, as well as numerous documents and other exhibition artifacts.


17 SEPTEMBER - 19 DECEMBER 2005 - Kölnerische Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany. Projekt Migration (Migration Project). Exhibition accompanied by a program of films, music, theater, and literature. The exhibition, examining new models for representing immigration, is a collaboration between the Kölnische Kunstverein, COOBE.
Every exhibition is a map. As such, it not only separates, defines and describes a certain terrain, marking out its salient features and significant points, omitting and simplifying others, but it also depicts the ground according to a method of projection: a set of conventions and rules under which the map is constructed. . . . The problem is . . . that in exhibitions as in maps, the conventional nature of the representation tends to be hidden in use. The laws of projector become invisible.

—John Tagg, "A Socialist Perspective on Photographic Practice"

There is an important politics in the locality of an exhibition. Where an exhibition is staged, particularly one of the perennial large-scale international exhibitions like the Venice Biennial or Documenta, determines who is included, both as participants and viewers, as well as how that exhibition is positioned and read. By definition, the location of an international exhibition constructs a map of the world from the perspective of both the city and the country that sponsor it, underlining any notion of an equality of nations.

With such exhibitions, the location is often included in the title, both as a manifestation of this bias, though not always an openly acknowledged one, and as a way of attaching the cultural and political status of the city or country named. The Venice Biennial is the oldest, largest, and best attended of the regular international exhibitions, but its rivals vie for some of the same attention and, through names and numbers, contend for an equal or different authority. These include, among others, the São Paulo Biennial, the Triennale India in New Delhi, the Biennale of Sydney, the Istanbul Biennial, and Dak'Art, the Biennial of Contemporary African Art in Senegal. Each competes
for worldwide cultural influence by asserting its importance on the map of international exhibitions.

This recent transformation in the kinds and numbers of geographical locations in the "international" art world is one of several components that have changed the agenda for major presentations of art, both in and outside Europe today. "Festival-exhibitions" with their roots in the large, international exhibitions of the nineteenth century are still a public model and a shifting backdrop against which the meanings of contemporary art are constructed, maintained, and sometimes irrevocably altered. However, the very ideas of centrality and dominance on which spectacular, imperial displays were originally founded are now increasingly interrogated by ideas and practices imported from formerly "marginal" discourses and artistic activities, geographic and otherwise. An ambivalent but intriguing case is the 1993 Venice Biennial, which expanded the number of countries from which artists were represented, albeit in the form of add-on delegations from East Africa, South Africa, Ireland, and Turkey. In a rather superficial manner, it took "cultural nationalism" as its theme, which reinforced the decision of a small number of countries to select artists whose hybrid citizen status put into question the concept of achieving or maintaining cultural hegemony through definitions based on a nationalistic agenda. Even before the theme was proposed, Austria acknowledged its confused national identity, selecting three artists, only one of whom was Austrian.

Many artists in the twentieth century and especially today have renounced singular national identification. Their ways of working depend increasingly on transnational access and multiple exhibition venues. These factors have altered the internal maps of international exhibitions, as has the inclusion of women, people of color, new nations, and indigenous peoples with a range of cultural and subcultural viewpoints. Of equal consequence in this recharting of international exhibitions are changes in the public acceptability of certain types of images previously restricted to specialized aspects of popular or reproductive culture, particularly from the realms of advertising and pornography, and the inclusion of technological and telematic systems into the practices of the art world.

Culture must now be viewed within the orbit of mainstream politics. This was the case with the specific incorporation into the Maastricht Treaty, in February 1992 in Europe, and the North American Free Trade Agreement, in October 1992. Cultural politics have been displaced from previously identifiable national registers, creating complex and contradictory understandings of artistic and social identities. The 1957 Treaty of Rome, which established the European Economic Union, did not put culture legitimately within the domain of the European Commission. Instead, it provided the now notorious and ill-resolved Article 36, which allowed member states to protect their "patrimoine national," both terms being anachronistic and unpatriotic.

Culture has been schizophrenically treated either as economic goods to be traded freely, like furniture or vegetables, or as national treasures that should be cherished and protected at any cost. Now, the Maastricht Treaty promises "The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity, and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore." In a small way, the treaty recognized that Europe had no single culture (other than being a spectator-participant in global media networks), but it failed to identify the continuing place and impact of cultural minorities, aside from those defined in terms of terrain, and failed equally to distinguish hybrid cultural forces within Europe. In the past, it was only through migration and the clash of cultures in European colonial projects that cultural development took place at all. Repressive immigration laws, as exemplified in France, are a vicious misunderstanding of both history and the present economic crisis and have proven to be a sad regressive move reminiscent of past attempts at "cleansing" with regard to foreign cultures.

Today manifestations of extreme artistry can be financed, produced, and presented by official institutions; indeed, art is dependent upon such support if it is to be produced at all and to find its way to an audience. Yet, at the same time, art denounced everything institutional and official.

— Theodor W. Adorno, "Culture and Administration"

Exhibitions formed, for instance, within the Cultural Capitals Program (one of the few parts of EC cultural policy to have public impact) are meant to be nice affairs, not disposed, of course, to such contradictions. Allied to the historical "international exhibitions," they have the triple intention of improving diplomatic relations with other political allies, boosting trade, and contributing to the urban regeneration of their localities. What the art actually is may be of little matter to those who fund it; what counts is the degree to which it commands the attention of the art world (curators, critics, dealers, and collectors), leads to wider media attention, and appropriately signals cultural and, by implication, economic progress. This is no easy task, even during the best of times. And in factionalized and hyper-racist Europe, these can hardly be considered the best of times. Such sensitive issues become even more complex when the art exhibited itself addresses these same questions of urban, national, or subjective identity or when, through image and text, art posits questions of power, domination, subjugation, and fantasy critical or of alternative to the behavior seen in many corporate executives or political leaders. For example, in La Reconquista: A Post-Columbian New World organized by Patricio Chavez for the 1992 Istanbul Biennial, a postcolonial position was in direct conflict with the official U.S. sponsoring body.

Exhibitions are fictions of a particular kind, and they can be both celebrat-
tory and critical by turn. Who is participating, why, and on what terms need careful examination. Questions of access more often than not have been first addressed from within the field of the arts. Shifts in both form and content have altered the certainties of international exhibitions, symbolized perhaps by the fact that the art museum is no longer the assumed haven of a de-socialized art. Artists both use, misuse, and abuse situations of exhibiting to many ends, and the art of today is often categorized by its pronounced alienation from the very patronage that offers it a home.

The exhibition is a tool of a thousand-and-one purposes, and half of them have not yet been discovered. Human nature will always cause men to want to exhibit, and the itch to see something new will then provide the visitors. "The eye is not satisfied with seeing nor is the ear filled with hearing."

— Kenneth Luckhurst, _The Story of Exhibitions_

The Great Exhibition held at the Crystal Palace in London in 1851 provided a spectacular model for the international expositions of the second half of the nineteenth century. These were stage-managed forms of national rivalry set within universalist assumptions and "international" presentation. They were public and popular devices within the ideology of modernity, where art usually had an important place alongside manufacture. Paris provided the peak of achievement with its three exhibitions between 1867 and 1889, when the Eiffel Tower was erected. Others, such as the World Exposition of 1873 in Vienna, decisively marked the spirit of a new age in an old capital. For other newer cities, the international expositions asserted a place on the map, enlarged commercial possibilities, and frequently originated or expanded the processes of modern city planning. Such expositions were essentially utopian and quintessentially didactic, liberally deploying sensation and pleasure. Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition codified the imperial dream of the White City. Hage temporary edifices sheltered national displays as well as thematic conglomerates of industry, communication, and the famous Woman's Building had murals designed by Mary Cassatt. The fair of the era were "triumphs of hegemony as well as symbolic edifices," as Robert Rydell puts it. In Chicago, the White City and the Midway (the other section of the exposition, where "ethnic" groups were located next to the fun fair and displayed anthropologically) were "two sides of the same coin — a coin minted in the tradition of American racism, in which the forbidden desire of whites were projected onto the dark-skinned peoples, who subsequently had to be degraded so that white purity could be maintained." This imperial and hegemonic story of the cultures of the world was also told in Paris, where African and other colonial villages were on display under the all-seeing eye of Eiffel's tower in the huge Exposition universelle of 1900. The debased form of these exhibitions today is Disneyland and EuroDisney, where each nationality or ethnicity is reduced to its most clichéd cultural form for facile and fast consumption. Although in a less polarized manner based on a schema of absences, the national identities set out in the pavilions of the Giardini in the Venice Biennial since 1989 have been simply a more circumspect but equally exclusionary form of internationalism. And it is the same history and the same assumptions about the rivalry of nations and hierarchies of race that stand behind the creation of the Carnegie International in Pittsburgh (founded 1896) and "national" exhibitions, such as the Concord Biennial in Washington, D.C. (founded 1907).

There is in this common history an interrelationship of parts between the promotion of art as a significant practice in support of cultural and national identity, the growing development of commercial world traffic in art, and the expansion of a modernist doctrine that positioned art as a form of international representation by its "universal" language. This complicity between the "unconscious" of modernist art and the deliberately hierarchically dominant policies of political forces joined together to anchor a new era of cultural politics and political cultures. It was the trauma of World War II and the exclusions of "degenerate art" during the Nazi era that provided the immediate backdrop for Arnold Bode's founding of the Documenta exhibition series, the first of which took place in Kassel in 1955. Here was a renewal of the humanist ideal, specifically to be expressed through an exhibition of Western contemporary art. Documenta was created as the antithesis of the propagandist exhibitions and national rivalries that had been all too evident in the years before 1939. Bode's exhibitions were precursors of the new museums and galleries devoted exclusively to white, Western, and predominantly male contemporary art, which were to become such a feature of urban life in post-World War II Western countries. By and large, this idealized notion of the sympathetic display of contemporary art was largely pushed forward in Europe through inventive national museums like the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (host of De Lyon in 1962 with its "dynamic labyrinth" of an international set of installations, including Daniel Spoerri's upturned gallery), the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, and the "independents" (i.e. the Kunsthalle in Bern and Basel as well as the Institute of Contemporary Art in London).

About 1960, artists began to work for the museum, in the same sense that they created works knowing in advance that they would be shown exclusively in the museum. However, even in the sixties, artists were already beginning to become allergic to the idea of cooperating with museums, seeking to escape from the static atmosphere of the museum by organizing their happenings and concerts. Today, in
1971, their preoccupations have a more social aim. Artists are no longer interested in getting into the mainstream, but want to conduct their activities on a wider stage, for example the municipality.

—Harald Szeemann, Museum

If Robert Rauschenberg's 1964 victory prize at the Venice Biennial symbolized a change in the balance of power between Europe and America, the 1968 social disruptions worldwide symbolized others. Euro-American disaffection with government and state institutions reverberated in widespread political and educational upheavals. The social and cultural frictions revealed fundamental shifts occurring in the relations between artists, curators, and spectators. These were commonly signaled by artistic projects that invited audience response through new kinds of physical, perceptual, and intellectual participation. The artistic ideals of the art informel, kinetic, and happenings movements together with the new technological advances, such as video, transgressed the museological notion of the passive spectator lost in aesthetic reverse guided by the curator or art critic. Allan Kaprow in his events, Claes Oldenburg in his store, Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica in their constructions and environments, and Ingrid Baxter's wide range of projects by the N.E. Thing Company, Joseph Beuys in his seminars and performance events, Carolee Schneemann's activities, and so on, at the very least, had a shared purpose of disrupting the conventions of behavior within an exhibition by blurring the edges, both of what might be looked at and where it might be seen.

The continuing emotional oscillation between the artist and gallery, both public and private, is indicated by radical shifts within the space and shape of traditional exhibitions. It also occurs in the creation of non-gallery exhibitions in the form of earthworks and environmental projects, the use of television and radio airwaves as studio or gallery "spaces," and the establishment of single-issue exhibition venues. A kind of vacillation between the museum, gallery, and vernacular locations was established and to some extent supported by those whose interests were not even immediately served by such waywardness. The late 1960s were years of tremendous growth in the art market and dealers' galleries, together with a huge expansion of independent, artist-based institutions. Surprisingly perhaps, it was dealers who frequently offered artists the spaces of greatest "freedom," where the absence of an overt institutional or curatorial "voice" allowed them total control of the space. As in the case of Gordon Matta-Clark, an artist might seek an urban site of specific architectural, social, and aesthetic qualities to intervene into existing meanings with support from a combination of dealer, public institution, or private sources. In the early 1970s, however, the power of a number of "avant-garde" dealers began to produce a narrowing of the range of art and artists who might receive consistent attention from collectors and museums.

Many of these contradictions were born out in Documenta 5 in 1972, which Harald Szeemann curated with Jean-Christophe Ammann and others. In Kassel, he presented a thematic structure that introduced comic-strip, film, and devotional religious materials in order to indicate some of the parallels for new artistic activity, inverting the axiomatic category of "individual mythologies." He also invited Baron Brock to restage the "visitor school," first made in 1968 as a vehicle for analysis and popular debate within the exhibition itself. Yet, these so-called radical approaches infuriated many artists selected for inclusion in the exhibition, such as Robert Morris and Robert Smithson, who protested vigorously against the lack of consultation in the thematic approach. More important still were the protests from women artists, newly organized but still ignored. No less problematic was the narrow base of countries represented. East Germany's participation, proposed for the photorealist section, was subject to much debate. Documenta 5 introduced all the contemporary tensions of medium, culture, nation, gender, race, and class that face us on every front and even more acutely today. Its problematic—hidden and barely acknowledged—are the very content and structuring devices of the artistic discourse of exhibitions today.

A whole series of "alternative" exhibitions and projects in the 1970s extended the questions of place, audience, and culture. From the mid-1970s with A Space project in local Toronto apartments, through Stephen Willats' participatory art projects in West London, to the 1976 Rooms exhibition, which drew upon the social qualities of R.S.I. (an alternative space in an old school in Long Island City, New York), artists challenged the assumptions of the gallery exhibition by creating viable and complex options outside its constraints. Trends changed, however, and in the early 1980s, the art world leapt to the idea of re-promoting a "proper realm" of art for art, for the poetics that surrounded exhibitions such as Pictures (1976), the Whitney Biennial (1979), A New Spirit in Painting (1981), and Zeitgeist (1981). At the same time and in contradiction, artists were in the forefront of opening up the hinterland between nightclub, music, and art activity, in what was to evolve the East Village scene in New York, through the introduction of everyday activities into the privileged realm of art, a spirit much guided by the earlier and continuing activities of Andy Warhol.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the use of new and multiple exhibition locations became the norm in certain international exhibitions such as the Ghost Chambers d'Amour show, the 1986 and 1993 TSWA projects across the United Kingdom and Places with a Past in Charleston. This new mainstream movement, which Mary Jane Jacob refers to as the scattered site exhibition, has once again restored all the ambivalences about the self-contained gallery exhibition, undermining the last lingering ideas of the transcience of the back to the kitchen. History is seldom telling us something new, even as we write ourselves into it. Consider how the Great Exhibition in London in 1851 became, on the preceding essay, observers, a model for the exhibition spectacles that followed. Paris in 1869, Chicago in 1893, New York in 1933, and the many biennials and triennials that defined the art world at the end of the last millennium. Like Setdik's annual North American International Auto Show and Chicago's international Fairy Food and Garden Show, our culture is a culture ensonored by the spectacles of the now. Exhibitions and fairs like these provide a survey of authority alongside the promise of change, a proof that symbols progress and hope. The question is: After 150 years of large-scale exhibitions, do they really matter any more?

In so many ways, I suppose they do—namely they matter to the cities and the people who produce them, they matter to the people who visit them, they matter to the artists. But I'm not sure what this tells us. And I'm less sure what it tells us about art. I like the way small exhibitions have a way of enlivening public spectator space in private intimacy.

Han-ULrich Obrist's Kitchen Show in 1981 in Saint-Galm, Switzerland, seems the perfect counterpart to the big: Understated, unapocalyptic, unspectacular, ascetic, it was one of the things that the boom of the past decade were not. Slow, not fast at all: few people, not a lot of people. It represented a kind of exhibition practice that had been a model ope ending through the 1970s—so in many ways a forgotten decade—reasserted in the 1980s in graphics and living rooms in Los Angeles, in food stands in Oak Park, in hotels in Paris, and in the Dave Hickey's nominative Three Day Weekend exhibitions. Culture has this way of moving through a constant cycle of past and counterpart, repositioning the relationship between here and there and as and used to be—and what matters now is that we keep doing this, because it's the doing that matters, in the end.

Joseph Grigely, Chicago-based artist and writer
pure, white cube. The flight from the gallery (from the temple to the grotto) and the utilization of spaces of immediate and strong connotations, as opposed to spaces masking their denotation through supposed neutrality, bears out many of the current contradictions in the seeking of new audiences. Krzysztof Wodiczko touched on the difficulties for artists, when he wrote: "The aim of critical public art is neither a happy self exhibition nor a passive collaboration with the grand gallery of the city, its ideological theatre and architectural-social system. Rather, it is an engagement in strategic challenges to the city structures and mediums that mediate our everyday perception of the world: an engagement through aesthetic-critical interruptions, infiltrations and appropriations that question the symbolic, psychopolitical and economic operations of the city."  

Abandoned office blocks, public buildings, or monuments of industrial archaeology are often the urban counterpart of the deserts sought by land artists. They have the cumulative advantage of a dual experience of space, for the "ghostly" presence grading the surface here (in the contiguous overlap between place and trace) is intensified by the fact that the here is never fully integrated as such, never fully familiar. It is often off-circuit. It is always from the outset "an elsewhere."  

—Johanne Lamouroux, "The Museum Flat"

In her critical analysis of the new "non-exhibition," Lamouroux has referred to its ambivalent relation with the leisure industry and tourist promotion. She identifies a common characteristic in such exhibitions as the creation of a "local exoticism." The insides of this development are manifold: Audiences, while unprepared and being forced to search through parts of a city requires an engaged commitment from a viewer, in contrast to the equivalent experience in a museum. On the other hand, for a viewer, in contrast to the equivalent installation and itinerant transnational artists, the discovery and public exhibition of spaces to be made "extraordinary" can produce results of exceptional poignancy and make infinitely more subtle a new exchange between histories and images and between participating viewers/readers, local and otherwise.

IV  

Voice has emerged as a crucial issue in the design of exhibitions. Whose voice is heard when a curator works through an established genre of exhibition, such as the monographic account of an artist's career or the ecological and social exploration of the lives of "primitive" peoples in the diorama of the Museum of Natural History? How can the voice of an exhibition honestly reflect the evolving understandings of current scholarship and multiple voices within any discipline?... How can the widely varying voices of museum visitors be heard by exhibition makers and reflected in their designs? Can an exhibition contain more than one voice, or can a voice exhibit more than one message?

—Stephen D. Levine, Museum Practices in Exhibiting Cultures

While questions of people and place have been explored assiduously in Australia and Canada in the twenty years following Documenta 5, questions of audience and culture have emerged more contentiously and less consistently. In the development of the Australian Perspecta survey exhibition and the Bienalle of Sydney as well as the elaboration of conflicts in the support and exhibition of Inuit and other artistic work from First Nations in Canada, initial issues concerning the segregation of supposedly Western and non-Western work came to the fore through political an artistic protest. It was clearly no longer possible for curators to characterize aboriginal art as an "unchangeable" and "timeless" set of conventions that could then be written off as fundamentally less creative than Western, artist-centered contemporary art. This direct cultural conflict added to the tensions of regionalism. As Terry Smith wrote from Australia in 1974, "most artists in art communities that are formed by a relentless provincialism. Their worlds are replete with tensions between two antithetical terms: a defiant urge to localism (a claim for the possibility and validity of 'making good original art right here') and a reluctant recognition that the generative innovations in art, and the criteria for standards of 'quality,' 'originality,' 'interest,' 'forcefulness,' etc. are determined externally... Provincialism produces highly self-conscious art obsessed with the problem of what its identity ought to be."  

The European mainland has allowed itself to remain more aloof from many of these concerns. Regional issues have been used as substitutes for the more complex cultural debate of postcolonialism. Even where more attantive, there are difficulties in the purported interest that a postmodernist art world has in issues of "difference." Against an emerging ambivalence about how to address such concerns, artist and critic Rasheed Araeen has consistently pointed out the dangers of producing new "ethnic" ghettos rather than recognizing cultural and racial difference already lying in the heart of modernism. Against this background, in 1989 Jean-Hubert Martin produced Magiciens de la terre (supposedly a reply to debates surrounding "Primitivism" in Twentieth Century Art at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1984) at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris as a self-conscious attempt to realign internationalism by basing the selection of one hundred artists on a quota of fifty percent "center" and fifty percent "periphery." Gavin Jantjes commented in the same year, "Les Magiciens de la Terre laid open the Western/Eurocentric consciousness like a surgeon dissecting his own body without an anesthetic. It revealed that the Eurocentric gaze has distinct and daunting problems when fixed upon the 'cultural other,' its achievements and methodologies. To imply that equality in the cultural arena is signified by everyone exhibiting together is both illusion-
istic and historically unsound.\textsuperscript{4,5} Magicians de la terre, as an exhibition, and some of the juxtapositions within it certainly gave fuel to further debate on both sides of the Atlantic, arguments re-reflect in the critical disputes around the 1992 Documenta 9.

A project that has also grown out of these debates is the Institute of New International Visual Arts (ininVA) in Britain. Funding was allocated for research and publishing, which may, together with the exhibition activity, eventually get drawn into a single place. The importance of the project lies in the structural change that it engenders: seeking new international models alongside the present Institutions.

The very idea of the international survey exhibition is now questioned at its most fundamental level. However progressive the political or economic intentions behind them, international exhibitions still invite a presumption that the curators have access to an illusory world view, and that spectators may follow in their wake. But a more specific and sustained engagement with communities and audiences, creating meanings beyond the spectacular and more festivalizing of such occasions, may produce a new genre of exhibition. It seems that in order to accommodate both artists’ needs and audience demands, the new exhibition must have reciprocity and dialogue built into its structure. How successfully this is accomplished will determine international exhibition maps of the future.

\textsuperscript{4} This essay was first written in the early 1990s as part of work on a Getty Research Fellowship and was originally published in On Taking a Research Student and Understanding It with Opening and Multiple Readings of Conditions True and Present (London: E. Arrows, 1992) in the context of Arrows being invited to a European Cultural Capital in 1992. This period followed the rapid expansion of the international contemporary art market in the 1980s. The first, transient art fairs, artists, curators, organizers, and writers associated with a growing number of exhibitions and events that appeared to be in distinct contrast to the homogeneity of the commercial art fairs were asking many questions about what was meant by international. Even the mainstream international events, such as the Venice Biennale, has begun to change. Our choice was to consider these questions within the history of international gatherings and exhibitions, going back to the nineteenth century. The savings of critical, commercial, and educational interests remained one of contin-

\textsuperscript{5} The exhibition's origins can be traced to the early 1980s when it was first proposed that an international art fair could be used to address social and cultural issues. The idea was to create a space for artists to present their work and to engage with the public on a more meaningful level than that of the traditional art fair. The exhibition was intended to be a platform for the exchange of ideas and the promotion of contemporary art and culture. It was hoped that the exhibition would also serve as a catalyst for the development of new ideas and the promotion of cultural diversity.

\textsuperscript{6} Habitat, New York: Horizon Press, 1974.

\textsuperscript{7} This essay was first written in the early 1990s as part of work on a Getty Research Fellowship and was originally published in On Taking a Research Student and Understanding It with Opening and Multiple Readings of Conditions True and Present (London: E. Arrows, 1992) in the context of Arrows being invited to a European Cultural Capital in 1992. This period followed the rapid expansion of the international contemporary art market in the 1980s. The first, transient art fairs, artists, curators, organizers, and writers associated with a growing number of exhibitions and events that appeared to be in distinct contrast to the homogeneity of the commercial art fairs were asking many questions about what was meant by international. Even the mainstream international events, such as the Venice Biennale, has begun to change. Our choice was to consider these questions within the history of international gatherings and exhibitions, going back to the nineteenth century. The savings of critical, commercial, and educational interests remained one of contin-

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NOTES

2. Ibid.

SPURRED by the renaissance of institutional critique in the early 1980s, the analysis of the conditions of art presentation has generated a substantial body of critical knowledge about the exhibition as an institution of cultural production. The proliferation of this knowledge has had positive effects. It has provided art criticism with a more differentiated view of social and ideological curators to develop exhibitions that explore and transform the politics of identity in art. But there are reasons to be skeptical. With the global 6.5. spread of biennials, the critical discourse on postcolonial identity politics is often converted to mechanical routines to showcase artists as ceremonial ambassadors of their home countries. 7. While some of these routines have been avoided, the critical discourse has enabled the expansion of the horizon of the forms of art shown and discussed. It has opened up doors for new and avant-garde gallery based art practices that would otherwise remain invisible. And this, quite simply, is a good thing.

The discourse on the politics of exhibition making can, however, become stifling when it portrays art institutions as the main agents shaping the reality of contemporary art and thereby肴ning a power. Paradoxically, institutional critique has played its part in discouraging faith in the potential of artistic agencies in favor of a belief that it is the privileged institutions and their curators to produce culture. The question is then: How can institutional critique also point beyond the institutions to other political realities and fields of artistic agency? While undoubtedly there is a need for institutions and artists to critically assess the conditions of art presentation, there also is a need for more attempts to transgress institutional discourses through the development of speculative agendas and experimental practices that allow other ideas of critical artis-
tic agency to emerge. Jan Verwoert, Hamburg: art cells and guest professor, Konstfackskolan (Academy of Fine Arts), Umeå University, Sweden.

TOWARDS A NEW LOCALITY: BIENNIALS AND “GLOBAL ART”

Hou Hanru

Biennials of contemporary art inevitably have cultural and geopolitical ambitions. They seek to be nationally and even internationally significant, by putting forward particular and supposedly incomparable local characteristics, which we might call "national identity," the concept of locality should be cultural-

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Biennials of contemporary art inevitably have cultural and geopolitical ambitions. They seek to be nationally and even internationally significant, by putting forward particular and supposedly incomparable local characteristics, which we might call "national identity," the concept of locality should be culturally related to the local tradition but innovative and open to international exchanges. The introduction of artworks by international artists is an efficient strategy to achieve this end and is often introduced as a catalyst to accelerate this process. Geopolitically, this newly constructed locality should demonstrate its singularity when compared to other similar events, especially those happening in surrounding areas. The Busan Biennial, for instance, has direct and indirect rivals or peers in Korea, such as the Gwangju Biennial, Seoul Media City, etc., and across the Pacific Ocean, with the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial, Yokohama Triennial, Taipei Biennial, or Shanghai Biennial and even, going a bit further, the Asia-Pacific Triennial in Brisbane and the Biennale of Sydney. To configure the locality of such events in contradistinction to their ever-increasing number of national and international counterparts means emphasizing something quite particular to the context of the locale—city, region, or "neighborhood," as Ayria Appadurai would say? This is true of most biennial or triennial organizations across the world today, including the Havana Biennial, Johannesburg Biennial, or Manifesta, to name just a few. The problem of locality provides us, as curators and artists directly involved with such events, a unique opportunity to explore the creative and innovative possibilities afforded by the occasion. The challenge that we face is how to "imagine and realize a biennial that is culturally and artistically significant in terms of embodying and intensifying the negotiation between the global and the local, politically transcending the established power relationship between different locales and going beyond conformist regionalism. More than ever, biennials of the future should be an occasion to conceive and construct new localities capable of responding to the age of globalization. As Appadurai argues, "The problems of cultural reproduction in a global-
lized world are only partly describable in terms of problems of race and class, gender and power, although these are surely crucially involved. An even more fundamental fact is that the production of locality—always, as I have argued, a fragile and difficult achievement—is more than ever shot through with contradictions, destabilized by human motion, and displaced by the formation of new kinds of virtual neighborhoods.** This vision or reality no doubt implies contradictions, conflicts, and chaotic elements, but it also offers an optimistic and futurist picture of the local scene. Artistically, biennials naturally reflect such a reality.

However, it is important that the projects and works presented not only respond to such a reality, but also be able to realize the main meaning of their achievement, to articulate the experimentality and vitality necessary to the invention of the new locality.

It has become increasingly evident in today's globalized world that it is impossible to talk about the question of locality without relating it to globalization. Historically and especially in the contemporary world, locality is always a product of the confrontement and negotiation of the locale (or the neighborhood) with the global (or "Other"). This vital and intense process of self-reflection, autocrique, and self-innovation allows the individual to continue to survive and obtain meaning within global modernization. The process is automatically one of breaking down and reestablishing territorial borders as well as cultural boundaries at large, whether they have been recently politically determined or historically granted. In our age of globalization when every locale is struggling hard to turn itself into either a member of the global village or a key point on the network of global cities, this becomes drastically intensified and even urgent. Producing new localities is the most imminent task for locales. If the boundaries of locales were once relatively clearly defined and conceivable as being like islands on the world map, today this island-based concept is no longer sustainable. Everyone must leave his or her island and merge into the border-crossing, translocal ocean of global restructuring.

Globalization is a necessary first step in the process of expanding the global economy and its related effects: migrations across borders—from economic and political refugees to technological and intellectual "global travelers" as well as the development of new technologies of global communication. Accordingly, the globalized culture of electronic media, with multimedia images and languages at its center, becomes the dominant, "mainstream" culture. It has penetrated almost every corner of the world and caused profound changes in local cultures. As a result, established economies, social relations, and politics as well as collective and individual imaginations, visions, values, and languages are all affected, contaminated, and transformed. For the sake of survival, every locale has to develop new strategies to face such a new reality.

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Last but not least, a closing unit, designed by Biotech Development, will produce all the carousels and artists that you might need, in just a month. The genets codes are provided by Intelbook, the internationally acclaimed gene bank based in Biel, Switzerland.

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** Politically, we are seeing a kind of reorganization of regional, translocal alliances. Aspirations for peace and the impossibility of coexistence between nations and communities are working hand-in-hand, drawing new geopolitical maps of different scales, from the unification of West and East Germany to the Balkan conflicts, from the tension between China and Taiwan to the latest constitutional change redefining the relationship between the French government and Corsican nationalists.

In terms of culture, a new phenomenon, as Appadurai emphasizes, is the unprecedented acceleration of the destruction of local cultures and the formation of new communication and cultures based on the "virtual neighborhood," which brings people from different parts of the world in closer contact than they are with their actual neighbors thanks to the Internet and other electronic media. In this context, the process of inventing the new localities in every place is inevitably open to global or other cultures. Everyone has to live a kind of "unholy" life, as Homi Bhabha puts it. Events like contemporary art biennials, initiated by local authorities to promote the position of locales on the global map, are, in the context of anxiety by nature, therefore inherently meaningful and productive in terms of new localities. The introduction of "foreign," international knowledge, cultures, artworks, and discourses are not only the proof of capacity to master international cultural exchanges and thereby defend local characteristics. More significant yet, this process reveals that international or global cultures influence and even condition the new reality of the locales. The home is being voluntarily turned into a kind of non-home, a constantly changing and evolving in-between space, a kind of "glocal" land. The new localities being generated are definitively impure, hybrid, and therefore innovative. Accordingly, the question of cultural identity is no longer based on the logic of the nation-state. Instead, it is about transnationalism, and identities themselves continuously transform. Even taken-for-granted distinctions between Eastern and Western cultures, for instance, are definitely losing their meanings. Permanent confrontation, negotiation, and hybridization between different cultures and identities are all that remain.

Along with economic globalization, the logic of late or global capitalism and the ideology of consumerism are now spreading and "conquering" the planet, an irreversible trend thanks to new technologies and electronic communication. Popular cultures and their images, mainly electronically generated and distributed, are becoming common sources of imagination, fantasy, and even moral values for people, especially youth, whether they live in the developed "First World" or the developing "Third World." This new global culture is, as already suggested, pluralist, hybrid, and interactive. One should not, however, be automatically optimistic about it. The fact that globalization is actually producing further divisions between the rich and the poor, between the empower-
ered and the exploited, clouds euphoric visions of the new reality like those in the post-World War II years in the West embodied by pop art. On the contrary, this new reality must be continuously examined and criticized, eliciting more fundamental, political critiques of global capitalism itself. However, the recent economic and political dominance of this new form of capitalism has rendered its critique much more complicated and difficult. We are living in a time of self-confrontation: Consumerism so thoroughly dictates the cultural context in which we live that even intellectual notions, such as locality, globality, multiculturalism, and hybridity, in spite of their original political bias, are systematically appropriated by the marketplace and turned into commodities or commercialized, the most infamous example being the advertising strategy of Benetton. Furthermore, localities, embodied in the promotion of tourist spots, local specialties, etc., are actually one of the most reliable economic revenues for local communities. They are first of all commodities. We are losing what Frederic Jameson has called the necessary “distance of critique.”

Facing such a contradiction, contemporary art has come to up with more innovative solutions in order to continue to exist. Using different mediums, notably electronic means, artists in different parts of the world or those sharing various localities have developed similar methods to reappropriate images from electronic media and commercial advertisements, turning them into subversively ironic statements and even critical commentaries on the origins. Putting the “detoured” images back into circulation in the media, they affect and transform the collective consciousness as well as fantasies governing popular cultures. This is only one example of how contemporary art is being re-harnessed to transform society.

Obviously, one of major results of globalization is the gradual disappearance of borders separating nation-states and the establishment of new boundaries according to the rules of global capitalism. Concomitant with such a tendency, contemporary art is also going through a transitional period of self-deconstruction. Increasingly, art concepts and practices merge with other disciplines, especially architecture and urbanism, providing a larger space for social intervention by means of the reconstruction of visual environments beyond the framework of art institutions or the market. In the meantime, like the internal transformation of architecture and urbanism into a domain between the “real” and the virtual, contemporary art is being “dematerialized” and rematerialized within the network of global communication and hence incorporated into every level of cultural and collective activity. The arts can no longer remain confined in a separate enclosure.

Another driving force of globalization affecting the world order is global migration. Populations are traveling at an unprecedented speed across the planet. Their compositions are diverse: from economic refugees to political exiles, from cheap labor forces to jet-set political, economic, and intellectual elites. These different groups of global travelers, however, are all closely linked to the logic of global capitalism. They are at once the very symptoms and the catalyst of this irreversible trend. This tremendous global movement not only creates new opportunities for economic and cultural activities across the world. More significantly, it also profoundly influences localities everywhere in the world and provokes their generation. The departure of certain groups from the local community and the arrival of “Others” are fundamentally transforming every city, region, and nation state. The conditions, discourses, ideologies, and values of the production of localities are producing totally new adventures. Apart from the problems and difficulties caused when one departs from one’s culture, displacement can also provide certain opportunities for the exile, which is an experience of global traveling and adaptation in new contexts can be re-imported to influence the locale of his or her origin.

Culturally and artistically, this intensive struggle to lead a new life in a new environment can also present an opening to an innovative perspective of creation. As the American-Irish theoretician argues, “Displacement involves the invention of new forms of subjectivities, of pleasures, of intensities of relationships, which also implies the continuous renewal of a critical work that looks carefully and intensely at the very system of values to which one refers in fabricating the tools of resistance.”

No doubt, “the invention of new forms of subjectivities, of pleasures, of intensities of relationships” is not only an inspiring moment for the cultural imagination and artistic creation. It also provides a necessary process of a more fundamental nature—the transformation and mutation of the relationship between subjectivity and society. The Internet is perhaps the most evident symbol of such a new cultural structure. Subjectivity and identity should be understood as comprising continuously changing and evolving processes. The border around the self is blurred, and the self merges more and more actively with the Other. Intersubjectivity, rather than subjectivity, is a more relevant and meaningful notion, while artistic and cultural creations demand a new foundation beyond the ideology of individualism. Art making should be a process and expression of intersubjective communication, exchange, and collaboration. We are now witnessing more and more artists working in groups, while interdisciplinary collaborations are becoming the focus of artistic experiments. In working collectively, different individual talents are accumulated and combined to generate new languages, concepts, and especially new cultural categories that suggest a resolution of the social order, both globally and locally.

Eventually, contemporary art created from and for different localities but immediately involved with the swirl of global information, communication, and displacement can become an efficient means of resistance, interruption, and deconstruction of the established, dominant, hegemonic power of global capital.
talism and its ideology. And it should remain so. To resist the materialist val-
ues of consumerism and evolve along with the possibilities that new communi-
tication technology offers, contemporary art is now being explored and
developed increasingly towards immateriality, interactivity, instability, uncer-
tainty, and spatial temporalization. This process, inevitably affecting the global
communication network, produces fragmentation, interrupting critical moments
in the flow of communication and the production of value. It always plays the
role of the Other, an alternative to the “mainstream,” voicing different and
unexpected feelings, understandings, knowledge, and projects. As a conse-
quence, artworks constantly create vacant spaces or voids. The works are then
open to free interpretation, interactive participation by the public, and the con-
stant reinvention of meanings through endless negotiations between different
individual and collective experiences and aspirations on their equally endless
journeys between the global and the local, between history and the present,
between reality and projection.

Projects to produce new localities should start by considering the dynamism of
the global-local nexus. This is the very context of locality production today. If
Appadurai is right and localities are the product of specific contexts and, at
the same time, present new contexts for the generation of social life, three
cities can potentially become the most vital spaces for the production of local-
ities, when they introduce international or global artistic biennials.

* An earlier version of this text was written for the catalogue of the 2000 Pusan International Contemporary
Art Festival (see the Back Biennale), which was never published. The essay appeared in my collection On
the Mid-Ground, ed. by Hsiao Hwei (Hong Kong: Stance X, 2003) and appears here in a revised form.

NOTES
1. Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization
(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
2. Ibid., 198.
3. Ibid.
5. Frederic Jameson, Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism
6. Trinh T. Minh-ha, “Cotton and Iron” in Out There: Marginalization and
Contemporary Cultures, ed. Russell Ferguson et al. (New York: New Museum of

THE GLOBAL WHITE CUBE

Elena Filipovic

The history still to be made will take into consideration the place (the architecture)
in which a work comes to rest (deiotops) as an integral part of the work in question
and all the consequences such a link implies. It is not a question of ornamenting
(disfiguring or embellishing) the place (the architecture) in which the work is
installed, but of indicating as precisely as possible the way the work belongs in the
place and vice versa, as soon as the latter is shown.

— Daniel Burn, “Function of Architecture”

First, the Museum

New York, 1929. A sparse, singular row of artworks lined the pallet of walls in
the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, a display strategy that Alfred
Barr Jr. imagined after a visit to the Folkwang Museum in Essen two years ear-
ier.1 The walls became somewhat lighter upon arriving on American shores
and even whiter over the years, moving from beige-colored monk’s cloth to
stark white paint by the time the MoMA moved into its new permanent home
on West 53rd Street.2 But the essence of the museum’s aesthetic project was
there from the start. With it, other details followed: Windows were banished so
that the semblance of an outside world—daily life, the passage of time, in
short, context—disappeared; overhead lights were recessed and emitted a uni-
form, any-given-moment-in-the-middle-of-the-day glow; noise and clatter were
suppressed; a general sobriety reigned. A bit like its cinematic black-box pen-
dant, the museum’s galleries unequivocally aimed to extract the viewer from
the world.” For this and other reasons, the minimal frame of white was
thought to be “neutral” and “pure,” an ideal support for the presentation of
an art unencumbered by architectural, decorative, or other distractions. The
underlying fiction of this whitewashed space is not only that ideology is held
at bay, but also that the autonomous works of art inside convey their meaning
in uniquely aesthetic terms.3 The form for this fiction quickly became a stand-
ard, a universal signifier of modernity, and eventually was designated the
“white cube.”4

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No tabula rasa, the white cube is an indefeasibly inscribed container. For more than a physical, tectonic space (monochrome walls delimiting a certain geometrical shape), the art world's white cube circumscribes an attitude toward art, a mode of presentation, and an aura that confers a halo of inevitability, of fate, on whatever is displayed inside it. The legibility of the artwork as work is contingent upon the structuring of that legibility by its surroundings—Marcel Duchamp taught us that. From the MoMA's whitewash forward, the white cube became a cipher for institutional officiousness, fortifying the ultimate tautology: An artwork belongs there because it is there. (The fact that the artwork is bracketed off from the world also undermines the impression that it might be related to, or the same as, the stuff of everyday life.) In that space of encounter, the ideal viewer (white, middle-class) is also constructed—well behaved, solemn, disinterested, and able to focus on the singularity of the work of art with an uninterrupted gaze. Particular to the white cube is that it operates under the pretense that its seeming invisibility allows the artwork to speak; it seems black, innocent, unspecified, insignificant. Ultimately, what makes a white cube a white cube is that, in our experience of it, ideology and form meet, and all without our noticing it.

Years after Barr invoked the white cube as the hallmark of the MoMAs exhibition spaces, Hitler approved of its use for the interior of the Haus der Kunst in Munich in 1937, the Nazis' first architectural project after coming to power. That monumental new building with its interior of vast well-lit gallery spaces, all white and windowless, opened with the exhibition Grosse deutsche Kunstausstellung (Great German Art Exhibition). The white container and sober display served to make the painted idyllic landscapes and bronze Aryan bodies on view seem natural and innocuous, despite the belligerent motives that underlay their selection and presentation. Driving home the point, the demonstration was doubly staged; Grosse deutsche Kunstausstellung was the "acceptable," positive pendant to the somber, densely cluttered, and apparently disorganized show Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art) that opened in a nearby archeological institute the following day. Thanks to such a contrast, the artworks in the former seemed all the more righteous and those in the latter all the more abhorrent. There is no denying the coincidence. When the aestheticization of politics reached terrifying proportions, the white cube was called in.

New York and Munich, 1929 and 1937. The larger architectural frames for these white cubes are not comparable, and their respective regimes, it goes without saying, were worlds apart. Confuting them is not my purpose. Rather, I wish to highlight the usefulness, efficacy, and versatiliy of an exhibition format that has become a standard. If the white cube managed to be both the ideal display format for the MoMAs and the Third Reich's respective visions of modern art, despite their extremely different ideological and aesthetic positions, it is because the display conceit embodied qualities that were meaning-

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**THE GLOBAL WHITE CUBE**

ful to both, including neutrality, order, rationalism, progress, extraction from a larger context, and, not least of all, universality and (Western) modernity.

Their examples are relevant today not only because they laid the foundations for how the white cube came to signify over time, but also because the subtle and not so subtle political ambitions of their exhibitions remind us of the degree to which pristine architectonics, immaculate backdrops, general sparseness, and the strict organization of artworks on the walls matter. The subjugation of artistic production to a frame at once "universal," megalithic, ordered, rational, and ultimately problematic for what that so-called universality implies and hides, points to a predicament with which artists and curators have grappled over since. Exhibitions, by their forms, entangle the viewer in a space at once physical and intellectual, but also ideological.

**New, Biennials and Other Large-Scale Perennial Exhibitions**

Fast forward, virtually, everywhere, everwhere. Like modernity, the white cube is a tremendously successful Western export. Its putative neutrality makes it a ubiquitous architectural surround (an "architectural inevitability," Rem Koolhaas would say) for artworks in museums, but also for galleries and art fairs that transform commercial environs into what look more and more like mini museum spaces. Given that galleries and art fairs have a financial interest in making goods for sale appear as if they have already been legitimized by museum-like spaces, not to mention their frequent desire to keep the poetry or violence of everyday life out of the realm of becalmed shopping, this is hardly surprising. It makes less sense, however, within the context of the recurrent, large-scale international exhibitions that have proliferated around the world.

Sometimes referred to in shorthand as "mega exhibitions" or "biennials" (even those that do not, strictly speaking, occur biannually), these various large-scale international exhibitions distinguish themselves from typical group shows staged in museums, art centers, or Kunsthallen in large part through their lineage to the Venice Biennial, the first perennial international salon of contemporary art inaugurated in 1895. This parentage implies a temporality and spectacularity that is their own. These punctual manifestations recur every two or three or even every five years, as is the case with Documenta, lack real visibility beyond the duration of their exhibitions; they have an explicit ambition both to represent their region, host city, or nation and to display a decidedly international panorama of contemporary production, an ambition that influences the scale and general circumstance attached to the event; and they often are dispersed over multiple public spaces and institutional sites. If these relatively basic features unite large-scale international exhibitions and biennials, an ocean of differences can separate their tenants and histories. A number of them find their origins in contexts of profound political
and cultural transition, for example, Documenta and German post-war reconstruction, the Gwangju Biennial and the democratization of South Korea, the short-lived Johannesburg Biennial and the end of apartheid, or Manifesta, European Biennial of Contemporary Art and the fall of the Berlin Wall. These and others have used the particularity of their historic, cultural, and geographic situation to define an institutional focus, a striking example being the Havana Biennial’s ongoing engagement to offer a platform for artists from the “Third World.” Whatever their individual histories, however, the ambition to be a counter model to the museum and its traditional exhibitions is a significant defining feature of such events.

Most biennials and large-scale international exhibitions in fact were founded in reaction to nonexistent or weak local art institutions unwilling or unable to support the most experimental contemporary cultural production. These perennial exhibitions, therefore, perceive themselves as temporarily punctual infrastructures that remain forever contemporary and unbounded by collecting and preserving what the vagaries of time render simply modern. The aim to be the paradigmatic alternative to the museum cuts both ways, however, with positive and negative distinctions. The proliferation of biennials in the 1990s rendered them new privileged sites for cultural tourism and introduced a category of art, the bimonthly proportions and hollow promises of which earned it the name “biennial art,” a situation that knotted the increasingly spectacular events to market lobbies. That mega exhibitions can be compromised is a frequent lament, but in their best moments, they offer a counterproposa to the regular programming of the museum as well as occasions for artists to bypass institutional walls and defy the neat perimeter to which the traditional institution often strictly adheres when it organizes exhibitions (although museums, it must be said, are increasingly challenging their own once-staid protocols). Moreover, mega exhibitions have also been platforms for challenging and heterogeneous artistic forms from around the world, often addressing some of the most politically charged issues of the period. Just as importantly, they have been known to elicit some of the most intense questioning of artistic practices through the expanded idea of where such an event’s borders lie. Interdisciplinary discussions, conferences, and lectures that take place on or near the premises of exhibitions or, and was the case with Documenta 11, in several locations around the world are increasingly integral to these events. This striking expansion goes in tandem with curatorial discourses that increasingly distinguish the biennial or mega exhibition as larger than the mere presentation of artworks; they are understood as vehicles for the production of knowledge and intellectual debate.

As Carlos Basualdo suggests, “the configuration of interests at the core of institutions like biennials clearly differs from that which gave rise to the institutional circuit traditionally linked to modernity (museums, art criticism, and galleries).”10 In many ways, he is correct. If, however, “museums are, first and foremost, Western institutions,” then biennials, as Basualdo reasons, avoid being so almost by definition because “the global expansion of large-scale exhibitions performs an insistent de-centering of both the canon and artistic modernity,” rendering the two qualitatively different.11 While such an optimistic position champions the positive effects of the increasing number of biennials worldwide, it tends to overlook some of the ways they perpetuate the museum’s most questionable paradigms.12 Despite the numerous reasons to exist mega exhibitions, it is necessary to examine the curious discrepancy between their accompanying discourses as well as the extraordinary promises they seem to offer and the conventions through which they frame the artworks on view.

**Globally Replicated**

Is it conceivable that the exercise of hegemony might leave space untouched?

— Henri Leclercq, The Production of Space

No one seems to want to speak about it, but no matter how fervently biennials and other large-scale exhibitions insist on their radical distinction from the idea of the museum, they overwhelmingly show artworks in specially constructed settings that replicate the rigid geometries, white partitions, and windowless spaces of classical museum exhibitions. Otherwise, these mega exhibitions simply bring artworks into existing museum spaces without altering their white cubes. Timeless, hermetic, and always the same despite its location or context, this globally replicated white cube has become almost categorically fixed, a private “non-place” for the world of contemporary art biennials, one of those uncannily familiar sites, like the department stores, airports, and freeways of our period of supermodernity described by anthropologist Marc Augé.13 One of the crucial particularities of biennials and large-scale exhibitions, however, is that they are meant to represent some place. Their specificity is precisely their potential to be specific—site-specific, if you will, and time-specific as well. The fact that the main exhibition format used in a recent biennial in Dakar looked like that used in Tokyo a short time ago or like that used in Venice twenty years ago seems to contradict such an idea. Forays beyond the box and into the city or its environs are part of what visitors expect from biennials, but such “special projects” held outside museal spaces often make up a relatively small percentage of the whole event and, in some cases, don’t figure at all. Instead, the requisite mixing of “local” and “global” artists, recurrent themes generalizing the contemporary condition (their titles say it all: Everyday, Looking for a Place, Art Together with Life), and a singular, age-old display strategy diminish the distinctions between geographically distant events. The paradox, of course, is that the neoliberal model of globalization...
against which many of these biennials position themselves throws up and itself produces just such homogenization.

There are exceptions to this rule. Biennials such as those in Havana, Istanbul, Johannesburg (while it lasted), and Tirana, all of which happen to represent the so-called margins of the art world, historically have often reflected the particular economic, political, and geographic conditions of their localities through their inventive and often hesitant exhibition forms. Rare editions of other biennials, like Paulo Herkenhoff’s edition of São Paulo in 1998 or Francesco Bonami’s edition of Venice in 2003, stand out for the ways in which they revised typical biennial norms and forms. Still, the list of cities that have hosted large-scale exhibitions is a growing one, and the practices of large-scale using and reusing white cubes to display large portions of the artworks selected for inclusion is seemingly endless: Berlin, Dakar, Pittsburgh, Luxembourg City, New Delhi, Taipei, São Paulo, Sharjah, Frankfurt, New York City, Kassel, Sydney, Prague, etc. Their reliance on traditional museum exhibition formats is questionable for numerous reasons, including, as Catherine David suggests, the fact that many contemporary aesthetic practices no longer correspond to the conditions for which the white cube was built. Just as troubling is the presumption that the profound diversity of histories and cultures that these biennials aim to represent should be equally legible in such a space. Determined to present themselves as an alternative to the museum, the large-scale installations attempt to give voice to cultures, histories, and politics underrepresented within that institution. The fact that the most seemingly progressive biennials, vanguarding the most heterogeneous forms of art, so often adopt a unique and now ossified exhibition format suggests that some of the most pressing problems affecting both the museum and the history of modernism it embodies remain fundamental to their functioning.

As Brian O’Doherty, one of the white cube’s most perceptive theoreticians, notes, “the history of modernism is intimately linked to this space, or rather the history of modern art can be correlated with changes in that space and how we see it.” More than “any single picture,” he further states, “that white ideal space…may be the archetypal image of twentieth century art; it clarifies itself through a process of historical inevitability usually attached to the art it contains.” The white cube, therefore, often supports the modern museum’s other highly conceptual devices, including a linear, evolutionary history of art (think Alfréd Baris’s famous “tornado” of modern art) with its distinctly Western perspective, limited temporal schemas, and unidirectional notions of influence. Given this, one wonders why this most dutiful spatial accomplish has continued to proliferate almost without question when we have become more conscious in recent decades that “modernity” is a construct that has suppressed, obscured, or transformed whole cultural histories and their pro-

It is about time someone persuasively showed that the strategies and tactics of exhibiting art in large-scale international exhibitions (whether it be Manifesta, Documenta, the Gwangju Biennal, or other similar events) are no less neutral or innocent than the traditional museum or gallery. In short, the biennial’s white cube is not a transcendental, transcultural, or spatial construct. Its aesthetic ideal is a specific macro-and-micro-political construction that operates in relation to an art that is involved in the social mechanisms of identification, exchange, consumption, pleasure, political expression, and undeniably the construction of social subjectivities and subjectivities. Strategies and tactics of exhibiting are not neutral in large-scale using and reusing white cubes to display large portions of the artworks selected for inclusion is seemingly endless: Berlin, Dakar, Pittsburgh, Luxembourg City, New Delhi, Taipei, São Paulo, Sharjah, Frankfurt, New York City, Kassel, Sydney, Prague, etc. Their reliance on traditional museum exhibition formats is questionable for numerous reasons, including, as Catherine David suggests, the fact that many contemporary aesthetic practices no longer correspond to the conditions for which the white cube was built. Just as troubling is the presumption that the profound diversity of histories and cultures that these biennials aim to represent should be equally legible in such a space. Determined to present themselves as an alternative to the museum, the large-scale installations attempt to give voice to cultures, histories, and politics underrepresented within that institution. The fact that the most seemingly progressive biennials, vanguarding the most heterogeneous forms of art, so often adopt a unique and now ossified exhibition format suggests that some of the most pressing problems affecting both the museum and the history of modernism it embodies remain fundamental to their functioning.

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Docers. If globalization, as is so often maintained, problematizes the binary opposition of the national and the international, defying national borders and unhinging dominant cultural paradigms to allow the entry of histories, temporalities, and conditions of production from beyond the West, then why do so many conventional structures remain at exactly those sites that seek to undermine the epistemological and institutional bases of these structures? The white cube is, to cite O’Doherty again, “one of modernism’s triumphs,” a Western construct conceived to uphold some of its most cherished values, including what Igor Zabel called the common presumption that “Western modern art is…modern art, that modernization (in the visual arts as well as in other areas of cultural and social life) is Westernization.”12 While it may not be surprising that the museum has been slow to dismantle these paradigms, why have biennials not done so? To question Baudrillard’s notion of decentering: Can a true decentering of traditional notions of modernity be fully accomplished so long as the Western museum’s frame is exported as the unquestioned context for which to legitimize an apparently expanding Enlightenment? To Lefebvre’s queries whether space can be innocent and whether hegemonies might leave space untouched, the answer—as he knew well—is “no.” And so it is for the space of the exhibition. There are diverse ways an exhibition can resist, accept the social and political relevance in our contemporary. To focus on select aspects, therefore, is admittedly held in suspense: a reading of the others. Still, the “ideology of an exhibition,” as theorist Mišu Štrukelj has so trenchantly contends, is not “an aggregate of oriented and entirely rationalized intentions of its organizers,” nor is it the “messages that the authors of an exhibition are projecting and proclaiming in their introductory or accompanying texts.”13 Instead, he concludes, it lies “between the intended and the unintended.” Or, to put it slightly differently, the ideology of an exhibition lies between the discursive statements of purpose and the aesthetic-spatial result that manage more or less effectively to translate the intentions of it makers. An examination of several editions of Manifesta, Documenta, and the Oriełen, Bineloyman, or others, suggests that in the discursive and structural armatures supporting these exemplary recent projects and, inevitably, in the ways in which the white cube still continues to haunt them.

Manifesta
Manifesta, European Biennial of Contemporary Art was inaugurated in 1996 as a platform for cultural exchange between newly unified, post-Wall Europe. The paucity of dialogue between artists, institutions, and curators across Europe (despite the dramatic historic changes), the phenomenal multiplication of biennials, and their increasing commercialization and inflexibility are all factors that profoundly influenced the project. As a result, the new biennial was imagined not only as an alternative to the museum, but as an alternative
to the typical biennial as well. Thus Manifesta's most unique feature was conceived—each edition was to be held in a different peripheral European city. Rejecting some of the inherent nationalism of geographically fixed events and eschewing art-world capitals in favor of locations with less established or visible infrastructures for art, Manifesta seemed to want to use its shifting locations and explicit focus on emerging European artists to rethink the form and specificity of large-scale international exhibitions.

For each edition, the selected curatorial team mounted its exhibition across a number of local institutional sites. The main venue was typically a contemporary art museum or Kunsthalle—the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen for Manifesta 1, the Casino Luxembourg for Manifesta 2, the Moderna galerija Ljubljana for Manifesta 3, and the Frankfurtische Kunsthalle for Manifesta 4. (Manifesta 5 was an exception to this rule, with only a small portion of the show displayed in a local contemporary art space, the Koldo Mientelana.) Exhibiting in such established venues was no doubt a pragmatic gesture: Given Manifesta's itinerant existence, it would be difficult to start from scratch each time. Moreover, the designation of local museums, contemporary art centers, and other cultural sites as exhibition spaces was a vital element, it was reasoned, in the collaboration between Manifesta and its host cities. However, in this process, the white cube seemingly had been accepted as a kind of "international-style" exhibition frame, an internationally recognized container that was deemed appropriate almost no matter where the project moved or the nature of the artwork being displayed.3 Whereas the incredible promise of such a project lay in the possibility of producing fundamental shifts in successive editions as they traversed Europe, Manifesta's exhibitions have remained relatively true to known biennial formats and standard museal display aesthetics.

Although no edition of Manifesta to date has abandoned the white cube, a remarkable fragility, informality, and tentativeness did characterize several editions, distinguishing them in the face of the otherwise visual sophistication and high-gloss spectacle of most perennial events. However, the modesty and ad hoc character of the display in Manifesta's first edition in 1996 had already begun to fade somewhat with the second edition two years later and seemed to have been lost altogether by the fourth edition of 2002. The reasons for this are hardly simple and the attachment to traditional museum spaces and their formats is perhaps the symptom of the resistance that biennials like Manifesta encounter when they consider departing from established expectations for such events. An anecdote about the city of Stockholm's decision not to host the second edition of Manifesta after having seen the first in Rotterdam is telling: The dozen venues across which were dispersed predominantly subtle and small-scale or otherwise unspectacular artworks and performances hardly seemed to cater to the ambitions of a city looking to place itself on the cultural (tourist) map. For city officials shopping for a biennial, there was little that seemed likely to draw the same crowds or press as more established mega exhibitions. This story suggests that there was pressure on Manifesta to conform to the idea of what a biennial should look like—which meant not only grand artworks displayed in visible concentration, but the appropriately conventional "museum hang" and white partitioned spaces to properly enframe them.

Another theoretical problem with abandoning the white cube remained, one perhaps even more fundamentally troubling to such exhibitions: how to display works of art by as yet unknown artists, often with an aesthetic sensibility that is as yet unrecognized by most viewers, or artworks that are not easily recognizable as art in spaces that do not announce themselves as bastions for art? Might not the artwork be mistaken for mere "stuff"? And wasn't it desirable that artists new to the international art world avoid this confusion at the moment of their entry into that world? (Not to mention that the emerging curators relatively new to the international art world might have felt they were expected to demonstrate that they too could organize a biennial that looked the part.) To imagine that the art that Manifesta showed or that the survival of such a new institution indeed depended on the white cube, however, would be to accept the dominance of Western modernity's structures as the ground against which everything else must be read in order to be considered legitimate at all, a highly problematic assumption and one contingent on precisely the kind of normalization that Manifesta claimed to want to question.

Efforts to highlight the specificity of a Manifesta exhibition in a particular place as well as its specificity as a biennial could instead be seen in the themes that both the displaced exhibitions and the artworks on view addressed, including homelessness, hospitality, diaspora, borders, and immigration. Perhaps more than any other biennial, Manifesta's various editions can be said to have consistently probed topics crucial to intellectual, cultural, and political debates of the 1990s. The third edition in Ljubljana in 2000 underlined those debates in a programmatic way. Its large number of politically engaged works, rejection of slick display strategies, active discussion program initiated by local thinkers, and collaboration with the RTV Slovenia to use local television broadcasts as a fifth venue were uniquely appropriate given the region's war-torn history. Relatively little was done, however, to engage in more than a thematic way the show's concerns with what it called Europe's "borderline syndrome." Thus, in the end, the significant distinctions between the exhibition formats of the editions themselves arguably were hard to discern.

Manifesta 5, held in Donostia-San Sebastián in the politically troubled Basque region of northern Spain, might be seen as an exception since it took urbanism as a theme at the same time it incorporated actual urban rehabilitation into the exhibition as a constitutive element. In collaboration with the Rotterdam-based Berlage Institute, the curators instigated theoretical reflec-
tion on the revitalization of one of the region's poorest districts, the Pasaia Bay area, and had two of the area's disaffected factories, Casa Griza and Ondarbeo, restored with the intention that they would serve the community after the run of the show. The largest portion of the exhibition, shown in the Casa Griza and thus framed by the defunct fish warehouse's post-industrial ruin and larger impoverished context, avoided the physical accoutrements of the white cube, as did the portion held in the sixteenth-century former monastery Museo San Telmo; yet, what was staged in these venues and those others that did resort to white cubes amounted to a rather conventional show. While the urban renewal project was an important step towards asserting that biennials could be the motors for lasting local change, in the eyes of a number of critics, the exhibition missed an opportunity to render the historic, political, and cultural specificity of the location more integral to its form or to the artworks selected. As one reviewer concluded, it "could have been mounted almost anywhere." 28

Ultimately, Manifesta's past exhibitions as well as its symposia, discussion forums, and parallel events have attempted to encourage curators and institutions to think about the limits, transformations, and particularities of Europe as an idea as much as a physical place but never productively incited the connection between this thinking and the reinvention of the project's structural form. After all, given Manifesta's concerns, why demand that it take the form or occupy the space of a conventional museum exhibition? Why not imagine truly experimental exhibition forms that emerge from both the specific sites in which Manifesta finds itself and the issues that make holding a biennial there and then relevant or even urgent? And why not imagine that even those cities less able to replicate Western European museum standards and lacking the same level of financial commitment might actually host a Manifesta edition, inventing new idiosyncratic forms for the event. As experimental platforms that define new models for exhibiting, the peripatetic editions could thus better reflect Manifesta's stated ambitions.

If questions such as these have beset the project from the start, the sixth edition seems to have used them as a point of departure. The curators of Manifesta 6, still in the planning stages, have announced that this upcoming edition in Nicosia, a geographically isolated, culturally and politically divided site with only minimal resources for the production and presentation of art, not to mention a historically fraught relationship to Europe, will exchange Manifesta's punctual, traditional exhibition in favor of the extended duration and pedagogical process of an art school. It appears that the biennial's newly envisaged form and temporality emanate from an attempt to respond to Cyprus' multiple historic overdeterminations, including its locus between Europe and the Middle East (a first foray outside of Europe for Manifesta) and its role as paradigm of the conditions and consequences of globalization today. For what sense could another mega-exhibition have in such a location today? If goods can traverse its international borders with relative ease, people still can—

not, caught as they are in the political instrumentalization of ethnic and national identities. In place of a biennial as showcase for contemporary cultural goods, the sixth edition purports to use the increased facility of movement across borders made possible by student visas to construct a bi-communal, international forum for process, experimentation, and exchange built from the artists' extended presence at the site in order to respond to the realities of its ethnically divided host city. What the visiting spectator will be able to experience, how such things as process and cultural translation can be rendered visible in an exhibition-at-school, and whether some of the complexity of what has for so long been the "Cypriot problem" will be adequately addressed in the result remain to be seen, but this shift for Manifesta suggests that the specificities of its site have come to serve as the foundation for imagining a new formal model for this biennial.

Documenta

Documenta began in 1955 in the hope of rehabilitating the image of postwar Germany, transforming the bombed-out town of Kassel and its most iconic extant structure, the neoclassical Museum Fridericianum, into the center of the art world every five years. The one-hundred-year quincentennial quickly came to be considered the most serious and among the most prestigious mega-exhibition of its kind.

One can hardly say that for the tenth edition of Documenta in 1997 artistic director Catherine David devised radical, new display strategies to recast the physical appearance of the white cube. While the artworks on display were largely political in content, their presentation in the Museum Fridericianum bore little evidence that the traditional museum format or the Western avant-garde canon were under attack. The highly problematic role of the white cube was, however, an essential tension underlying Documenta 10. A reflection on what David called its "spatial and temporal but also ideological limits" was central to the conception of the curators. 30 The seeming absurdity of the museum's "universalist model" to accommodate some of the most experimen
tal and exemplary contemporary cultural production determined her objective to conceive an exhibition that included the program: 100 Days--100 Guests, a mammoth series of daily public lectures, theater performances, film screenings, poetry readings, discussions, and other events in Kassel.

Conceptually, 100 Days--100 Guests began with the premise that present-
ing a panorama of recent visual art was not a priori the best means of represent-
further explained:

For reasons which have partially to do with interrupted or violently destroyed traditions, as well as the diversity of the cultural formations that have sprung from colonialization and decolonization and the indirect and unequal access these formations have been given to the forms of Western modernity, it seems that in many cases the persistence, excellence, and radically of contemporary non-Western expressions finds its privileged avenues in music, oral and written language (literature, theatre), and cinema forms which have traditionally contributed to strategies of emancipation.72

All cultures, she thus contended, are not equally served by the white cube. David's resulting project, with predominantly Western figures featured in the show's historical "retro-perspectives," more recent but still largely American and European artwork on view in the exhibition spaces, and the work of non-Westerners overwhelmingly relegated to a lecture and events program, admittedly offered a Eurocentric perspective of visual art. But, instead of imagining yet another "Museum of 100 Days," as Documenta had been nicknamed at its founding, she aimed to present more heterogeneous works—and through more heterogeneous means—during 100 Days-100 Gambits. Both conceptually and physically central to the exhibition (its stage stood in the middle of the Documenta-Halle), the events program could also be experienced live on the radio and via the internet, or consulted as recordings in the exhibition, constituting a growing archive both in and, potentially, beyond Kassel.25 David thus effectively transformed Documenta from a spectacular visual arts exhibition to a hybrid site for the representation of diverse cultural production. The result opened Documenta to the kind of political engagement and diversity of mediums and cultures that no other such exhibition in the West had seen—what many critics in turn lamented as an overly political, theory-driven, and aesthetically impoverished show. In fact, David's move to counter the mega exhibition's usual spectacle was consistent with the audacious assertion that it is impossible to continue to innocently perpetuate the museal exhibition format as the legitimate frame for all works of art from all places. The exhibition and events program thus staged the very limitations of the white cube. And it critically reflecting on the way hegemonic forms operate, Documenta 10 used the conceptual and discursive structure of the last edition of the millennium to encourage others to do so as well, a role that was, as David suggested, no less political than aesthetic.

For the eleventh edition of Documenta in 2002, artistic director Okwui Enwezor and his curators aimed to transform the geographic, conceptual, and temporal constitution of the event, conceiving a series of five "platforms," the first four of which were themed conferences (in one case including a workshop and film screenings) held in Lagos, Saint Lucia, New Delhi, Vienna, and Berlin over the course of eighteen months.24 The discussions deliberated such issues as the recent impact of globalizaton on the world or the violent legacy of colonialism. Although far from a literal rehearsal of the exhibition, they also mapped out the concerns at the heart of the fifth exhibition platform. Reiterating the terms of the larger project's postcolonial critique, the stridently political artworks and accompanying curatorial statements rendered explicit the need to question Western imperi- ament, including its perpetuation through such notions as modernity, the avant-garde, universality, and democracy.26

The first four platforms were, by most accounts, thought provoking if aca- demic affairs, at once dislocating the singular site of Documenta and situating critical research and theoretical reflection at its heart. Despite the fact that, relatively few visitors and participants actually attended the conferences, these proceedings were integral to the form of Documenta 11, which expanded the boundaries of this art event traditionally held in a provincial European town and transformed it into a transnational, interdisciplinary, multi-layered manifestation. While these events overturned the structures of Documenta's hallmark one-hundred-day exhibition in Kassel, the fifth platform appeared to be a decided return to order. Impeccable arrangements of white cubes and black boxes回顾ed throughout most of the show's multiple sites. Even though the exhibition largely occupied the steadily Museum Friedericianum, keeping with Documenta's typical practice, here as well as in the massive, newly inaugurated Binding Braueri and the Kulturbahnhof one encountered a display even more museal, conservative, and rarefied than in previous editions.24 Exceptionally, a few of the exhibition projects extended outside the museum, seeming the more to confine that platform to neatly delineated display spaces.27 It was as if, in creating four other platforms out there in the world, the curators decided that the fifth in Kassel would replicate even more closely a museum space cut off from that world. The exhibition brought, as one critic noted, "issues of genocide, poverty, political incarceration, industrial pollution, earthquake wreckage, strip-mino devastation, and news of general dis- asters into the invisible white cube."28

This is not to suggest that the means through which display strategies structure perception and art history were simply overlooked. As one of the curators attests in his catalgogue essay:

Art exhibitions also frequently adopt linear models to represent historical flux and the relationship between past art and recent production. To be sure, there is a cor- respondence between the linearities of these narratives and their tact—or implicit—totalizing will. . . . The ideological effects of these types of exhibition strategies are well known; the consolidation of an artistic canon, and therefore the staging of a series of mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that assures its permanency.29

If the proliferation of biennials can be said to mark a break in the global cultural politics of modernity and modern art, it is because they affect art history writing and contemporary art's relationships to the specificity of location, which ultimately henge as the revision of the aesthetics as dominant in the art of the 21st century. However, a biennials's role in fashioning alternative art histories and aesthetics needs to be taken in account of their other concerns as well. Periodic events, they also aspire to showcase the new art and the more contempor- aye to a response to and echo of local and global transformations in economy, politics, and culture. This lends their ability to incorporate historical depth but it continues it with the museum, which tends to be less sensitive to what is most contemporary. This context in the functioning of biennials has to be examined carefully, particu- larly given in the circumstances where "contemporary art" only arrived in the 1980s (at the same moment that biennials began to proliferate) and still needs to take significant histories. Thus, instead of taking art at face value is the attempt to muse hin- dus, we should talk about the "effects" of biennials on art history writing. On the aesthetic side, it is hard to measure how far biennials can depart from the traditional white cube. Every biennial tackles this issue differently, and each edition also provides different approaches, articulated in more or less conscious ways. But, in general, it would not be fair to say that as long as biennials present themselves in museums, they will not be able to depart from the white cube or a linear art history based on Western modern art. On the one hand, museums all over the world are reacting their relationship to the traditional white cube. On the other, the museum, with the protective and fluid- ity of framing it can offer for art works, will still be an important venue for biennials, at times for reasons that are context-sensitive. A biennial can be created because of the lack of a museum, or because existing museums do not feature contem- porary art, or because the contemporary art fea- led by the museum is outdated.

Museum House, independent curator and critic based in Taipei and Berlin.
He and the other curators of Documenta 11, therefore, tried to imagine a "structure that would allow the works to co-exist in a heterogeneous and non-linear temporality." Indeed, as such an effort suggests, an exhibition's politics are inevitably a politics of (identity) representation, articulated in the selection of works and in the ways their strategic display rethink certain established ideals. Once the works were selected, however, Documenta 11, being largely composed of recent art, did not seem to fully question the ideological legerdemain of traditional museum shows, except insofar as it dispersed historical works from the 1970s throughout the exhibition. If Documenta 11's notable breadth of representation (with significantly more visual artists from non-Western nations than any previous edition) and the displacement of the four platforms sought to challenge occidental paradigms and champion instead "those circuits of knowledge produced outside the predetermined institutional domain of Westernism," then corseting the exhibition portion in exactly that predetermined institutional paradigm most intimately connected with the development and historicization of occidental modernism effectively undermined many of the very objectives of the project.

Examining the fifth platform in this way inevitably simplifies the breadth and theoretical complexity of a much larger project, but it also underlines the silence which allows the white cube to function, even in those projects most consciously and explicitly positioned against the hegemony of modern Western forms. Why, one might ask, expand Documenta into different parts of the world through the four discussion platforms only to encase most of the over four hundred works from five continents in Kassel within the West's lead gallerized framing devices? A hasty response might be that bringing works of art from vastly different cultures requires using a uniformly prestigious or valid frame through which they can be experienced—the necessary fiction sustaining this being that the white cube is that neutral, legitimate frame. The issue is undeniably complex, but it was rehearsed, one might say, in one of the essential queries of Democracy Unrealized, the first platform of Documenta 11: Can democracy, a fundamentally Western concept and hegemonic political form, serve as a legitimate benchmark for the constitution of society in the postwar period, even in nations with vastly distinct histories and cultures? One could also ask the same of the white cube in relation to large-scale exhibitions. Of course, the underlying stakes of these two questions might seem, on the surface, wildly different, but both suggest that there is an imperative need to problematize (Western) models that quietly perpetuate themselves as unquestioned universals.

The Gwangju Biennial

The Gwangju Biennial, East Asia's first large-scale contemporary art event, was founded in 1995 at a high point in the biennial boom. With memories of nearly two decades of political oppression still present, including the 1980 massacres that accompanied a citizen uprising for democracy, the new biennial was imagined as a bandage for old wounds and a means by which to provide the city a positive, forward-looking profile. Critics derided the overly Western focus of the first two editions as well as their seeming inability to draw attention to the specificity of the emerging Asian art scene or, for that matter, those of other cultures less well-represented in Asia. As a result, the biennial's third edition in 2000 was revamped, initiating a strong Asian focus accompanied by a declaration of commitment to becoming a forum for artistic practices outside the West. Broadcasting that the biennial would "pursue globalization rather than westernization, diversity instead of uniformity," officials marked their seriousness and new focus by building a multiistory, convention center-like exhibition complex, which was inaugurated with the 2000 edition. Ironically, at precisely the moment that Gwangju and its biennial hoped to demonstrate their entry into a globalized art world, this new permanent exhibition structure incorporated generic Western display tropes in the form of a series of flexible but neatly arranged white cubes. For biennial officials, to be globally relevant meant replicating the "universal" exhibition backdrop. The fourth edition in 2002 opposed this strategy. Entitled P.A.U.S.E. and directed by Wan-kyung Sung, the biennial was composed of four curated exhibitions or "projects" that in different ways engaged the vestiges of Gwangju's uneasy past and contemporary condition, including a series of site-specific installations in a former military prison, a project to reconstruct the area around the city's abandoned railroad tracks, and an exhibition concentrating on the Korean diaspora. Project 1: Pause, curated by Hou Hanru and Charles Esche and held in the biennial hall, was the largest part of the biennial, and the curators conceived it as a "context specific event" rather than a panorama of recent art. Asia's transformed urban reality provided the context for questioning art's "global-local negotiation" and imagining possible alternatives to the homogenization and acceleration of late capitalism. The conditions of art production in contemporary Asia and beyond the Western world more generally, where structures to support experimental artistic practice are rare or nonexistent, determined the curators' decision to show dynamic recent cultural productions by artists who had self-organized outside the occidental art world's capitals. As a result, they conceived an exhibition that included some twenty-five independent collectives and artist-run organizations from around the globe, mostly from Asia and Europe but also from the Americas and India. These groups were invited essentially to self-curate their participation in the biennial, retaining incredible autonomy and shifting the role of the biennial curator. The result was less a presentation of discrete artworks than a biennial as the workshop for artistic experimentation, since bringing together artist collectives from around the world was meant to empower and mobilize, acting as a first step towards a global network of independent, self-organizational, and
resistant structures for creation.” By highlighting the possibilities of collective self-organization in the face of institutional inertia, the biennial engaged in a real dialogue with its local context, offering artists multiple models of self-sustainable cultural production.

"You and Echou seemed to want to subvert both Eurocentrism – with its fellow traveler, a certain patronizing exoticism – and the museum as an institution," one critic noted, adding that “in much of Asia, these two issues are deeply intertwined.” Project 1: Pause translated its conceptual ambitions into an equally remarkable form: In collaboration with architects, the artist groups were asked to conceive display pavilions or reconstruct the actual spaces in which they typically worked and exhibited. A sprawling frame of steel and plywood delimited these pavilions, the ensemble redefining the biennial hall’s exhibition spaces with evocations of a frenzied global metropolis. The resulting makeshift structures connecting the different parts of the exhibition rendered tangible the physical qualities of various international art spaces and conceptualized them about the practices seen within them. The pavilions and reconstructed independent art spaces varied wildly, from a Bedouin tent printed with images of Western cities overlaid with Muslim iconography (AES Group from Moscow) and a carpet-lined photocopying facility for xeroxing reduced-priced copies of the catalogues during the exhibition (Kurimanazato from Mexico City) to reconstructions of an apartment interior (IT Park from Taipei) or a meeting room (Project 304 from Bangkok). They also implied, as did the urban evocations of the large exhibition frame, that the particularities of artistic practices were connected to and imbricated in the actual structures that allowed for their experimentation. Suggesting that colonialism insinuates itself through the appropriation of the Other’s monuments, demonstrating how capitalism’s means could be used against itself, or illustrating that the most apparently quotidian gathering spot could be the site of intense cultural exchange, these structures within the larger exhibition refused the white-cube form but also demonstrated that the aesthetics of a display space are not separable from the ethics of an art practice.

The End(s) of the White Cube
To have begun to question the use of the white cube in recent large-scale perennial exhibitions by addressing the foundation of the modern museum and the historical and political implications of certain exhibition spaces, extreme as those examples may be, was not merely for rhetorical effect. By doing so, I intended to underscore that the framing of art, no less than the selection of artworks, is fundamental to the ideological dramaturgy that we call an exhibition. A curious silence regarding this phenomenon remains in discussions of biennials and related large-scale exhibitions. Yet, one could say that the “crisis of biennials” that so many critics have decried lies not so much in the prolifer-

How is an exhibition articulated? What new grammar of space should we invest for international shows, which claim to represent a globalizing art productive, in order to transcend the Eurocentric conditions of the white cube? These are relevant questions, but let’s push them one step further. What sort of new spatial language are we looking for? Is it a language that universalizes its meanings through the subsequent inclusions of new forms, contexts, audiences, producers, practices? Or is it a form of more and more different spaces combined together? This erosion of the white cube’s boundaries works both ways. We are faced with an increasingly rapid demand for new raw materials of art production: social contexts, local specificities, cultural differences, even new models of resistance. The white cube is only partly dismantled in the search for new stages and venues for art. This is because its manifestations are also extended into the new areas to which the white cube has been most curiously adapted: new dynamic forms; to instrumental polities of multiculturalism, multicultural groups are dragged into uncharted spaces through which they couldn’t care less. The call for another form of exhibiting remains, nevertheless, urgent. But what if an exhibition is not a means to an end? What if it is not meant to transmit, to communicate, to translate, or even to reflect, but to bastardize, plagiare, dissolve, or suspend the instrumentality of meaning? Isn’t the consequence of the call for a politics of form to liberate form from the instrumentalities of the rationality of means and ends? The ends of the white cube thus could promote a steady getting rid of ends that mistake politics for politics because a politics of form knows no ends, just means, and it knows no and either, just endless combination.

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THE GLOBAL WHITE CUBE
the aesthetic and intellectual premises on which an exhibition is based—the issues its curators and artists wish to defend, the positions they seek to express—need to be more fully articulated in the forms exhibitions take. Of course, it is not evident what forms might be appropriate to the vast cultural and formal heterogeneity of contemporary artistic production—suffice enough to accommodate diverse practices, respectful enough to reveal the inherent, individual logic of artworks, and quiet enough to allow an intimate relationship between artwork and viewer. The answer is surely not singular. The now global white cube certainly should not be supplanted by another model that will become the biennial standard. Merely inserting works in cramping industrial buildings or any number of other "exotic" locales is not the solution either. Instead, the future of biennials is to be found in a sensitivity to how the coincidence of works of art and other conditions (temporal, geographic, historic, discursive, and institutional) locate a project and how that "location" can be used to articulate a project that is respectful of its artworks and speaks to its viewers. This requires the willingness of curators and institutions to think through more complex relationships to sites, artworks, audiences, and the theoretical propositions of an exhibition—a prospect that may require more time for exhibition research and preparation as well as greater collaboration between artists, curators, and institutions, but also the courage to risk a result perhaps more vulnerable and hesitant as it departs from an authoritative format. In the end, none of this will guarantee consistently memorable shows, but thinking through an exhibition's form will facilitate the development of more complex relationships between artworks and their presentation frames as well as projects and viewers more aware of the ideological entanglements of the structures and strategies they experience everyday. Only then will biennials and mega exhibitions emerge that assert themselves fully as the "models of resistance" that they promise to be, which does not necessarily mean the end of the white cube in all cases and for all places so much as a critical relationship to its ends.

NOTES
3. As Grunberg ("The Politics of Presentation," 206) argues of Barr's whitewash of the MoMA: "The white, neutral and ideology-free gallery space constitutes the physical materialization of MoMA's selective amnesia. More than anything else, the 'white cube' epitomized the attempt to escape from the realities of the external world, hiding modernism's original claim for the integration of art and life....the physical confinement and limitations imposed by the institution reveal MoMA's selective appropriation of modernism."
4. And artist and critic Brian O'Doherty, the white cube's earliest commentator, probably first coined the term in the mid-1970s. His series of three articles entitled "Inside the White Cube," originally published in Arthurr in 1976, remain the most thorough and engaging study of the phenomenon. They have been collected and reprinted with later articles on the subject in his Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space (Berkley: University of California Press, 1999).
5. Over the last decade, various studies have begun to make evident the manner by which the museum, from its origins, has been both as ideologically laden and disciplining site crucial to the formation of subjectivity. The white cube is in many ways the culmination of its Enlightenment project. See, in particular, Douglas Crimp, On the Museum's Ruins (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993); Tony Bennett, The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics (London: Routledge, 1995); and Donald Precioci, The Brain of the Earth's Body: Art, Museums, and the Phantasm of Modernity (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).
6. Indeed, the white cube is no more a tabula rasa than the white surface in architecture more generally. The seminal work on this subject is Mark Wigley's White Walls, Designer Dreams: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996). Whitewashed spaces, Wigley argues, were far from accidental, blank, or silent, and although his study concentrates on the beginnings of the use of white in modernist architecture of the 1920s and 1930s, the whiteness of museums, galleries, and biennial exhibitions in the decades since similarly speak volumes.
8. A discussion of the Third Reich's paradoxical conceptions of modernity and diverse exhibition strategies is not possible here. While the above cited studies have brilliantly treated many of these issues, what interests me is the ways in which the white cube was instituted early in the twentieth century as a vehicle for the projection of diverse, even contradictory, ideals. There is, as I have pointed out, some shared significations of the display concept, including legitimacy, neutrality, and—albeit differently for Barr and Hitler—a modernity that is resolutely Western. This last point may sound contradictory, since what counted as "Western" was also very different for both men and their respective institutions. Moreover, one could argue that the art shown in the Große deutsche Kunstausstellung was like Albert Speer's monumental neoclassical structure, hopelessly caught between past and present, more backward looking than "modern," in the way we have come to think of the term. However, for Hitler, the presentation of newly made works of art at the Haus der Kunst (the only ones that could legitimately represent their time) contrasted with those of the avant-garde and everything else gathered in the Große deutsche Kunstausstellung, which were "modern" in any semblance and essentially non-Western or at times degenerate because non-Western (the discourse that...
accompanied the show was explicit, while the primitive "African" lettering of the posters for theたりのArt show attempted to underscore the point.


10. Ibid., 60. For a discussion of the degree to which museums have historically been Western institutions founded on colonial imperialist principals, see Prezioso, The Brain of the Earth's Body, 116–36.

11. Across various texts, from his curatorial statement for his exhibition The Structure of Survival at the Fifth Venice Bienial in 2003 to his essay for the Documenta 11 catalogue, Basualdo has interestingly engaged the discursive and display strategies in large-scale international exhibitions. If I point here to what has been overlooked in his most explicit treatment of the question in "The Unstable Institution," I do so in part because that essay is a rare example of serious consideration of the biennial phenomenon, and it is remarkable that it does not acknowledge how the endless replication of the white cube in biennials relates to the Western museum model he discusses.


14. O'Doherty, Inside the White Cube, 14. Igor Zabel astutely discusses the ambivalent possible readings of the use of the white cube in recent exhibitions ("The Return of the White Cube," MJ – Manifesta Journal 1 (spring-summer 2003): 12-21) and I agree that means of the display scaffold are hardly univocal over time. However, I would argue that this format that "returns" may be more historically overdetermined than most admit and its proliferation as an ideal standard in biennials and other mega exhibitions merits questioning.


18. Robert Fleck ("Art after Communism?" Manifesta 2, European Biennial of Contemporary Art, (Luxembourg City: Casar Luxembourg-Forum d'art contemporain, 1998); 195, reprinted in this volume), one of the show's curators, employed this term in the catalogue for Manifesta 2. He provocatively argued that after the Wall fell and equal access to such things as video games and Coca-Cola was established, essential differences between artistic production in the former East and West disappeared to be replaced by what he called an "international style."

19. Jordan Casteel, "Manifesta 5: Turin Outward," Art in America 92, no. 12 (December 2004): 68-73. The show almost completely, and perhaps understandably, avoided directly addressing the deep political tensions in the region, the site's past, striking particularly. Instead, the curators opted to construct unspoken analogies to the local situation by displaying a number of artworks that pointed to such things as identity construction, geopolitical shifts, and territorial borders elsewhere in the world. However, the inability of the exhibition to more actively or inventively engage with the complex specificity of its location, especially given that this "romantic" biennial had chosen a Tuscan city for ostensibly those reasons, left many viewers feeling that the analogies were too few, too distant, or too abstract to resonate with the local reality.


21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., 11-12.

23. The massive publication that accompanied Documenta 10, Documenta X: The Rose (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 1997), a collaborative project between David and Jean-François Chevrier, conceptually carried through this premise, but it is no way attempted to reproduce on the page the exhibition or events or otherwise represent the diverse artworks. Instead, it served as a parallel intellectual, political, historical, and cultural anthology of Europe across several key historical moments.

24. For the conference platforms – Democracy Universalized (held in Vienna and Berlin), Experiments with Truth: Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation (held in New Delhi), and Creolization and Categorization (organized as a workshop that was closed to the public), see Stewart Lee DAC, 1999, and Under Siege: Four African Cities: Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos (held in Lagos) – are more widely known through the publication of the proceedings in four exemplary volumes by Hatje Cantz in 2002 and 2003.


26. Critics repeatedly noted that the spaces were exceptionally "elegantly proportioned" and "restrained," what Peter Schjeldahl calls "The Global Salon: European Extravaganzas," The New Yorker 78, no. 17 (July 2002): 94 described as a "global salon." Another critic, Jens Hoffmann, "Reentering the Event: Reentering Politics," Flash Art 34, no. 231 (July-September 2002): 105 praised it as "almost perfect, at least in terms of what a traditional art exhibition can be." In one of the few reviews that addressed the contradictions inherent in the aesthetic of the display strategies of Documenta 11 in relation to the content of the artworks, Massimiliano Gioni ("Finding the Center," Flash Art 34, no. 231 (July-September 2002): 106-07) proclaimed: "Everything is presented in an almost clinical manner, waging on seamless slickness. Disorder is at the core of the exhibition, but the show itself speaks in a very clear, at times didactic tone. The trouble with this edition of Documenta also lies in this attitude, for it renounces themes, artists, and languages, but it does not match the format of the exhibition or truly question our role as spectators." It perhaps bears underscoring that my critical position in relation to the near-uniform format of many mega exhibitions, exemplified in Documenta 11's ultraflatlined version, does not suggest that the alternative is necessarily a chaotic, disorderly, overwhelming, or fetishized version, but instead, one that is uniquely appropriate to and in dialogue with the works, themes, location, moment in the region, the site's most...
such project and a perfect example of the way in which subversive content and architectural play form meet. Its insistent engagement with its displaced location on the outskirts of Kassel (through its use of vernacular materials, a local Turkish workforce to install and maintain the monument,) and explicit dedication to the local immigrant community enacts its own commentary on the relationship of memory to center and political injustice advanced by the exhibition.


30. Ibid.


34. See Hou Hanru, "Initiatives, Alternatives: Notes in a Temporary and Raw State," in How Latitudes Become Forms: Art in a Global Age, ed. Philippe Vergne, Vasif Kortun, and Hou Hanru (Mnemosyne: Walker Art Center, 2003), 38-39. The Gwangju Biennial demonstrated what Charles Esche (“Debate: Benaissa, Frieze, no. 92 [June-July-August 2005]) 105 has argued is the most pressing issue for such events: “the biennial needs above all to ask what kind of global culture it undertakes and how that support is made manifest.”

35. Hanru, "Evert City and Pandora’s Box," 91-93.


37. I actually believe in the agency of the artist as author, a singular one at that. This does not preclude the exhibition from providing a context for reading the work (otherwise, I have written in vain) but it does not, to my mind, fundamentally change the artwork nor does it ameliorate the dialectic relationship between artwork and exhibition and the potential sense constructed by their encounter.

38. Such a turn would be a positive shift for the museum as well, which has arguably also been rethinking its own exhibition forms, in many cases in response to and under pressure from its biennial counterpart. The museum haunts this essay even as its particularities—but also its important social contributions—remain insufficiently discussed. (This section’s little nods to the 1996 exhibition and conference series, The End(s) of the Museum) Musicians unquestionably serve a vital role and one that would always be distinct from that of mega exhibitions. Still, neither institution is monolithic: despite the need to refer here to the values of each in schematic terms; space limitations have kept me from being able to treat the issue in a more nuanced way, but one should not go away with the impression that museums/Kunsthallen (and their directors and curators) have not historically grappled with the ideological signification of the white cube, nor that these institutions have not at times been the sites for body-engaged and innovative projects. The relationship between the large-scale international exhibition and the museum—one of exchange and articulation of difference that has been important for both sides—is a subject waiting thorough study.


Once, not so long ago, on a damp, rainy afternoon in Paris, a stroll took us across the Avenue d’Iéna, from contemporary art to ancient and medieval Asian art, from the Palais de Tokyo to the Musée Guimet. There, standing at the far end of the ground-floor section of the permanent collection in front of a frieze from the Banteay Srei temple in Cambodia’s Siem Reap province, we felt the sharp edge of strangeness in something that also felt downright familiar.

The Banteay Srei frieze narrates a story from the Mahabharata, a Sanskrit epic. The story is of two brothers, the demons Sunda and Upasunda, whose tussle over the attentions of Tittivatana, an Aspara—a heavenly courtesan sent by the gods to destroy them with jealousy—was the cause of their downfall. Like most others who grew up listening to stories in India, we knew it well, even if only as an annotation to the main body of the epic. But it wasn’t the details of the story that intrigued us that afternoon, nor the carved contours of Sunda and Upasunda’s rage, not even the delicacy of the depiction of Titivatana’s divine seduction. Instead, standing before these stone images, made in a region roughly 3,500 miles to the east of where we live, in Delhi, and exhibited in a museum roughly 6,500 miles to the west, we felt compelled to think again about distance and proximity, and about how stories, images, and ideas travel.

The story of Sunda, Upasunda, and Titivatana was probably first told around 200 B.C. in the northwestern part of the South Asian subcontinent. Between the first telling of the story and the carving of the frieze in a clearing in the forests of Sean Riep in circa 967 lay a little more than a thousand years and an eastward journey of a few thousand miles. Between its carving and our sudden encounter with it in Paris, there lay a little more than another millennium and a westward journey halfway across the world. These intervals in time and space were overlaid by an elaborate circuit that encompassed travel, conquest, migration and settlement, wars and violence, the clearing of forests, the quarrying of stone, slavery and indenture, skilled artisans, the

DIGRESSIONS FROM THE MEMORY OF A MINOR ENCOUNTER

Raqs Media Collective
faces and indiscernibles of the men and women who would become the inspiration for jealous demons and divine courtesans, a few thousand years of history, the crossing of oceans, the rise and fall of several empires across different continents, and the repeated telling and forgetting of a minor story.

Contemporaneously, the sensation of being in a time together, is an ancient, enigma of a feeling. It is the tug we feel when our times pull at us. But sometimes one has the sense of a paradoxically asynchronous contemporaneity — the strange tug of more than one time and place. As if an accumulation or thickening of our attachments to different times and spaces was manifesting itself in the form of some unique geological oddity, a richly striated cross-section of a rock, sometimes sharp, sometimes blurred, marked by the passage of many epochs.

Standing before Sunda, Upasunda, and Tilottama in the Musée Guimet, we were in Siam Reap, in Indraprastha (an ancient name for Delhi, in whose vicinity much of the Mahabharata story is located), in New Delhi, in nineteenth-century Paris, and in the Paris of today. We were in many places and in many times. Sometimes art, the presence of an image, moves you. And you find yourself scattered all over the place, as a consequence. How can we begin to think about being scattered? Collections of objects from different parts of the world are indices of different instances of scattering. The minor encounter that we experienced in the Musée Guimet is one kind of scattering. It taught us that sometimes we encounter familiarity in the guise of strangeness and then suggested that we learn to question the easy binary shorthand of the familiar and the strange, as ways of thinking about ourselves, others, and the world. It suggested the possibility of other less polarized and more layered relationships between cultural processes. But this is not the only possible kind of scattering that the presence of images and stories echoing the familiar in uncanny ways provokes.

An increased intensity of communication creates a new kind of experiential contagion. It leads to all kind of illegitimate liaisons between things meant to be unfamiliar. The first thing that dissolves under the pressure of this promiscuous density of contact across space is the assumption that different degrees of "new" obtain in different places, that Delhi or Dar es Salaam or somewhere is somehow "less" now than Detroit. The "news" of different places leaks into each other with increasing force. The realities of different contemporaneities infect each other. This condition generates active estrangement, a kind of nervous expulsion, a gladiatorial of repulsion scripted either through an orientation of contempt or of homage.

Why contempt and homage? They permit the automatic assumption of a charm between the beholder and the object of contemplation. The tropes of contempt and homage are an optic through which some perennially survey other

Unsettling tropes, the tropes of critical analysis, Raqs Media Collective pulses the emergence of new geographies of making art and existing of unmaking existing systems of power and authorship, and of the practices of making and unmaking in general. These are geographies increasingly thickened by the inhabitations of real and highly diverse instances of time-space figuring. And these geographical remap notions habitually ensconced in specific time-spaces, for instance, the time-space coordinates of mobility, existing movement across some sort of physical boundary. Advanced technologies are seen as raising physical mobility, and globality in that easily used as mere people moving and interacting with different cultures. Raqs writers about curators and artists moving and living in worlds other than their own. This is critical, but too narrow. Today there are narratives not predicated on geographic mobility but in the realm of mobility and globality from this expanse, one that facilitates the dynamics of distribution. There are new mobilities that encompass those unable or unwilling to "travel" but can use seamless experience themselves as part of larger worlds marked by the occurrence of meanings, struggles, and imaginaries in multiple other locations (including many where geographic immobility is the norm). These are mobilities that contribute to "make" horizontal globalities that do not need to go through vertical and centralizing politico-economic constructs. The possibility of emancipatory decentralized access and interaction made possible by public-access electronic networks is critical, then not enough by itself.

The notion of scattering, acutely captured by Raqs, is seen purely through new technologies, so that many different spatial/geographic spaces can be experienced simultaneously but at a kind of remove. The experience around an axis of distancing, notably through homage or contempt. Raqs calls for citations of this distancing, through inhabiting rather than just gazing at different worlds — by artists, by curators, by art critics. The implicated hybridizations of this way of dividing distance is but one way. Another one, one that I think matters, is to akin to indentation. I see this notion to distinguish from true hybridization, to capture the possibility of a citation of distancing and the invisualization it entails without losing the specificity of the worlds, actors, and practices involved. Indecent captures interactions that do not necessarily hybridate the entities involved but do produce mutabilities — mutual need, recognition, and illegibility. This form of dividing distance also is available to those who cannot move geographically.

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ers and then evaluate them along an axis, where the production of estrangement has to be resolved in terms of either positive or negative regard. The "survey" mode of understanding the world presumes a stable cyclopean and panoptic center of surveillance to which the gaze can never adequately be returned, ensuring that a meeting of visions will never take place on equal footing.

Like Sunda and Upasunda fighting over Tilottama, the more that different parts of the world come to be aware of each other’s desires, the more disputes there are over who has the greatest access to the contemporaneity both desire—the part of the world that has more confidence in itself or the one that has more of the élan of the "Other." Key to this conflict of perceptions is a refusal to recognize that, like the sudden appearance of an anonymous story in a newspaper in a Parisian museum to a collective, the relationships between familiarity and estrangement are compromised of many folds and cracks in space and time. Estrangement is only familiarly deferred or held in abeyance.

Rather than recognize the fact that familiarity and estrangement are only two nondistinct and contiguous instances of cognitive and affective transfer, this tendency to resolve the unfamiliar into the binary of the "like" and the "other" seems to be an automatic rehearsal of reinforcement. The duality of contempt and homage is one such mechanism. In the first instance (contempt), the object of the survey is pinned down in taxonomic terms, explained away to require no further engagement, making impossible the blurring of the distinction between the surveyor and the surveyed. In the second (homage), the object is exalted beyond the possibility of an engagement. In either case, a difference, once identified, becomes a factor of cognitive and affective exclusion. This forecloses the possibility of recognizing that what is identified and estranged may in fact be disturbingly similar to what is familiar, even though it may be located in realities that are difficult to translate with coherence or consistency. It is the inability to recognize the face of a stranger when you look at your own reflection.

The amalgam of the sensations of familiarity and estrangement evokes a new register of a tense accommodation, a hospitality to the presence of the "strange" that is not without attendant unease to the "familiar." In this end, this may guarantee us to reframe the way we think about the cultivation of some sort of cohabitation. We can change the framework of the story on the Barney Srie frieze. Sunda and Upasunda can both survive by agreeing to stay within the framework of a generous but awkward polyandry. They can do this by learning to negotiate with Tilottama’s claims on both their desires and displaying a little more effort at being open to unpredictable encounters.

What does a little more by way of encounter attain in the domain of contemporary art? An assessment of the amplitude of signals and the intensity of contact that marks our world today is still waiting to be made. One of the
Biennials have afforded the most incredible lens of space and time imaginable. They have been superficial predilections given insufficient attention by people flying in and out attending to their careers, kickoffs continued with complacency. Yet they have also presented abundant opportunities for events—in the biennial sense—within the often-expanding narrative frameworks that stretch their events—is the socio-economic sense.

Often biennials have provided such opportunities for the very reasons they failed as projects. Biennials only rarely have been grand projects, like the realizatory 1980 São Paulo edition of Paço Heroncourt, which didn’t only then actuate antithetical packages but also exalted it, or the biennial 2002 Savage edition of Charles Eames and Ray Harris, which structured the encounter through an architectural confrontation based upon the dwellings of artist collects from all over the world. Biennials have rarely even deployed the nearly uncanny desperation to live up to their initial ambitions, something that became the hallmark of Manifesta. More often still, they have been behaved according to fairly classic exhibitionist lines, which have consisted of a curatorial rhetoric functioning as a PR master narrative and a selection of artists who relate to their rhetoric from their positions in a given locale.

Yet isn’t this impressionistic, sometimes hop-hazard confluence of energy generated by the encounter of half-formed ideas, unexpected communities, and accidents of both time and place what gives biennials their present importance? When biennials became events, they did so for specific artistic practices in specific places, for specific visitors, for fringe narratives that emerged and twisted the stretch of the cura tor’s original plans. While classic biennials have centres and artistic practices in esoteric and homogeneous time, biennials concentrate there in time and scatter them around various places. Art and artistic practices encompass one another by way of an adventure in which selective affinities predominate. In this incompleteness, the roles are flexible, “composing” a matter of fact. Furthermore, a shared yet processes context, constituted through the very artistic practices meant to relate to it, becomes unavailable.

This dynamic of loss and gain that biennials manifest doesn’t only make for fluid chronology for the artistic practitioners and their practices. It also affects the expectations regarding the out come, visitors to biennials are less concerned with judging the overall affair, which is standard practice in the field of contemporary art, and more with discovery and context. This unscripted setting, with its creative prob lems that could be transformed into opportunities, fosters a natural attitude, one of wandering and of dwelling, where viability emerges. I understand how the evanescence of biennials might some times encounter the arbitrary, as with the Biennale États-Unis in Paris. However, I understand less the optimistic predictions of the Raqs Media Collective concerning an overall switch in the mainstream of everyday exchange. A shift in the protection structures that foster and maintain the biennials over their temporal limits, the spatio temporal isolation of their like-like cartography? They don’t exist, editor, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (M HKA), Antwerp
Theorists are unlikely to remain of much significance. Likewise, the European or North American artistic practitioner or curator increasingly will be called upon to demonstrate his or her relevance in a multipolar world where European or North American origins or location will no longer operate as an automatic set of credentials. In a world that grows more used to being networked, curators and artists from different spaces will work together and in each other’s spaces, as a matter of course. In their everyday practices, they will question, challenge, and subvert stable identifications of spatiality and cultural affiliation. This will not necessarily mean better or worse art or discourse, what it will mean is that the terms “global” and “contemporary” will resonate in a host of different ways, so as to indicate the active presences of hitherto absent, silent, or muted voices and expressions.

The formulation regarding the challenges and the notion of bounded authorship as a result of the expansion of a global platform like the Internet is perhaps of deeper significance for contemporary art, even if it is at the moment less visible. The Internet has set in motion peer-to-peer networks and online communities that do more than share cultural intelligences. They also occasionally collaborate on the making of things and of meaning, often on a global scale, in a way that is at variance with mainstream protocols of intellectual property. This is most clearly visible in the global open-source communities, but the influence of the “open-source” idea has ramifications beyond software. This tendency is increasingly audible in the domain of a new global musical sensibility based on file sharing, remixing, and recycling of extant musical material, with scant regard to the admonitions either of the protectors of intellectual property or cultural purity. It is also present in peer-to-peer networks founded by scientists, legal scholars, philosophers, historians, and other social scientists who have used the Internet to establish a new intellectual common that gains strength through regular usage, participation, and contribution, often in direct opposition to the hierarchies prevalent in institutionalized academic and intellectual life. These new communities of research and reflection are rapidly establishing today’s bridgeheads of inquiry, free from the inherent conservatism founded on concerns for proprietary or commodifiable utility that ties production in academic institutions and research spaces to “safe” areas of inquiry through the instruments of intellectual property. Increasingly, these “open science, philosophy, social theory are “hot,” more responsive to the world around them.

By foregrounding an emphasis on the commons and other forms of collaboration or non-property or anti-property arrangements, open-source practitioners and theorists (the they in software, music, science, or the humanities) have initiated a profound turbulence in cultural economy. The domain of contemporary art cannot remain immune to this turbulence, which exists all around it. It is perhaps only a matter of time before the ethic of sharing, collaboration, and “commingling” becomes commonplace within contemporary art, just as it
has in other domains of culture. It is already visible, in a nascent sense, in numerous curatorial collaborations and artist-practitioner-technician-curator-theorist networks that transcend borders and disciplinary boundaries, that give new twists to the "publicness" of public art projects, and that raise vexing questions concerning the "ownership" of the ephemeral and networked creations and processes that they generate. The increasingly dense cross-referential nature of practices within contemporary art are also pointers in this direction, leading us to think of the space of contemporary art not as a terrain marked by distinct objects, but as one strained by works that flow in and out of each other or cohabit a semantic territory in layers of varying opacity. Crucially, a liberality of intellectual property rights constitutes what constitutes intellectual property and what deserves to be left to the public domain will be central to defending the freedom of expression in art. Art grows in dialogue, and if intellectual property acts as a barrier to the dialogue between works, then it will meet with serious challenges that arise from the practice of artists and curators.

All this cannot happen without conflict and disruption. The domain of the sign is the playing field of a new cultural economy, where the generation of value hinges on an adherence to the principles of intellectual property. Practices that are at variance with the principles of property in culture for a variety of ethical, social, intellectual, aesthetic, and pragmatic reasons increasingly, however, have perforated this domain. The likely consequence of all this is that the tasteful tranquility that marked the enterprise of aesthetic contemplation will find itself besieged by disputations, legal suits, accusations of copyright infringement, and intense, invasive scrutiny by owners of intellectual property. Making art will increasingly be about forging new legal concepts and creating new economies of usage, ownership, and participation. Making and exhibiting art will be fashioning politics, practicing a new economics, and setting precedents or challenges in law.

The existence of contemporary art is ultimately predicated on the conditions of life of its practitioners. The myriad daily acts of practicing, reading, inscribing, interpreting, and repurposing the substance of culture across cultures, constitute these conditions of life. These acts, in millions of incremental ways, transpose the "work" of art to a register where boundedness, location, and property rest uneasily. The work of art, the practitioner, the curator, the viewer, and the acts of making, exhibiting, and viewing all stand to be transformed. All that is familiar becomes strange; all that is strange becomes familiar.

We would like to acknowledge Rania Dasgupta for his comments and criticism.

NOTE
The author has become a curator. The artist is primarily the curator of him- or herself, because he or she selects him- or herself. And he or she also selects others: other objects, other artists.

At least since the 1960s, artists have created installations in order to demonstrate their personal practice of selection. These installations, however, have been nothing other than exhibitions curated by artists, in which objects by others may be—and are—represented, as well as objects by the artist. Accordingly, however, curators are also freed from the duty of exhibiting only those objects that are pre-selected by artists. Curators today feel free to combine art objects selected and signed by artists with objects that are taken directly from “life.” In short, once the identification between creation and selection has been established, the roles of the artist and of the curator also became identical. A distinction between the (curated) exhibition and the (artist) installation is still commonly made, but it is essentially obsolete.

This became especially obvious during the last couple of decades, as the figure of an independent curator at first emerged and then firmly established itself in the international art scene. Independent curators organize small focused projects as well as big international exhibitions, like Documenta, the Venice Biennal, or Manifesta. Characteristically, these big shows are organized increasingly as a combination of different, individual curatorial projects that function not unlike artistic installations. Independent curators become more and more the leading figures in today’s globalized art world. The curator is looking for new, innovative art and for young, promising artists all around the world. That was earlier the role of the galleries or the art agents. But contemporary curators do not understand themselves as impresarios or as agents of artists—and that is maybe the main difference between the contemporary art world and its predecessor. Today’s curators develop mostly their own art projects and involve the artists in these projects if these artists seem to be suitable for a task. In many cases, the curator recontextualizes and also redefines the already existing artistic production by putting it in the context of an international project or exhibition. But in an even greater number of cases, a new work is produced by an artist in collaboration with a curator, with a conscious goal to be placed in a certain theoretical, political, or artistic context. And in all these cases, we can no longer speak of the authorial autonomy of the artist because he or she, from the beginning, is involved in a collaborative, collective, institutionalized, productive practice.

The old question must, therefore, be asked anew: What is an artwork? The answer that present-day art practices offer to this question is straightforward: The artwork is an exhibited object. The object that is not exhibited is not an artwork, but merely an object that has the potential to be exhibited as an artwork. Not by chance, we speak of art today as “contemporary art.” Such art must be exhibited in the present in order to be considered art at all. The elementary unit of art today is, therefore, no longer an artwork as object but an art space in which this object is exhibited: the space of an exhibition, of an installation. Present-day art is not the sum of particular things, but the topology of particular places. The installation has thus established an extremely variegated form of art that can assimilate all the other traditional art forms: paintings, drawings, photographs, texts, objects, readymades, films, and recordings. All these art objects are arranged by an artist or curator in the space, according to an order that is purely private, individual, and subjective. Thus the artist or curator has the chance to demonstrate publicly his private, sovereign strategy of selection.

The installation is often denied the status of art because the question arises: What is the medium of an installation? That is because traditional art mediums are all defined according to the specific support of the medium: canvas, stone, films, etc. The medium itself, which means, among other things, that the installation by no means “immaterial.” Quite the contrary, the installation is by all means material because it is spatial. The installation demonstrates the materiality of the civilization in which we live, particularly since it installs everything, otherwise merely circulates in our civilization. Hence, the installation demonstrates the civilizational hardware that otherwise remains unnoticed behind the surface of circulation in the media. And it also shows the artist or curator’s sovereignty at work: how this sovereignty defines and practices its strategies of selection.

That is why the installation is not a representation of the relationships among things, as regulated by economic and other social orders; quite the contrary, the installation offers an opportunity to use the explicit introduction of subjective orders and relations among things in order to call into question at least those orders that must be supposed to exist “out there” in reality.

Here, I must take the opportunity to clear up a misunderstanding that has come up again and again recently in the relevant literature. It has been argued with some insistence that art has reached its end today and that, therefore, a new field—visual studies—should take the place of traditional art history. Visual studies supposedly extends the domain of pictorial analysis. Rather than considering artistic images exclusively, it is supposed to address the purportedly larger, more open space of all existing images, to transgress courageously the limits of the old concept of art. The courage to transgress old limits is certainly always impressive and welcome. In this case, however, the transgression of limits turns out not to be an extension at all, but rather a reduction of the relevant spaces. As we have noted, art consists not of images, but of all possible objects, including utilitarian objects, texts, and so on. And there are no distinct “artistic images,” rather, all images can be used in an artistic context. Turning art history into visual studies is thus not an extension of its field of study, but a drastic reduction of it, since it restricts art to what can be considered an “image” in the traditional sense. By contrast, everything that can be presented in an installation space belongs to the realm of the
visual arts. In that sense, an individual image is also an installation; it is simply an installation that has been reduced to a single image. The installation is thus not an alternative to the image, but precisely the extension of the concept of the image that is lost if this extension is ignored and the traditional image is readopted. If we want to extend the concept of the image, it is precisely the installation that we need to discuss, since it defines the universal rules for space by which all images and non-images must function as spatial objects. In more than one respect, the transition to the installation as the guiding form of contemporary art changes the definition of what we define as an artwork. The most significant and far-reaching change is to our understanding of authorship in art.

Increasingly today, people protest against the traditional cult of artistic subjectivity, the figure of the author, and the authorial signature. This rebellion is usually conceived as a revolt against the power structures of the system of art that find their visible expression in the figure of the sovereign author. Again and again, critics want to demonstrate that there is no such thing as an artistic genius and, consequently, that the authorial status of the artist in question cannot be derived from the supposed fact that he is or she is a genius. Rather, the attribution of authorship is seen as a convention used by the institution of art, the art market, and art critics to build up “art stars” strategically and to profit from them commercially. The struggle against the figure of the author is thus understood as a struggle against an undemocratic system of arbitrary privileges and unhanded hierarchies that de facto represent base commercial interests. Naturally, this rebellion against the figure of the author ends with the critics of authorship being declared famous authors precisely because they have stripped the traditional figure of the author of his or her power. At first glance, we might see this as merely the well-known process of negation at work, in which the king’s murderer is made the new king. It is not so simple, however. Rather, this polemic reflects real processes that take place in the art world but that have yet to be adequately analyzed.

The traditional, sovereign authorship of an individual artist has in fact disappeared; hence, it really does not make much sense to rebel against this authorship. When confronted with an art exhibition, we are dealing with multiple authorship. And in fact, every art exhibition exhibits something that was selected by one or more curators, from their own production, and/or from the mass of ready-mades. These objects selected by the artists are then selected in turn by one or more curators who thus also share authorial responsibility for the definitive selection. In addition, these curators are selected and financed by a commission, a foundation, or an institution, which also bear authorial and artistic responsibility for the end result. The selected objects are presented in a space selected for the purpose; the choice of such a space, which can lie inside or outside the spaces of an institution, often plays a crucial role in the result. The choice of the space thus also belongs to the artistic.
projects for future exhibitions. And that is the crucial aspect: The artwork today does not manifest art, it merely promises art. Art is manifested only in the exhibition, as in fact the very title "Manifesta" suggests. As long as an object is not yet exhibited and as soon as it is no longer on exhibit, it can no longer be considered art. It is either a memory of past art or a promise of future art, but from either perspective it is simply art documentation.

The function of the museum is, therefore, also modified. Previously, the museum functioned just as it does today, namely as a public archive. But it was an archive of a special kind. The typical historical archive contains documents that refer exclusively to past events; it presumes the ephemerality, the mortality of the life it documents. And indeed, the immortal does not need to be documented; only the mortal does. The assumption about the traditional museum, by contrast, was that it contained artworks that possessed an eternal artistic value, which for all times equally embodied art and would fascinate and fascinate many generations. That is, to say, museums did not just document the past but could manifest and emanate art here and now. The traditional museum thus functioned as a paradigmatic archive of eternal presence, of profane immortality, and in this, it was quite distinct from other historical and cultural archives. The material supports of art—canvas, paper, film, etc.—may be considered ephemeral, but art itself lasts eternally.

The museum today, by contrast, is increasingly like other archives, since the art documentation that the museum collects does not necessarily appear before the public as the permanent exhibition of the museum is no longer—or at least less frequently—presented as a stable, permanent exhibition. Instead, the museum is increasingly a place where temporary exhibitions are shown. The unity of collecting and exhibiting that defined the particular nature of the traditional museum has come to an end. The museum collection today is seen as documentary raw material that the curator can use in combination with an exhibition program he or she has developed to express an individual attitude and a new strategy for dealing with art. Alongside the curator, however, the artist also has the opportunity to shape museums spaces in whole or part, according to his or her own personal taste. Under these conditions, the museum is transformed into a deposit, into an archive of artistic documentation, which is no longer essentially different from any other form of documentation, and also into a public site for the execution of private artistic projects. As such a site, the museum differs from any other site primarily in its design, in its architecture. It is no coincidence that in the recent past, in recent years, attention has shifted from the museum collection to museum architecture.

The museum today, however, has not abandoned entirely its promise of profane immortality. The art documentation that is collected in museums and other art institutions can always be exhibited anew as art. This distinguishes

Museums and galleries, like artworks, have not enjoyed stable definitions over time. Relations between artists and politics have perpetually been of the greatest interest to artists, but artists have rarely regarded themselves as lacking in their support by curators—especially not with curators in the lead. After the dogma of patronage, credentialing, group shows, such as art academies, central public displays of works of art, but art as we know it today, art as it exhibits, has never exhausted artists' ability to bring their works to their publics. Artists have also worked collectively to both produce and distribute. Further, the art world's web of social relations includes all interested parties—artists, art critics, writers, and others who are often exchange roles, both formally and informally. In the modern world, artists and gallery owners can rely on their personal connections to bridge the world of art and social milieus. In mid-twentieth-century United States, critics were central to the reception of abstract expressionism, as was the crucial support of politically powerful patrons vested on the boards of trend-setting museums. Both critic (Eleven Greenberg, Harold Rosenberg) and patron (Milton Resnick) played shaping roles in the production of artworks themselves. Curatorial power was decidedly secondary, and curators who tried to defy powerful board members and their museum-director representatives lost their jobs. Lower curatorial ranks were filled with the children (largely daughters) of wealthy owners of the museums back then.

Presently, curatorial roles, while growing in power, remain circumscribed by archival museum boards, and the influence of critics has declined dramatically. As the art marketplace has become ever more central, first curators and then galleries displaced critics as arbiters of worth. Now, perhaps, curators (and consultants to collectors, both individual and corporate) are power brokers again. Galleries provide entry to very young artists, often right out of master's degree programs that constitute a mess of art-world professionals and students. Selected artists become visible to collectors, who may buy their works at galleries, increasingly, at auction. The curatorial ranks attract professionalizing institutions that diminish the gentility and the help that then develop a signature practice. The proliferating international shows on the borderline model are where curators get to impress their individual brands.

The art projects collected in museums from the life projects documented in other archives: realizing art as art means exhibiting it. And the museum can do that. It is admittedly possible to present a life project anew in a reality outside the museum, but only if it ultimately concerns an artistic project. This kind of rediscovery of art documentation is, however, only possible because it relies on multiple authorship, a product of the shifted role of the artist, but also of the shifted role of the curator. Old art documents are restored, transferred to other media, and rearranged, installed, and presented in other spaces. Under such conditions, it is meaningless to speak of an individual, intact authorship. The artwork as exhibited art documentation is kept alive because its multiple authorship continues to multiply and proliferate; and the site of this proliferation and multiplication of authorship is the present-day museum.

The transformation of the artwork into art documentation by means of its own archiving also enables art today to employ in an artistic context the immense reservoir of documentation of other events and projects that our civilization has collected. And indeed, the formulation and documentation of various projects are the main activities of modern humankind. Whatever one wishes to undertake in business, politics, or culture, the first thing that must be done is to formulate a corresponding project in order to present an application for the approval or financing of this project to one or more responsible authorities. If this project is rejected in its original form, it is modified so that it may still be accepted. If the project is rejected entirely, one has no choice but to propose a new project in its place. Consequently, every member of our society is constantly occupied with drafting, discussing, and rejecting new projects. Assessments are written, budgets are precisely calculated, commissions are formed, committees are convened, and decisions are made. In the meantime, no small number of our contemporaries reads anything other than such projects, reports, and budgets. Most of these projects, however, are never realized. The fact that they seem unpromising, difficult to finance, or undesirable in general to one or more experts is sufficient for all the work of formulating the project to have been in vain.

And this work is by no means insubstantial; and the amount of work associated with it grows over time. The project documentation presented to various commissions, committees, and councils that is designed with increasing effectiveness and formulated in greater detail in order to impress potential assessors. As a result, the formulation of projects is developing into an autonomous art form, the significance of which for our society has by yet to be adequately considered. Irrespective of whether it is realized or not, every project presents a unique vision of the future that is itself fascinating and instructive.

Frequently, however, many of the projects that our civilization is constantly producing are lost or simply thrown away after they are rejected. This careless approach to the art form of the project is quite reprehensible, really, because it

In the 1980s, when the art market registered great leaps forward, artists took exasperated museums, Papy and then Duchampianism, by forgoing the rational elements in art production over abstract expressionism's quasi-mythical rhetoric of transcendence, elevated the intellectual quotient of art and widened the field of observation, helping free the artist from the need for either critical or curatorial explication. Conceptual改革ing became the big new idea in a cluttered and overwrought society of sensory overload, but a generation later, "conceptual" identity is one name for most commercially viable practice.

Competing for publics with the tremendously expanded communication and entertainment sectors, including theme parks, the art world has spent decades struggling frantically to retain a prior role as an artist of the aesthetic. Reckoning the art object as a leisure good with both investment potential and (unsold) cultural capital has restored market hegemony, and adopting the theme-park model for exhibitions has potentiated both advisers and showman-curator and Valence and installation, formerly tactically elusive forms, may have been successfully commodified, but artists continue to develop resid-}
often prevents us from analyzing and understanding the hopes and visions of
the future that are invested in these projects, and these things can say more
about our society than anything else. Within the system of art, the exhibition
of a document is sufficient to give it life. The art archive is particularly well
suited to being the archive of these sorts of projects that were realized at some
time in the past or will be realized in the future, but above all, represent the
archive of utopian projects that can never be realized fully. These utopian proj-
ects that are doomed to failure in the current economic and political climate
can be kept alive in art, in that the documentation of these projects constantly
changes hands and authors.

Translated by Steven Lindberg.
Hans-Urich Obrist: To begin, I would like to ask you about Europe. One can speak of Europe as a geographical construct, cultural construct, political construct, or still other constructs, but what, in your mind, is Europe in 2005?

Jacques Le Goff: Europe is an entity at the geographical, economic, political, and cultural levels, but it is unfortunately altogether unfinished and, above all, fragile. I see it as being in an intermediary state that offers a lot of opportunities, in particular insofar as Europe has opened up to countries that obviously belong within it but weren’t officially and institutionally part of it. But the construction of this grouping remains difficult. I believe that the construction of Europe, if it is successful—and I very dearly wish it to be—remains a long process. Consequently, I am very surprised to see so many people who think that Europe is coming together slowly. From my point of view as a historian, I am in fact struck by the swiftness with which Europe has moved forward since the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

HUNO: How would you say your work to locate the beginnings of Europe in medieval times, which is a quite controversial starting point given that the period is frequently thought of as the “Dark Ages,” relates to the contemporary reality of Europe today?

JLG: First of all, my sense is that Europe, as in fact most other political and historical entities, was constructed in several phases. And, using a word of Michel Foucault’s, to understand the construction of Europe, one must inquire into its “archeology.” Europe was built first from a base in antiquity, when Greek geographers in the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. gave it its name and thus associated—in a mythical form, of course, and in keeping with ancient Greek thought—a name and a reality. The nymph whom Zeus abducted from Phoenicia (in other words, the Orient) to bring to the Occident reminds us of the idea that close connections tie Europe and the Orient, but that Europe
was separated from the Orient. Which is why I can say that I am opposed to Turkey's entrance into Europe in the near future. I don't know what will happen in several decades or centuries, but my sense is that Turkey still belongs to the Orient, and that Europe is still an occidental entity.

HVD: You are thus in opposition with Jean-Pierre Vernant on this point. I spoke with him about this issue in a recent interview, and he pointed to numerous histori- cal and cultural connections between Turkey and Europe that convincingly suggest how linked the two are.

JLG: Jean-Pierre Vernant and I are not always in agreement. What's more, he is a historian of antiquity, so he may see things differently from that perspective. I don't know what he's told you. But as for me, I disagree, at least with regard to an admission in the near future of Turkey within Europe. As for later, I can't say.

HVD: In his new book Si l'Europe s'éveille (2003), Peter Sloterdijk quotes you as saying: "Today, Europe must invent another form of unity than that of an empire." What might this other form of unity look like?

JLG: I see Europe as being at bottom antagonistic with the notion of empire, insofar as an empire is the reunion of heterogeneous entities under a dominat- ing principle. Europe should reject both the heterogeneity of its components and this principle of domination. One of the primary conditions that I see for the historical possibility of Europe's existence was the disappearance of the Roman Empire. Rome had brought together pieces of the Occident, Asia, and North Africa, and those were heterogeneous to one another, which makes the Roman Empire very far from European conceptions. And anything that looked somewhat like an empire in the later development of Europe has been doomed to failure. Whether we look at Charles V's empire in the sixteenth century, Napoleon's empire, or Hitler's empire, I think that "Europe" and "empire" remain antagonistic terms.

HVD: In connection with this notion of empire, I have talked a lot with Édouard Glissant about globalization, and he opposes the homogenization of globalization with a new notion of mondialité, which stresses differences. Accordingly, he suggests that we should stop thinking in terms of continental logics in favor of a logic of the archipelago.

JLG: This sounds like an interesting notion, but I must admit that I haven't read his book. Concretely, how is the notion of archipelago applied to Europe?

HVD: It applies to, among other things, the multiplicity of European languages, to the fact that there is not a single European language but many of them...

JLG: I agree on this point. And I do think that the concept of mondialité is far better suited to that of globalization (mondialisation), insofar as it implies worldwide contact and trade, without the sense of domination implied by the term globalisation. It amounts to a universal that maintains a sense of multi- plicity and freedom. I think Europe should become somewhat more homoge- nous, but it must also remain plural. I believe it should turn into a new type of entity, different from other types of entities that have existed in history. For instance, it should not resemble the United States of America, but it should—let me stress this again—remain an empire even less. It should counteract the principle of empires—the American empire, which is about the only one right now, but probably soon the Chinese empire, too, and perhaps the Indian empire.

HVD: In your opinion, what would be concretely different if most people accepted your conception of a Europe, with its beginnings in medieval times?

JLG: A very important element in the construction of the European spirit was the creation of universities in the Middle Ages, and I believe that now, it's in the domain of education that one should pursue this movement. Earlier, I mentioned the first phase of the creation of Europe in the invention of the name in antiquity and, with it, the invention of the idea that goes with that name. A second phase is obviously no less important, in my opinion: the medieval phase. In fact, the Middle Ages and its Christianity have provided what can be seen as a draft of what could be a political, ideological, and cul- tural unity that respects nations, countries—that is what happened in the Middle Ages through Christianity. But there are also medieval elements that are detrimental to the creation of Europe, in particular, the invention of a new world as it would be necessary for a sovereign empire. This notion appears in the thirteenth and, above all, the fourteenth centuries with what we call the modern state. This was much studied by the German-American scholar Ernst Kantorowicz, in particular in his article "Mysteries of State." And unfortu- nately, this notion of sovereignty triumphed in the sixteenth century, as is clear with the Frenchman Jean Bodin. To me, sovereignty is a dangerous notion, insofar as it implies a closing down. In fact, it does not come from Roman law, but is a modern notion. To return to the present, a solution should be devised that would allow for all Europeans to understand one another, but without giving up on their language. I believe technological means could be designed that would allow somebody speaking their own language to be under- stood by someone from another country or another one they understand. These instant-translation instruments are a possibility, according to scientists who speculate about a future...
I have talked to, but this research is not developed enough and should be supported more. Obviously, I also think that an easier communication should be sought both in the world of companies and trade and in the sphere of education, whether at the university or school level. In this respect, the new French system of three-tiered university degrees recognized Europe-wide is an important step in that direction.

HUG: You just mentioned Kantorowicz, and in Un Autre Moyen Âge (1989), you spoke of Ferdinand Braudel and Marcel Mauss, the latter of whom, as you noted, was as influential on your generation as Durkheim was on the previous generation. How have these two figures influenced you and redefined the reading and making of history in Europe?

JLG: With respect to Braudel—it is my experience, but I believe it is rather widely shared—I would say that, above all, he has passed onto us the essential notion of the long durée or "long term." His point was that history is made in the long term. One can identify several rhythms in history, and this is the case for individuals as much as for groups, for economics as much as for culture. There is a fast pace, which is that of events and which, obviously, in our civilization is upheld and fostered by the media. And here, I would like to stress my deep admiration for the profession of journalism, particularly the print media. This profession is a very difficult one and an essential one because it gives us one of the elements that helps humanity the most—information. But the time unit of journalism—a word based on the French word for "day"—is a day. But a day is nothing to history. Other rhythms have to be taken into account, the medium and long term, and the long term is the one that is most important to history: It takes a very long time to develop, becomes itself, and comes to the fore. And clearly, Europe is one of those constructions that call for the long term. Braudel showed that the most important things in history happened over this long term. Marcel Mauss, compared to Durkheim, is the ethnological impulse, compared to the sociological impulse. Durkheim taught historians the importance of sociology, but no matter how great his influence was, he had grown in the context of positivistic philosophy, and one of his limits was the resulting tendency of positivism. Marcel Mauss, on the contrary, stands for the multiple, the multiplicity of culture, and the community, because what constitutes the individual and communal life of men and women, from clothing, housing, food all the way to economic and political institutions. In other words, Marcel Mauss spurred historians in two essential directions: comparatism, since these are traits that are found in all civilizations or cultures, and the desire for totality, globalization, not dealing solely with the institutional, for instance, but considering men, women, human beings, and societies as global entities. Michel Foucault and I, for instance, at the same age had exchanges, but neither of us was a great influence on the other. We were in dialogue, and we were often in agreement with respect to our conception of human and social sciences. Foucault was not only the philosopher who studied human sciences and social sciences closely, but he was himself a human and social researcher and, I would even say, a historian. Other philosophers were interested in history, while Foucault was a historian. Another person who played a very important role for me was Maurice Lombard. He is not very well known because he died relatively young, when he was about sixty years old, and his one published book is the posthumous L'Ismam dans sa première grandeur. He was a scholar of Islam, which limited his influence on me since I am not an Islamicist, but the classes of his that I attended studiously and the discussions we had, when he was kind enough to take me as his assistant at the École des Hautes Études, taught me many things. Above all, he taught me that history takes place in space, and thus, if one is to understand a historical fact, one must understand its deeper connections to spaces. Spaces can mean a number of different but related things: a territory, roads, and other systems of connected sites. So you see how fundamental this method is to trying to understand Europe, for instance.

HUG: Yes. Picking up on the notions of the long durée and space, I would like to ask you your perception of Europe with respect to the events since 1989. You spoke a little earlier about your position on the inclusion of Turkey within the European Union, but the main movement of expansion thus far has been towards the former Eastern bloc, so the question is very complex, especially if one sees this in light of increasing globalization...

JLG: Indeed. Among the different notions in history—and there are many—one is particularly difficult: that of borders. The word itself is not very old. In antiquity, borders were a rather unstable element. Take the Great Wall of China or the Roman Itineraries, these borders were uncertain. One thing makes the matter even more complicated. Earlier, you mentioned that interesting dichotomy between the "outside" and the "insiders," that is, the epicentral impulse. Durkheim taught historians the notion of "dualistic, Catholic crusaders!" This card seems very important in Europe's history in order for this "clash of civilizations," historically absurd but perhaps indeed being crafted out of the air before our eyes, not to take place. And I don't see why we should refrain from playing this card. That is my position, at least. But as I said, regarding political questions, I am merely voicing an opinion, as is it not my profession. Instead, let me say that a favorite character of mine, Duras, the anti-Aristés, is a useful figure to cite here. Aristés is the short-lived Cyclops, the figure of eternal youth because he chooses a heroic death. Duras is the max of the return and above all the man who endures. He is also the figure of the man who refuses to be dominated, he is the free man and an impertinent man. He wants to be known. For instance, he wants to see and know the Cyclops, and he passes up the opportunity to fly when he can. But above all, he is a man true to himself and to those around him, and he forgives his chance at immortality and eternal youth, when they’re within reach. And why does he refuse them? Because he wants to be Durases, and Durases is the one who will live through mestizaje and finally come back to Poseidon and his Sex. For me, this vitality, this curiosity, and this vanity are very decisive in many respects. As for Europe, it has traveled very far. It is both closed and open, and even today it is made up of so many different things. But I don’t think it is as urchy and true to its role as Odysseus. And obviously, it doesn’t seem to get itself out of trouble as successfully as our hero.

by placing on the occidental side of the Bosphorus the most important Turkish
town, Istanbul. As for Europe's relation to the Turkish empire, on the one
hand, and the Russian empire, on the other, they have changed radically. In
my opinion, things are clear with respect to the Turkish empire: Turkey does
not belong within Europe anymore, but countries that were influenced by it
do. But another thing that is necessary to belong to Europe is missing in many
of the countries of the region: democracy. Regarding Russia, things are
extremely complicated. There is no doubt that on many cultural and political
points, Russia belongs within Europe. The Europe of the Enlightenment in the
eighteenth century included Russia, even if Catherine II used the
Enlightenment for her own purposes. Romanticism has been a Russian move-
ment, too. Nevertheless, Russia built its empire in Asia, and there is no way
that this Asian Russia should belong within Europe. Thankfully, a large part of
this Asian Russia has achieved independence since World War II, but Siberia
remains. The problem is not currently before us, but it will come to the fore.
Consequently, a great number of problems remain, and my wish is that the
coming years be seriously devoted to the integration of the new countries
within Europe—but by integration, I do not mean homogenization. Above all,
Europe should not become a new nation; it should not construct itself accord-
ing to the idea of European sovereignty.

HUD: So in your opinion, Europe should maintain what you call the two-fold foun-
dation of the old Europe: the diversity of nations and unity.

JLG: Yes, that is what I believe. We must definitely maintain these two. But
of course, we should also move forward in the direction of a greater unifica-
tion. With respect to this, the recent proposal to apply the rights of the coun-
try of origin to a person working in a different country should obviously be
rejected. One of the greatest steps forward for Europe has been the adoption
of the droit du sol or jus soli, literally, the right of soil, over and above blood
or ethnic rights. I don't agree with those who think that Charlemagne was the
first great European, but Charlemagne did do an essential thing: He replaced
ethnic rights with the jus soli. Henceforth, subjects of Charlemagne's world
were not subject to Bavarian, Lombardic, or Frankish law, but to the same and
unique law, the law ruling the soil on which they lived. That is exactly what
should be pursued, and Europe should, above all, be this soil, this territory.

HUD: I would like to ask you what method you see as appropriate to respond to the
complexity of Europe today, and to what extent can cultural initiatives respond
to it?

JLG: In my sense, this is one of the fields in which things move in the best
direction, but unfortunately cultural initiatives and collective events are still
mostly spurred by an elite, while mass initiatives are necessary. We have to be
careful. The Europe that we are trying to build should not be a closed one; we
should not build a new nation under the flag of sovereignty, which would close
it off from others. We must pursue an entity that is open to both Europe and oth-
ers, but we must also strengthen the sense of an internal community. In my
opinion, it is thus important to emphasize what Europeans share, while at the
same time stressing the exchanges that have taken place with those outside
of Europe. We can make a comparison with the field of sports. We have sporting
competitions both at the European level and at the global level. Much the
same thing should be done in the cultural field, so that Europeans can better
experience and express what they share, while at the same time avoid closing
themselves off by participating in international or worldwide events, too. As I
have said earlier, I am wholly in favor of combining and exchanges,
the vanishing of internal borders, easier contacts, and this by building more
high-speed trains, increasing the number of airline companies, highways, etc.
Mobility is truly essential.

HUD: With respect to this notion of mobility, I want to ask you about a theme that
is very present in the press these days, that of immigration, the integration of this
immigration in Europe, and a possible crisis of identity resulting from it.

JLG: You are sparing me none of the toughest questions! Let's start from a his-
torical standpoint. Since the sixteenth century, and even more so since the
nineteenth century, Europe has colonized a large part of the world. This colo-
nization meant, above all, exploitation. For a number of reasons, since the
twentieth century, and increasingly so as it progressed, a reaction happened
on the part of the colonized countries that took two main forms: the struggle
to achieve independence and immigration—an immigration with the goal of
securing better life conditions and with the dual advantage of feeding not only
the immigrants, but also parts of their families back in their home countries.
This is the problem, so finding the solution is extremely difficult. I believe this
solution is to be found in an agreement between the developed European
countries and the formerly colonized countries in which the benefits of both
parties would be balanced. Consequently, it seems obvious to me that devel-
oped European countries should accept immigrants and do so better, but this
immigration should be filtered. Otherwise, the outcome will be one that
everybody suffers from and the prosperity sought by the immigrants will van-
ish. I am not defending the privileges of Europeans, but rather advocating a
moderation that works for the best of both sides. And obviously, that is a very
difficult task.

HUD: Regarding your beautiful book Pour l'amour des villes (1997), in which you
study towns in the Middle Ages, I wanted to ask you about your sense of the future
of towns, particularly in the context of the current European town/countryside or center/periphery divide.

JLG: One advantage of European cities is that they have avoided, to a certain extent, turning into the inhuman megalopolises that developed in Third World countries. This is really a sad situation for these developing countries: On the one hand, they have a share of the rural population that specialists consider to be detrimental to modernity, while on the other hand, their cities are monstrous. Whether in Brazil, India, or Egypt, what we see is that these megalopolises are great centers of misery, poverty, crime and present a terrible cost for the countries in which they are situated. In contrast to this, I see a European type of town that—I am definitive about this—appeared in the Middle Ages, between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. These towns are very different from the ones in North America, too—and here we touch on another enormous question, which is the crucial one of Europe's relation to North America. Concerning this point, two things should be remembered: Europe and North America belong together in the Occident, but within this common grouping, they are very different. As a consequence, Europeans should be wary not to forget the community that is formed by the Occident and democracy, but they should also take into account that Europe and North America have been drifting apart. In other words, Europeans should have, in front of the United States in particular, a two-fold discourse that still needs to be clarified. Sometimes they tell the U.S., "You are marvelous; thank you for having saved us during the two world wars!" And sometimes they say, "You're awful. See what you are doing in the world? You want to dominate everybody and exploit the whole world, economically, politically, etc." This double talk should be cleared out by recognizing that the two are true, but a modus vivendi should be urgently between the two. The point is to devise a shared participation of Europeans and Americans in the institutions of democracy and the furthering of progress, but at the same time, the distinction between different sets of values should not vanish. These different sets of values are not only their different attitudes with respect to foreign countries—i.e. not only Iraq—but deeper things, such as a clearly different conception of capitalism. American capitalism does not see any limits to the pursuit of profit except, of course, those set by law. European capitalism, on the other hand, was also born in the Middle Ages. It only talks about these institutions because I have studied their birth! And this medieval capitalism was born with respect for the ideas of justice and rights, moral notions, the "just price" of the legitimacy of some amount of state intervention. For instance, people turned to the king for laws to stir the economy, when it seemed necessary. Another main difference belongs to the political sphere. It's very clear with Bush and his team, but it's true of just about every American president and administration. American politics are infused with religious ideas. Each president, whether democrat or republican, concludes every one of his speeches with "God bless America," and that is far more important than it may seem; it is not simply a formula. Obviously today, with the neoconservatives or neoliberalists, we are dealing with a group of people for whom this religious impact in politics is particularly strong. And I should add here that Protestantism, the main religious strand in the U.S., is much more amenable to this type of politics infused with religion than Catholicism, which, despite its great loss of authority, remains more or less the dominant religious influence in Europe. And so the other crucial difference is that Europe should maintain its separation between church and state. And thank God this has been achieved, since the Preamble of the European Constitution states this clearly, despite pressures from the Vatican and, among others, the Poles. Furthermore, this separation from the religious is the perfect backdrop for my sense of diversity, since it recognizes and protects the freedom to practice any religion—any decent religion, in other words, those that are not sects or tied to terrorism. So this separation of the state from the religious means religious freedom, much more than the lack of religiosity.

HUD: In closing, I would like to ask you a question that I ask in all my interviews. Do you have an as yet unrealized or unfinished project that is particularly dear to you?

JLG: I'm hesitant to say so, as it may seem immodest, but I do not have any. About a year ago, I turned eighty, and I told my wife that the book I was writing, a book about the medieval imagination, which will come out next month and about which we have talked a lot, would be my last one. I have written what I wanted to write, and I don't want to do anything else that I haven't already done. But since my wife died, I have started to write a book about her, which I hope I will complete. It is not a book of memories or an autobiography—I don't think these are ever honest in the end, but instead, it is a sort of biography, in which I will also remain a historian. My wife was Polish, and we got married in Warsaw in 1962, and I would like to tell how a Polish woman married to a Frenchman lived through the cold war, how she lived with the iron curtain, which we were able to cross several times, and how we witnessed that iron curtain and the Berlin Wall fall, first, and then as a Franco-Polish couple, living in a united Europe. So in the end, I would like to inscribe the life of my wife, who was, by most accounts, an admirable person, in a European history that was effectively hers. That is my last remaining project.

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Transcription and translation by Boris Belev.
What really happened in 1989? A glorious democratic revolution that has radically changed our lives, freed millions from the totalitarian nightmare, and opened new historical perspectives? Most of us take this simple and convincing story for granted. No wonder, it has become a self-evident element of our historical consciousness, telling us most directly who we are in today's world, where we historically come from, and where we are going.

According to this tale, we have once and for all left totalitarianism behind, there is no other thinkable alternative to the way we live now, and the only imaginable future is one that ceaselessly repeats this already realized dream.

Let's say it openly: This story is a very naive one, indeed. Nonetheless, nobody would seriously challenge it. Even though our real experience is at odds with this story, we are unable to tell another. Isn't that then the best reason to doubt it and openly ask: Was the "Revolution of 1989" really a revolution similar to those events, like the French Revolution two hundred years before it, in which humanity experienced the exclusively modern phenomena of a radical change and a totally new beginning?

As a political overthrow from below of one state order and its replacement with another, the events of 1989 qualify as an example of an authentic revolution. The images we remember from that time, like the one of the masses in the streets of Prague who peacefully (in a "velvet" manner) collapsed the ancien régime and installed a new democratic government, confirm this impression. Similar scenes of popular uprising were seen all over Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Even when mass protests turned violent, like in Romania, they always achieved their primary political goal: the replacement of a one-party communist system with capitalism and parliamentary democracy.

One particular scene expresses, in the most profound way, the entire meaning of the Eastern European revolution. No one can forget the masses of people climbing over the Berlin Wall, which for nearly thirty years had separated two parts of the same city, two parts of the same nation, two parts of Europe,
two antagonistic ideological systems, and even the so-called First World from the so-called Second World. Without question, the fall of the Berlin Wall is the genuine symbol of the Revolution of 1989.

In a peculiar way, this event evokes the very meaning of the Greek word symbolon (from symballein, literally "to put together"): two parts of a whole once cut in two but now rejoined to form a universally recognizable sign of an original unity. The collapse of the Berlin Wall was an event that, in a way, directly displayed its symbolic meaning, triggering another association: the myth about the origin of love as told by Aristophanes in Plato's Symposium. According to this myth, human nature was originally one, and we were a whole. Because of the wickedness of humankind, Zeus decided to cut each human in two. After the division, the two parts searched for their other half, longing to grow into one. This ancient desire for one another, the need to make one from two, which seeks to reunite our original nature, this pursuit of the whole is what Aristophanes called love. He believed that, in returning to our primeval nature, we would be able to perfectly attain "true love," making humankind happy and blessed.

The fall of the Berlin Wall illustrates the same mythical motive. Its erection and the manner in which it divided Berlin—its squares, streets, and its inhabitants—into two parts seemed an abnormal or unnatural act; its final collapse was experienced not simply as a reunion of the two separated parts of the city and its people, of all of society and its genuine nature, violently suppressed under communism. For this reason, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the failure of the entire communist project it symbolized have never been understood simply as the victory of one political system over another, of one ideology over another, but as something much deeper and stronger, namely the ultimate victory of human nature over its worst enemies, ideology and politics. Moreover, the overwhelming enthusiasm that the fall of the Wall awakened all over the world was the result of this extra-ideological, extra-political, and extra-historical symbolic surplus. The real source of that enthusiasm, which according to Kant not only accompanies every genuine revolution, but more importantly discloses its true meaning, resides in this meeting and melding of two ideologically and politically divided parts—of one city, one nation, Europe, the world—into one another. This oneness, this coming of human nature into its own, is the very expression of that ancient need and desire Plato called love.

Nobody, for sure, is claiming that all those political events that brought down the Eastern European communist system were simply a revolution of love. However, the fact that the Berlin Wall has come to symbolize those events, that the scene of its destruction flared passions and caused such an enthusiastic identification with the Revolution of 1989, lies in the fact that it echoes the old Platonic myth about the origin of love. The Revolution of 1989 undoubtedly reminds us of the immortal promise, to recall the words of Aristophanes, of Eros, the greatest benefactor of humankind who guides us in life back to our own nature and gives us high hopes for the future. This explains the strong emotional appeal of the Revolution of 1989 as well as its deep impact on today's world.

In this context, one cannot help but recall Freud's theory of Eros. In opposition to the death drive, which destroys things and breaks them apart, Freud saw Eros's main purpose as binding individuals together and producing ever-greater unities. The whole process of civilization (in the original German, Kultur), according to Freud, is in the service of Eros who combines single individuals, then families, races, peoples, nations, and ultimately all of us into one great unity, the unity of humankind. However, Freud's discovery of the conservative character of instincts is even more important in his theory of love. Freud was actually convinced that all instincts tend toward the restoration of a previous state of affairs. Although they are forces striving toward change and progress, human instincts instead are seeking an ancient goal, the same goal Eros pursued in Plato's myth about the origin of love.

Let us now sum up our argument: The fall of the Berlin Wall echoes the myth of Eros not only in terms of an epochal victory of love that has finally reunited what communist totalitarianism previously separated, but also in terms of the regressive, restorative tendency of the democratic Revolution of 1989, in short, its essentially conservative character.

With this argument, we leave the vague world of mythical associations and step into the world of harsh reality. What happened in the former communist countries after 1989 was actually one single historical process that we can describe only as the restoration of capitalism. No matter what we call it: transition to democracy or belated modernization, one fundamental change occurred everywhere in Eastern Europe—the change in property relations, better known as "privatization." What under communist rule used to be common, collective, or state property is now in private hands. All those individuals (and there were many pretty serious people among them who were anything but communist dogmatists) who believed that the famous "expropriation of the expropriators," that is, the collectivization of private property—primarily the means of production—enforced during the Communist revolution, was historically an irreversible act were proven brutally wrong by the now reality. However, they were not the only ones taken by surprise. The actual political subject of this radical change was not, as the victorious liberals had expected, the celebrated free individual of emerging democracy, but rather an old one that suddenly woke from its historical sleep—the nation, which provided the institutional framework for that change. The political, juridical, executive, and, before all, the ideological apparatus of the nation-state is today the ultimate guarantee that what is now private will never again be common. Finally, if there were a simple answer to the question of what actually happened in 1989, it would be: nation and privatization. In this context, democracy was a secondary phenomenon, often nothing more than an excuse for both.
Of course, this becomes clear only in light of the essentially conservative character of the Revolution of 1989. Russia is a perfect example. What appeared there in the wake of 1989, a historical step forward toward capitalism and democracy, was actually a step backward—from the Bolshevist revolution in October 1917 to the Russian bourgeois revolution in February of the same year. In terms of political subjectification, the events in Russia also exemplified a move backward from a class of workers and peasants with its revolutionary institution of councils (Sovnarkhoz) to the nation and its state institutions, from the concept of proletarian internationalism, with its emancipatory universality, to Russian nationalism and its claims, to the imagined glory of the Russian past and sacred egotism of its future. "Russian Russia!" is what the masses were shouting at the beginning of the 1990s on the streets of Moscow, as Boris Groys reminds us in his reflections on the so-called post-communist condition. He stresses the fact that the struggle for national liberation became about the Russian anticommunist revolution. What those masses really wanted was Russia to step out of the Soviet Union. They were actually struggling for Russian independence from Soviet authority. The civil war fought in the early twentieth century between Reds and Whites was in fact a historical clash between the Communist International and nationalistic Russia. The Communists won in 1917. After 1989, Russian nationalists took revenge on them, as if this new democratic revolution, this final victory over communist totalitarianism, was nothing but a move backwards to a moment in the past when communist intervention succeeded in stopping history, violently disrupting a "natural" development and dividing the nation, its allegedly original unity destroyed, into hostile parts fighting each other—all in the name of some social, transnational society, a utopia of social justice, prosperity, and humanism.

Similar regressive and restorative processes have taken place all over post-communist Eastern Europe. The consequence, as Groys points out, has been an omnipresent conviction that communism, which has in the meantime completely disappeared from our historical horizon, was simply a kind of disruption of an otherwise "normal" development of Eastern European countries, a pause or delay that has left behind no traces except for some sort of a "backlog demand." German philosopher Jürgen Habermas has stressed this point even more explicitly. He defined the Revolution of 1989 literally as a "belated revolution" (die nachholende Revolution). Despite, as also as a "rewriting" (rückgeschriebene) revolution, the actual goal of which was to make for missed developments in Eastern Europe. In the events of 1989, he saw a clearly articulated wish by Eastern European nations to catch up, in constitutional terms, with the legacy of European bourgeois revolutions and, in a sociopolitical sense, with the forms of communication and lifestyle of advanced capitalism, especially that of the European Union.

Isn't it strange to talk about a genuine revolution, yet this revolution has brought about nothing new. On the contrary, this old-fashioned, well-known, and, as we are supposed to believe, historically tested and sufficiently proven life now seems worth catching up to and repeating. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, we celebrate the final reunion of violently divided and separated parts, a symbolic victory of love that has created one from two and restored a natural primal unity. And yet, these parts, although reunited, are still not equal, and there is no balance whatsoever between the two sides of this new wholeness, as if the old divisions have survived somehow in the guise of a new asymmetry within one and the same unity. Berlin, Germany, and Europe are divided again in two, half having existed and the other just beginning, one half occupying its firmly established historical place, while the other strives to catch up. This new difference is one between two forms of life or, to use philosophical terminology, between one whose essence has already become identical with its appearance and another, belated and alienated, that has yet to accommodate to this standard and find its true essence.

The concept of belatedness, the fundamentally conservative character of the Revolution of 1989, necessarily implicates and in fact reproduces the divisions of old and new in today's Europe. These divisions are surely not the same as those that once marked the cold war. What makes them different is the simple fact that we are more able to experience these divisions on the level of political systems or economic production. This doesn't mean, of course, that political and economic differences have disappeared. What has changed in fact is only how and where we become aware of them. Only the conceptual space of differentiation has changed, becoming now exclusively cultural. Today's differences and divisions can be seen and recognized as such only if they are articulated solely in cultural terms. Culture has completely absorbed everything that used to be our social, political, or historical experience and dominates almost the entire space of our everyday life.

This is the reason why political conflicts that are shaking our world today become visible only as conflicts of competing cultural differences. The former Realsozialismus (actual existing socialism) is the best example of this phenomenon. Its previous political utility, based upon communist ideology that has melted away since 1989, reappears thereafter as a common space of opposing cultural differences. In this perspective, insipid eruptions of repressive ethnic nationalisms are perceived to be the cause of post-communist political conflicts, including bloody civil wars. As if particular cultural values are the only source of post-communist political mobilization. The radical change in property relations, with its historically regressive character as mentioned above, took place at the same time and may also have caused some of the post-communist social tensions and conflicts, or at least had some influence that the early kings of Bavaria employed after independence in 1805, whereby the young nations formed a national identity through the promotion of art and opera. Tony Blair engaged in similar marketing in this 1990s, promoting Cecil Birtles and Young British Art. In the above cases, art functions as a cipher of contemporaneity, as contemporary art seems to have become quintessentially "of our time," a notion embraced particularly by young nations and regimes eager to boost up their otherwise politically and socially archaic legacies. The Moscow Blackout and the Sharjah Biennial—both held in the guise of projects of the Ministry of Culture or the Shirak of Sharja—clearly function to this end. Here, history is neglected in favor of an ab-encompassing contemporaneity. Some questions now. How will the future iconographies and ideologies of contemporary art relate to this "revolution," to the horror spirit against politics and ideologies, to the pressure to reach out to an audience, to the idea of art as an arena where a different public sphere can take shape? Maria Lind, curator, critic, and director, International Artists' Studio Program in Sweden (IASPIS), Stockholm
on them. This has never crossed the political minds of those in victorious capitalist democracies.

Moreover, culture also seems to have become the ultimate horizon of our experience of time, for it is only in the cultural terms of today that we can still differentiate the past from the present and make sense of historical change. This applies to the communist past too, which can only be experienced today in the guise of a different culture. In short, either we remember the communist past as a particular (communist) culture, or we don't remember it at all. There is obviously no memory except for cultural memory. And what is more, there is no cultural memory without its collective subject, which is, in the first place, a nation.

We face here the crucial paradox of European identity, which as many experts have argued, seems to emerge out of itself as a cultural by-product of political and economic unification. What still divides Europe today, what cuts it in two different parts in spite of the ongoing unification, namely its communist past, cannot be remembered by Europe itself. Every attempt to do so is doomed from the beginning, for a common past must necessarily fall apart into different nation-based cultural memories. The only communist past we remember today is always only a Polish, a Bulgarian, a Russian, or an East German one, but never a common European communist past. This paradox implicates an intrinsic impossibility of remembering communism at all. For there is no politically viable version of a transnational collective memory, and there is no subject of this memory that would be able to remember communism for what it is—despite all the terror that had accompanied it—essentially was: the concept of a universal emancipation that, from the very beginning of its political history, had been a global phenomenon. What our memory today cannot keep hold of from the past is precisely this exclusively universalist experience of communist political engagement. To the simplest member of any communist party, it was once perfectly clear, as a trivial fact, that his or her main cause was a better world, over and above the prosperity of his or her local community or the interests of its particular cultural identity—ethnic, religious, or gender. No cultural memory can recall today the worldliness of the communist political experience. This points to the crucial antimony of our historical experience today. As a particular culture necessarily structures this experience today, it is not able to recall what once had been thought, felt, and done not only beyond the bounds of any particular culture, but against cultural particularity as such. In a simple and more concrete way: We know very well that the communist past belongs to both Eastern and Western Europe and, what is even more important, to the world as a whole, and yet we don't have the conceptual means to recall this past as such. This is not because cultural memory is itself blind to the common character of the communist legacy. Far from it! In her Requiem for Communism, Charly Scriabin has shown very clearly how recent aesthetic and cultural production in Europe (both Eastern and Western) is not only well aware of a common loss created by the collapse of communism, but also able to redeem it by accomplishing some sort of a Freudian Trauerarbeit (labor of mourning) for the lost experience of collective solidarity among working men and women, typical of industrial labor's industrial modernity, i.e., its forms of life and work, has historically exhausted its utopian potential on both sides of the former iron curtain and not simply the Eastern European side, where state socialism collapsed in 1989. (Our collective European cultural memory, as Scribin believes, should recall today "and claim its reminders as sites of reflection and resistance."  ²⁶

However, what has been offered here as the solution turns out to be yet another comradeship illusion. What cultural memory is this? To what political collective does it belong, or what is today nearly the same, from which particular cultural memory does it originate? Is it not difficult to see what this cultural memory is really about in this context, namely to keep hold of something that has never existed before—communism as a particular culture—and to do it in the name of a European global collective that politically doesn't yet exist. Cultural memory, therefore, is not about making up for what we have lost in the collapse of communism, but about producing a new cultural need that can be rather easily satisfied by this cultural memory itself. In fact, cultural memory is nothing more than this need, the satisfaction of which it pretends to fulfill.

The belief that we can come to terms with our past only after we have translated it into some sort of cultural difference is more than a mere illusion. It affects our perception of reality, transforming it into a force of an ideological compulsion; that is, it determines primarily the way we become subjects in our world and not simply how we see it. The fact that this world appears to us today mainly as a space of cultural diversity, therefore, has nothing to do with objective reality. On the contrary, it is the moment of our subjectification, of the way we internalize this reality and draw experience from it. And we can rationally internalize today only what we previously have culturally externalized. In other words, we can assert ourselves as the self-conscious subjects of our lives, knowing who we are, where we historically come from, and where we are going, only in relation to some sort of culturally generated otherness, the Other of our past, the Other of all sorts of cultural particularity, the gendered Other, the neglected, marginalized, suppressed, abused, victimized, silenced, "subaltern," or otherwise excluded Other. Of course, only an ideology can provide such perfect transparency. And it does, since ideology too has survived the Revolution of 1989. If, therefore, it is never true that ideology affects again today's political reality.

The project of European unification perfectly proves this. It too follows an ideological pattern, that is articulated—and legitimized—precisely through the relation to the Other of Europe, the Other of its communist past, the East, the epistemological orientation of our own country, the loss socially unmarked condition of capitalism, and prioritized national political cultures are not due only to lower costs of being compared to Western neighbors. And a more favorable outlook toward European expansion in the East is not simply an opportunity to attain the same level of consumerism. The past experience of internationalism and several decades spent in a mega-socialist united by one ideology (although against our own will) have provoked a longing for a global, singular ideal. Eldeny communists do not miss social guarantees, but rather the mise en scène used to unite dozens of nations belonging to distinct cultures, including those of historicalxrists. Enneasu Rovinicius, Vilnius-based artist and filmmaker.
its cultural, religious, underdeveloped, backward, belated Other. In this way, the whole process of the so-called enlargement of the EU appears to us as a heroic endeavor to cope with countless differences, in short, as being part of an epochal struggle with the Other—a sort of gigantomachy of our time—that will decide the future of the entire world.

In reality, only difference that has proven precisely not to be so, difference that is basically the same as the subject who supposedly recognizes and includes it, will have the chance of being recognized and included, that is to say, an already parliamentarily democratic difference, "properly" privatized, based on free-market economics, backed by the so-called free and independent media, tolerant of minorities, or sim-
ply "post-Fordist" whatever that means." So the essence. What appears to be the genuine political cause behind the project of European unification, the one that transcends the logic of capitalist expansion giving it a "higher" legitimation, is in fact a purely eth-
cultural attitude. The United Europe of our future is, therefore, primarily a matter of belief, in a religious sense rather than a political one.

One is perfectly justified in asking here: What the hell does art have to do with it? Hopefully, nothing! That is probably the only adequate answer to this question. Any art that would adopt the project of European integration as its commitment to justify preserving fully its autonomy, its social function, and/or its financial support in the name of it is likely to betray both its aesthetic rea-
son and its political meaning. Europe is all but an innocent cause. If the European politicians are so keen to forget this, artists shouldn't be.

As Jacques Rancière has reminded us, it is precisely by virtue of art's dis-
tance from what we perceive as politics proper that it becomes truly polit-
cal. This applies fully to the historical situation in which we live. Art's very distance with respect to Europe after 1989, that is, to the ideological and political cause of Europe's integration, to the moralistic promise of its demo-
cratric tolerance, and to the aggressive narcissism of its self-assured cultural superiority—in short, to the whole myth of 1989—makes a European art today both aesthetically and politically respectable. For art and Europe have nothing essential in common.

NOTES
1. In his famous essay Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920) (ed. 18 of The
James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud London: The Hogarth Press and
the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1915], 57-80), Sigmund Freud explicitly quotes
Kripke's speech from The Symposium.
2. Boris Groys, "Die Geschichtsschreibung sucht ein neues Subjekt: Die postkommu-

Recently, a discussion has been initiated by certain Eastern European representa-
tives in the European Parliament about banning the public use of not only Nazi, but also communist symbols. In general, a political will seems to have prevailed, bent on rearticulating from memory the idea of communism as a progressive, universal, humanist concept and introducing "order" to Europe. A unified and "normal" Europe is also the aim of stimulating cultural programs as well as of the increasing conformity of individual member states' cultural policies with European policy. Indeed, art should distance itself from the European culture of tolerance. In reality, it is a culture of con-
formity, one that interprets the history of commun-
imism as an aberration comparable to Nazism or fascism, in the sense of righting the wrongs of yester-
day and improving prospects for all. But that raises questions: How can art maintain its distance and at the same time accept funding from European cultural programs dedicated to stimulating collabo-
ration and common subjects? How can radical dif-
ference be recognized and entered in a situation
where the production, distribution, and presentation of art are guided by more and more conforming
directions? And how might one prevent stereo-
copied or distorted European policy from appropriating and absorbing all critical perspectives—even the most avant-garde and extreme ones—and making them part of the latter's increasingly banal idea of cul-
tural difference and "tolerance"?

Zdenka Badovinac, director, Moderna galerija
Ljubljana, Ljubljana

some new idea of democracy that will go beyond already known concepts of
parliamentary democracy, political parties, citizenship, etc.? The problem with
this question is that every possible answer is a radical one. No decision can
be made in this matter without risk and conflict or without some sort of a rad-

cal (revolutionary?) change, in short, without dealing with radical political
difference, one that cannot be simply recognized and included according to
the principle of (cultural) tolerance. This is the reason why this challenge is so
traumatic. It hits the European ideological edifice at its very foundation, in
the mechanism of its subjectification. What constitutes the political and his-
torical identity of today's Europe, if not dealing with cultural differences, rec-
ognizing and including the Other, following the imperative of tolerance? To put
it quite simply, Europe is nothing but a culture of tolerating cultures, which is
mistaken for social essence. Where does the art and its project of European uni-

THE REVOLUTION OF 1989

3. Ibid.


In her book, Scibor analyses a number of literary texts, artworks, and other cultural projects (museums, collections, etc.) that in some way deal with the communist past, including the writings of Christa Wolf, John Berger, and Leslie Kaplan; films of Andrzej Wajda, Krzysztof Kieslowski, and Mark Herman; the German museum collection Ottoneus Depot; The Detachment, an installation by the French conceptual artist Sophie Calle; sculpture by Rachel Whiteread, etc.

6. Ibid., 4.

7. Against this ideological background, we can understand certain unexpected and curious developments on the European art scene, like the sudden interest in so-called Balkan art. Over a period of only one year in Austria and Germany, there were three large and quite ambitious exhibitions of the art from the Balkans: In Search of Balkania (October–December 2002), curated by Roger Conover, Eda Gonè, and Peter Weibel at Neue Galerie Graz, Graz, Austria; Bild und HRR: Zukunft ist am Balkan (Blood and Honey: Future’s in the Balkans) (May–September 2003), curated by Harald Szeemann at Sammlung Eo, Klösterneuburg, Austria; and in the Schlosshof des Balkans: einer Ruggage (In the Gorges of the Balkans: A Report) (August–November 2003), curated by René Block at Kunstehalle Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany.


10. Ibid., 23.

11. In a speech at the General Assembly of the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (EFH) in Lille, France, in October 2004, Adonis Guidero, who was then the senator for science, research, and culture in Berlin and since 2002 has served as curator of the city’s Hauptstadtkulturhöfe (Cultural Capital Funds), told an anecdote about artists’ applications for financial support in 2004. The majority of their project proposals began with the sentence: "In the year of the enlargement of the European Union..."

12. See Jacques Rancière, The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2004), 60: "Consignment is not a category of art. This does not mean that art is apolitical. It means that aesthetics has its own politics, or its own meta-politics.

EUROPE CALLING

Rem Koolhaas interviewed by Hans-Ulrich Obrist

Hans-Ulrich Obrist: You have been thinking intensely about Europe for some time now. The culmination of this seems to be your recent series of exhibitions called The Image of Europe and its vast panorama of European history. How did this project start? I recall that, a few years ago, you told me about your participation in a think tank about Brussels in which Umberto Eco was involved...

Rem Koolhaas: In December 2000, at the summit of the European Union (EU) in Nice, it was decided that Brussels would be the capital of the EU. Both Romano Prodi, the president of the European Commission (EC), and Guy Verhofstadt, the prime minister of Belgium, were involved, but neither of them had a sense of the implications of that decision. So they called together a group of people and had a daylong brainstorming session, followed by two more meetings. It was a very interesting group, although most of the people were men. The group included, among others, a French moviemaker, the guy that invented Swatch, and Umberto Eco. We spent the first day trying to define what the elements or emblems of "a capital" are and were asked to invent a "European" institution, like a museum of "European" civilization, yet we felt that those kinds of institutions are really ponderous, onerous, and uninteresting. I believe it was Umberto Eco who proposed that, instead of an actual museum, we might conceive of a virtual museum. The most crucial and painful impression that came out of this was how little I and other invited people knew about how the European Union works. So I came back to the office a bit embarrassed by my profound ignorance as a European intellectual about the institution that has been drastically changing Europe. I was determined to correct our ignorance. That was the basis for our Europe project. We started looking at Brussels and wondering what could be done in Brussels by analyzing how "Europe" is present in Brussels. That led AMO to begin a study of the iconography of Europe and, by implication, to study the status of that iconography today. We presented this to Romano Prodi and Guy Verhofstadt, and they, in turn, asked us if our work could be considered the official result or product of the brainstorm. And that is, to some extent, and, by default, how we became involved.
WHICH EUROPE?

HUB: We have spoken in the past of invisible cities, especially in the context of your Mutations project, but what you have described is, in a way, an invisible continent: Europe. I remember in our first discussions that you were confronted with the strange "invisibility" of the continent. Could you talk a bit about this?

RK: For AMQ, The Image of Europe project has been particularly interesting because we have worked so long on it that it has enabled us to work in different phases and to come to conclusions that were not at all evident in the beginning. In essence, we found that the iconography that represents Europe is profoundly inadequate, and that inadequateness is, I think, partly responsible for the low regard in which Europe is held. We discovered this when we were looking at Brussels the city, but also at the history of the EU, and how it represents itself. The ambition to create a united Europe is such an incredible project and had to overcome so many obstacles that a certain degree of invisibility in the beginning was very productive for proceeding but later became problematic in terms of communication. Our own work evolved over time and toward unexpected dimensions; we abandoned the emphasis on the iconographic and started to look at what had been achieved by the EU, how it had been achieved, and the fundamental reasons for it's existence, but also how it was crafted, and what potential directions it could take in the future. And then, we began to look at how such achievements might be communicated.

HUB: I remember you often spoke about engaging with politics. Jacques Delors speaks about this and the necessity to re-politicize, arguing that there is currently a triple crisis of politics: a crisis of the nation-state, a crisis of politics searching for a project and common values again, and the crisis of European construction, which is a paradox because Europe has never before been more interesting and active. Dozens of countries want to join the EU...

RK: Interestingly enough, when we started working on this project in early 2001, there was no interest whatsoever in Europe as a political institution. It was really a blank spot. So in that sense, it is a fascinating development that in four years it has become the subject – that’s a fantastic development for all parties. But it also means that our tone had to change all the time because in the beginning we had to draw attention to an unknown issue that everyone now knows is a crucial issue.

HUB: How did that initial study lead to the exhibition in Munich and Brussels? And when does the invention of a barcode flag for Europe emerge in this process? In the past, you’ve mentioned propaganda and the propagandistic nature of such things as flags and codes. Is that the case here, too?

EUROPE CALLING

RK: The flag reflects an initial, playful, and not particularly serious idea. It suggested that there might be other ways to make the EU visible than through existing morose symbols. When we studied it in a more fundamental way, we realized that, since states or governments didn’t really advertise or proclaim the reasons for the EU anymore, Europe needed to develop its own dialogue to explain and advertise why it exists. We looked at the history of propaganda. Propaganda is usually defined by sound bites or by simplifying issues. The beauty of Europe is that you cannot simplify it, as it is an infinitely complex process. So in the end, we interpreted what we were doing as propaganda for complexity—a paradox since those two issues usually don’t fit together. The exhibition, therefore, consists of two parts: the history of Europe and the history of the EU. After World War II, for the first time, it became possible to define a European narrative objective and integrate the entire story without lying, but nevertheless negotiating the paradoxes that characterized Europe: that one nation’s villain is another nation’s hero. If you look at the current tensions between China and Japan, you see what an achievement this single history has been. It is really a very persistent issue. In our project, we made a very serious effort to develop a narrative that is valid for all parties and tells the history of the EU, which includes all the important moments, disasters, crises, arguments, actors, and triggers for change in a way which hasn’t been done and which is accessible. We have our own hesitations, of course; we wonder whether it is intellectually serious or respectable enough or, whether it is the right thing to do at this moment, but on the one hand, you could be more earnest, and on the other hand, you could be more populist, and yet I think it proposes an ultimately plausible dimension to Europe’s history.

RK: These multiple dimensions made it a very interesting project to me. I would like to ask you more about the historical panorama as it took shape. In it, the writings of thinkers like Jacques Derrida, Peter Sloterdijk, Benedict Anderson, and others are brought into action. I didn’t think of the project as tracing the finished past or unforeseeable future of Europe, but about a form of dynamic memory – Derrida called it “double memory.” In Europe, reactionary forces are co-opting the use and the entire notion of memory, making it static. In an amazing way, what you showed is the possibility of using memory in a dynamic way. Neuroscience has proven that memory is dynamic. But I think that Europe has a kind of memory problem...
moment of modernization, where all modernization is driven by nostalgia, on
every level. Yet, we are absolutely disintegrated in the past, in history. Auschwitz,
for example, has become nostalgia, and there are more and more instruments of
memory and less and less actual remembrance. That's a quite pervasive
thing. Nostalgia means living permanently in a form of denial, and what is
particularly sinister about it is that it is driving the left as much as the right,
intellectually as much as the general population. What is underneath all of
this, and indeed, the essential operation that is necessary to redefine what
"modern" means.

HUG: What is amazing about your project is that a lot of those things are actually visualized—they are seen through pictures, timelines, maps, etc., even more than through texts. If one sees a map, one sees that Europe is not a homogenized space. Can you speak a little bit about how those visuals combine with the multi-
linguial aspect of the project? You call it "Eurobable," a Balabean dimension of multilingualism...

RK: What is ultimately beautiful in the EU project—and maybe we live in a
very intense moment of it at present—it is, in spite of the efforts of the
politicians and in spite of the effort of bureaucrats, a new understanding of
Europe developing and emerging that is completely independent of them. There is no construction of a super state in progress but rather the co-
existence of difference, the construction of a virtue out of difference. And this is an incredibly rare thing. At the moment, there are many fears that the differences between European countries are disappearing, and that is the way that the EU functions. Ethnologists are constantly counting the languages
that are disappearing, the cultures, the species. But in fact, Europe is a
very strong counterfeit to that flattening and is investing in the preservation
of regional difference, ironically at the cost of a certain "inefficiency."

You could say that the entire project is a post-September II project, in the
sense that we felt there was a compelling reason for Europe to develop a
degree of representation that would be sufficiently robust so that the Bush
vision would not abuse it because Bush has been putting all kinds of wedges
between any seam that Europe revealed. That is the underlying theme in the
whole project. But a further implicit driving it is that, since the September II, we are able to realize that there is a connection between Europe, Russia, China,
and India, which means that, for the next twenty-five years, Eurasia is the site
where both creativity, productively, and the next iteration of all these separate
identities and the relationships between them as a larger whole will be identi-
fied. That's an instinct of mine, but I feel wholly convinced that it's true, and
as you may remember, we discovered it by looking at the increased air travel
of all these countries at the expense of the Atlantic circle.

HUG: In Brussels, the project took the form of an exhibition in a tent that revisited the
panorama, which many artists have used since the nineteenth century. I've been thinking about panoramas and, among other things, about the unrealized
alpine panorama of Giovanni Segantini for the Paris World Exhibition in 1900.
Panoramas are, by definition, meant to present a singular, all-encompassing view.
But in your project, the panoramic is made up of parallel views or contradictions—
the lines of sight in your panorama go in two directions.

RK: For the display in Brussels, we thought for a long time about how we
could do that. It was a collaborative project with Jens Hommert, Reinier de
Graaf, and Brandon McGregror; Jens was particularly responsible for the exhibition portion. I don't know exactly how it all came about, but we very early on thought of the idea
of the two interlocking panoramas. The panorama is, of course, very traditional. We found it very important not to make it virtual, slick, or computer-based and
scientific, since with those mediums you get a smooth, narrative sequence and a certain amount of erasure of the tension between history and the pre-
sent. In the tent, the beauty was that the panorama defined a central space, and
in that central space, we created a kind of thing like the Jean Monnet statue and, most particularly, the acquis communau-
taire, that book of eighty thousand pages of all those rules that together
define "Europe."

HUG: We are back to memory again. One of the things that I want to ask you about
is the relationship of culture to your project. I have been rereading Denis de
Rougemont, who was one of the founding protagonists with his idea of a cultural
Europe. I wonder how you see The Image of Europe as a cultural project of the
twenty-first century?

RK: I think that to speak of a "cultural project" today is too limited, and
that is partly because culture has become part of the market economy.
Perhaps the only domain that is not entirely absorbed by the market is the
political domain. If you talk about real imagination at the surface of more
than commercial forces or more than strictly limited forces, then politics is
in itself a culture. That is also a positive outcome of globalization: We live in
such an incredibly radical moment that the best way to participate is
through politics rather than culture. It is wonderful, though, given the
demand of the project a cultural reading and to interpret it also as an effort to politicize
architecture.

HUG: Do you see this as a further step away from architecture? Indeed this
project—set up in a readymade circus tent in an open public space in Brussels
and then in an existing art museum, the Haus der Kunst, in Munich—had little to
do with constructing or imagining a new architecture and even less to do with
design. I thought that your project was a big leap forward for you in this regard...

RK: It was the furthest we ever went in not relying on any explicit reference
or connection to architecture, and the project is really driven by the ambition to
ultimately disconnect from architecture. For us personally, it has been incredibly important that, as the rest of the architectural field is increasingly prec‐
cupied by last years’ biennial and moving in the direction of an astonishing process of homogenization, we wished to step away from that and announce our final lack of interest in it.

HUD: Not only was The Image of Europe project not explicitly architectural, but it took the form of an exhibition. What chance do you think exhibitions (of all sorts, but also exhibitions of contemporary art) have to awaken a public awareness about important issues or motivate change in general? I ask because, increasingly, large-scale international exhibitions like Documenta, the proliferating biennials all over the world, and even the Itinerant European biennial, Manifesta, aim to be platforms for the visualization and discussion of the political implications of glob‐
alization, border openings, immigration, and even Europe.

RK: The point about The Image of Europe show was its limitations to the con‐
struction, workings, and future of Europe, independent of any other issues, let alone our “feelings” about Europe.

HUD: The project is an interesting pendant in fact to your very first architectural project, The Berlin Wall as Architecture (1970). I remember when we spoke about that project in an earlier interview you said: “To see the Berlin Wall as architec‐
ture was for me the first spectacular revelation in architecture of how absence can be stronger than presence.” You also said that this realization had an impact on your position against architecture, which, in a way, seems fully realized with The Image of Europe. A lot has changed in Europe since that 1970s moment, most notably the status of that piece of “architecture” that once ran through Berlin. I wonder if you could speak about Europe as a result of 1980 and the changes that you see since the fall of the Wall, which perhaps have been less discussed? Do you feel, for instance, that East and West fully act now as if the Wall were no longer dividing them?

RK: Europe now is like a fast-forwarded movie that shows you what happens after the elimination of the Wall, first to Europe, East and West, but eventually to Asia and the entire world. In retrospect, it’s clear that the Wall had had bigger consequences than anyone could have imagined at the time. It kept Europe and Asia apart, therefore, it kept Europe and America together. Now that it’s gone, you understand what it actually prevented from happening.

HUD: What new institutions are required in this post-1989 Europe to respond to those changes. I have been wondering, for instance, if we should invent a new col‐
lege in Europe—perhaps a European Black Mountain College...

RK: That should actually be our next project—places that can compete with the best American universities. You could have thousands of Chinese and Indians studying here, but there is no place for them to go. Europe has to construct something totally different, a kind of laboratory to investigate the relationship between power, the military, religion, race, and history, for instance.

HUD: If one looks at the whole question of the enlargement of Europe eastward, such a laboratory seems particularly relevant, and it might help to make European expansion more productive. Because the idea of expanding, of pushing boundaries,
I think that the current discussion about immigration is taking a suicidal and dangerous turn because we escape from the question of citizenship. And I think that it’s fundamentally connected to an inability to grasp the contemporary—is what Europe’s potentials are. We are not alert enough in embracing some of the positive consequences. To use an example: In Amsterdam in the 1960s there was a horrible planned project, the Bijlmermeer, and in 1972, while people moved in, started moaning about it not being finished, and immediately turned around to go back to the city. This meant that the buildings became available to recent immigrants from Turkey, Ghana, etc. There were the most incredible discussions between young leftist politicians, academics in Amsterdam. ‘Get rid of this, and this, and this,’ and that’s where I find the academic world basically useless because, in effect, those buildings turned out to be incredibly creative, capturing the dynamism and diversity of all those new citizens. The immigrants organized the entire project complex. They self-organized, dedicating blocks to one national-ity or another. They imported their own drugs, their own merchandise, and filled their own supermarkets. Everything became incredibly multilingual, and they created their own radio stations. Actually, what was going on was really incredible but no one saw it, no one got it. Even today, it’s treated as a disaster zone. I think that in the rest of the world there is the same kind of thing. The typical pizza restaurant in Germany, for instance, is run by Turks, and yet the discussion of the politicians is that these people should know about German history and should have a minimal sense of belonging to an identity, etc., so it is a completely counterproductive and reactionary idea and also part of this nostalgia. It would be really interesting to locate the moment that nausea started to become the dominant mode.

HUO: And where would you locate it? Would you say it was postmodernism?

RK: I think that it was probably earlier, no?

February 2005
Transcription by Frances Horn.

NOTES
1. Founded in 1998, AMO is the think-tank pendant to the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), which Rem Koolhaas established in London in 1975 with Elia Zenghelis, Zoe Zenghelis, and Madelon Vriesendorp. While OMA, now headquartered in Rotterdam, continues to design buildings and plan cities, AMO (as inversion of the acronym OMA rather than one in its own right) focuses on ideas, the speculative, the virtual, and the unbuilt. Ed.
WHEN EAST WAS EAST AND
WEST WAS WEST:
ART ATTITUDES IN THE COLD WAR*

Henry Meyric Hughes

There have been a number of different visions of Europe (from Napoleon's to Hitler's), not all of which we would nowadays regard as benign. The meeting at Yalta between Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin in February 1945 determined the shape of Europe and the pattern of relations for the next fifty years. But only the threat of "greater German" hegemony was sufficient to hold together the anti-Fascist alliance between the Soviet Union and the Western capitalist democracies. The Western nations were anxious to get on with the business of rebuilding their shattered economies, with American support, and preferred to meet the Soviet threat with a policy of containment rather than one of confrontation. In Eastern Europe, the struggle against foreign domination went on, and ideas of resistance and of civil disobedience took root. In a famous speech at Fulton, Missouri, Churchill already had warned of the impending danger: "From Stettin on the Baltic to Trieste on the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line, lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central and eastern Europe—Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Sofia....This is certainly not the liberated Europe which we fought to build up." There was a brief moment of uncertainty from 1945 to 1948-49, when the communists sought tactical alliances with the socialist parties in Eastern Europe. But after that, the ideas of a Danube confederation or a wider "United States of Europe," of the kind envisaged by Churchill to counter Soviet expansionism, were replaced with a fragile equilibrium between two opposing power "blocs" represented by NATO and the common market in the West and the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) in the East.

The next four decades form the new historical period referred to as the "cold war," which was dominated by a Manichean and sometimes apocalyptic view of the ideological struggle between East and West. Images of an "iron curtain" and a homogenous Eastern (or communist) "bloc" all too often obscured from Western observers the varied contours of Central and East
Central Europe and their convoluted pasts, while the peoples inhabiting those regions felt cut off from their natural historical and political affiliations to the West, abandoned to their own devices, and throw back on their inner resources. Right up to the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, Westerners seemed content with their version of a little Europe based on the Franco-German alliance and rooted in the assumption of growing material prosperity under the protective umbrella of the United States. The overthrow of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe changed everything at a stroke, and the choice of Berlin as the eventual capital of a reunited Germany signaled the dramatic shift eastward of Europe's center of gravity. The Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, which began with Stalinization in the late 1940s, was characterized by successive waves of liberalization and repression, reflecting the key political developments in Moscow, such as the (relative) "thaw" of the Khruhchev era from 1956 to 1964, the stagnation of Brezhnev and his short-lived successors from 1964 until 1985, and the perestroika of Gorbachev, which ended in the disbandment of the Soviet empire in 1991. It was punctuated by Stalin's off with Tito in 1948, leading to Yugoslavia's position outside the main socialist camp, and the "Finlandization" of Austria in 1955 as well as the workers' uprising in East Berlin in 1953, the Hungarian "counterrevolution" in 1956, Prague Spring in 1968, and the rise of the Polish Solidarity movement in 1981–82, with all their attendant consequences.

Each of these events had major repercussions within the countries concerned and a powerful effect on their political, economic, and cultural development, but local circumstances varied so much from one country to the next that it is impossible to speak of a uniform or synchronous development throughout the region as a whole. This is particularly true of the cultural field and the gradual recovery of artistic life, from the blanked imposition of socialist realism to the attempted nationalization of the means of artistic production (i.e., the imposition of state control over the academies, studios, awards, commissions, sale of artists' materials, and practically everything else affecting the individual artist's livelihood). Initially at least, artists not playing a full part in the official unions or academic groupings worked in a position of near isolation, and their achievements were local and went unreported. News of their activities that reached the West was due largely to the occasional relaxation of constraints on the movement of people, works of art, and ideas, reflecting the barometric changes in the political climate referred to above rather than a response to pressure from artists, critics, dealers, or curators in the "free world." Even within the "Eastern bloc" itself, it was sometimes easier to gather up-to-date information about artistic life in the West (or the Soviet Union) than in its neighboring countries. Those anxious to defend the notion of an unbroken continuity in the cultural development of Europe as a whole often emphasize one point: the common intellectual heritage of all parts of Europe, which had been affected by the great religious and intellectual movements from the Middle Ages onward, as well as the social revolutions, of which marxism was one of the principal motors, and early modernism, in which Vienna, Prague, Budapest, and other capitals in the region played a notable part. There is truth in this, as there is in the assertion that marxism is itself an important part of Western heritage. But we should not be allowed to forget that official ideology allowed no room for the study of individual psychology (Freud or Nietzsche, surrealism or existentialist philosophy), that Adorno and the Frankfurt School were unknown, Benjamin unheard of, and that structuralist philosophy and its aftermath were regarded in official quarters as characteristic products of late capitalist decline. Many of the principal sources of twentieth-century modernism were banned, occluded, or partially inaccessible to the majority of artists and is of interest in question. In contrast, much of the most creative thinking of marxist philosophers and theorists ( Lukács and his school, for example, or Brecht and his followers) had been completed by the 1950s and passed over into the Western corpus of thought, where it reached American campuses at the time of the Vietnam War and was absorbed into mainstream political discourse in Western Europe at the time of the protest movements of 1968. Official culture in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe languished in a heavily subsidized limbo and access to popular Western culture was blocked. Individuals were left to pick up the threads of their own traditions and tie them together with their fragmentary perceptions of what was going on in the West.

Socialist realism was only pressed into service in the satellite states of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland from 1949 until the death of Stalin in 1953 or, at the latest, 1955. It barely survived as a style, though the link between politically committed art and some form of realism lasted a great deal longer. At the very least, socialist realism provided independently inclined artists with a negative model against which they felt an urge and even a moral compulsion to react, often by retreating into a private world of denial or by explicitly renouncing the possibility of social engagement. It helped to sustain a widespread belief in the myth of the inviolability of the avant-garde, for some time after such illusions had been dispelled in the West, and provided their work with an ethical determinant that was to be a frequent source of misunderstanding in the West.

Throughout most of the 1950s, it was virtually impossible for artists from Eastern Europe to travel and exhibit in the West, unless they belonged to the privileged elite associated with the official unions and state-run institutions. Countries such as France and Italy still had large communist parties and many communist sympathizers among artists and intellectuals, but the brutal suppression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956 fatally weakened the position of the Stalinists among them. What was occasionally exhibited in state-sponsored exhibitions of Eastern European art in the West merely served to rein-
force a Western prejudice against figurative painting in general and art engaged in particular. Westerners scarcely suspected the existence of an alternative art scene in certain of the countries in Eastern Europe and implicitly rejected the notion of “inner emigration.”

Yugoslavia went its own way in 1948, after its rift with the Soviet Union, and later became prominent as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, which included countries such as Egypt and India. In any case, art there was freed from most stylistic constraints by around 1950, after which official blessing was bestowed on a wide variety of personal expressions, ranging from naive or primitive art to abstract art and magical realism. Marshall Tito is known to have encouraged artists to break out forcibly against modernist artistic tendencies in the semi-privilege of his own circle of supporters, but from the 1950s onward, Titos Yugoslavia did much to promote contemporary art, both at home and abroad, as a sign of political liberalism (though artists were well advised to avoid any direct allusion to political themes) and a demonstration of cultural independence from the Soviet “bloc.”

The situation in Austria in the early 1950s was comparable to that in Germany, insofar as the country was divided into different zones of allied occupation (until 1955), and regional centers, such as Graz, Innsbruck, and Klagenfurt, were almost as important to incipient cultural life as the capital, Vienna. However, in contrast to Western Germany, little or no attempt was made to come to terms with the recent past or to rehabilitate the modernist artists and intellectuals who had suffered persecution at the hands of the National Socialists. This explains in large measure the violence of the Actionists’ revolt against bourgeois attitudes to sex and religion and the limited impact of contemporary Austrian art outside the country itself until the early 1960s.2

In so far as the history of East-West relations in this century, Germany has played a pivotal role. Indeed, it might be said that the early ideological struggles over the division of war play were put out on the territory of divided Germany, with the superpowers (the United States and the Soviet Union) on the touch-line spurring on their respective sides. In this respect at least, the two Germans continue to represent a certain idea of Middle Eastern (or perhaps, more authentic and original “national” school of painting eventually grew up on the unpromising soil of Soviet-inspired socialism realism). The Dritte Deutsche Kunstausstellung in Dresden in 1953 was the first in this series effectively to exclude modernist tendencies and West German participation. It attracted a total of 200,000 visitors, and its success contributed, in part, to the West Germans’ determination to establish a rival quadrennial international event of their own in Kassel, some three hundred kilometers to the west, on their own side of the border.

Documenta 1 in 1955 had aimed to reinstate the centrality of modern art as a reaction to the Nazis’ “cleansing of the temple of art,” while Documenta 2 in 1959 (134,000 visitors) gave prominence to American abstract expressionism and the idea of abstraction as a world language.29 Werner Haftmann, the principal architect of Documenta 2, went out of his way to emphasize the independence of the artist from social and political concerns and reverted to German idealist aesthetics to justify the virtual exclusion of all forms of realist art.30 Thus, Documenta 2 came to be described as a direct riposte to the hard-line policies for a politically engaged, figurative art laid down that year by Walter Ulbricht and the art functionaries of the GDR with their so-called “Bitterfeld Way.”31 It marked the highpoint in the controversy over the respective merits of abstraction versus figurative art (or formalism versus humanism, in communist terminology), which had dominated artistic debate throughout the decade on both sides of the ideological divide.

The 1960s brought a gradual loosening up of political and artistic doctrines and the easing of some of the restrictions on travel and communications contributed to the development of artistic dialogue between East and West. The influence of American art in Europe reached its peak in the period, beginning with the consecration of pop art at the 1964 Venice Biennale, where Robert Rauschenberg won the major painting prize, and ending around the time of the oil crisis in 1973. As the 1960s progressed, United States influence expanded to embrace minimalist and conceptual art, hyperrealism, happenings, performance art, body art, earth art, and the rest of what has now come to be regarded as second-wave modernism. All these movements met with a sympathetic response in Central and Eastern Europe, in so far as they provided an alternative to prevailing orthodoxies, though ideas from abroad sometimes arrived late, were imperfectly understood or modified in relation to local circumstances, and were mostly developed in private. The state’s espousal of some of the safer brands of abstraction placed avant-gardes in Yugoslavia (east Serbia, Belgrade, and the Medvedgrad and Knjazevac positions), and this no doubt encouraged younger, more radically inclined artists to demonstrate their independence by experimenting with different ways of engaging once more with reality, from hyperrealism to actions and performances. It may also account, in part, for the introspective nature of much Central and Eastern European art and the artists’ involvement with elements of their own lives in their work — qualities that enjoy wide currency today.

Little is known in the West about the Hungarian or Czechoslovak variants of pop art, for instance, though some of the supposed protagonists had occasion when we have the opportunity to undertake a new type of investigation that bypasses both ideological and political rivalry and prejudices in order to construct a new and fuller history of contemporary art. Take Manifesta as an example. It was one of the first events of its kind to transcend national borders. It attempted to overcome the official (and sup-
to exhibit there on their own but out of context. A number of leading protagonists also emigrated to the West (Egylsa Konkoly in 1970, for example, and Laszlo Lakner in 1973). Indeed, it is hard to determine whether the use of this label even makes any sense, when it is applied to work produced under entirely different social and political conditions and in the virtual absence of a consumer market or an advertising industry. One Yugoslav critic asserted that no local brand of hyperrealism had emerged in his country because the economic conditions were not right for it, whereas German critics reviewing Lakner's first show in that country in 1974 treated him as a hyperrealist, when in reality he was handling the pictorial imagery of communist propaganda with a perfectly conventional painterly technique. Much of the conceptual or performance art of this period was poorly documented and never accessible to the general public, so even local audiences had to wait for twenty to thirty years to see comprehensive and carefully researched exhibitions, such as Body and the East: From the 1960s to the Present in Ljubljana (1998) or an exhibition of "Polish" conceptual art (only an apparent contradiction in terms perhaps) in Warsaw (1999). Little such work was seen in the West at the time of its production, and as the Slovenian curator of Body and the East points out in her catalogue introduction, "just as Western art has mainly presented itself to the relatively isolated East as reproduced in magazines and books, so the East has been presented in the West with a small quantity of poor quality documents, with white spots in retrospectives of European art, with the myths of official art and suffering dissidents. In this dialogue, the power always remained on the side of the West which has been constantly producing new trends." The fact that George Maciunas nominated Milan Knizak to be the official representative of Fluxus East in 1965 and that the latter succeeded in organizing an international Fluxus festival in Prague one year later seems for more important in the Czech context than in the international one. (Knizak's appointment to the prestigious directorship of the National Gallery in Prague in the 1990s provides a witty epilogue to this!) In general, it is hard to disagree with the verdict of the British performance artist Adrian Henri that it was often difficult in the atmosphere of "repressive tolerance" (Marcuse) in the West to appreciate fully the radical nature of any new art that might be construed as a political action in its country of origin.

Work still remains to be done on the reception in the West of some of the more ephemeral and transportable forms of art that succeeded in crossing the frontiers in both directions with relative ease, from concrete poetry to mail art and multiples. (There was a particularly active scene in Hungary in the 1970s, but even in the repressive GDR, Robert Rehfeld managed to establish an active web of postal communications with artists from all over the world.) Some reference would need to be made in this context to the role played by small independent galleries, such as the Galeria Foksal in Warsaw and

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Akumulatory 2 in Poznan, as well as the student centers and clubs in a number of principal cities in the East, which managed to use public funding intended for individual visits and exchanges to invite artists from the West to present sculpture-sized exhibitions to a limited, invited public. Needless to say, encounters such as these did much to promote bilateral contacts, at a time when they were extremely difficult to sustain, and undoubtedly helped to make the art of a number of Eastern European avant-gardists better known in professional circles in the West.

One area of fruitful exchange was in the field of geometric abstraction and related forms of kinetic and op art in the 1960s. Artists from Poland had gravitated to Paris beginning in the 1920s, and this link was maintained by the Salon des realites nouvelles, founded in 1947, and the Galerie Denise René, which mounted the important exhibition The East in Pologne in 1957 including work by Henkry Berlew, Katarzyna Kobro, Władyw Strzemilwski, and Kazimir Malewicz. This exhibition and others like it were instrumental in highlighting the direct link between Strzeminski's Unitarianism and the pioneering work of Malevich in Soviet Russia. In turn they are recorded as having exercised a direct influence on the evolution of the work of Max Bill in Switzerland, the somewhat younger François Moreleit in France, and Günther Uecker in West Germany.

Constructivism and various forms of geometric art had an equally long and virtually unbroken history in Hungary. Most of the pioneers, such as Vilmos Huszár and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, emigrated to the West between the wars, but among those who returned, Lajos Kassák and Sándor Bortnyik exerted a direct influence on younger artists in the 1950s and 1960s. Kassák himself had his first solo exhibition abroad at the Galerie Denise René in 1960 at the age of seventy-three, and the younger Victor Vasarely (a former pupil of Bortnyik before emigrating to Paris in 1930) became a pioneer first of kinetic art in the late 1950s then of op art around 1965. The strength and continuing vitality of the Hungarian constructivist tradition were demonstrated in a number of exhibitions in Western Europe in the 1970s and in two parallel exhibitions at the Fodor Museum in Amsterdam, where eight contemporary artists from Budapest were shown alongside The Hungarian Constructivist Tradition until the 1980s (1988). In contexts such as these, Western viewers could trace the survival in Central Europe of a tradition of fine arts and design closely linked to a faith in social and technological progress, which had become unfashionable in the West by the 1970s. By and large, the utopian component in the urge to intervene in all branches of human thought and activity ran parallel rather than counter to the prevailing socialist ideology and could be followed back to William Morris and the social reformers of the nineteenth century, via the Russian constructivist movement, the neoplastic idealism of de Stijl, and the praxial utopism of Bauhaus.

Until the 1980s, contemporary art from Central and Eastern European
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countries became known in the West most frequently through group exhibitions selected by the sending country and funded under reciprocal arrangements laid down according to the terms of bilateral cultural exchange agreements with host countries in the West. The problem with the majority of such exhibitions was that they reflected not so much the ideological as the aesthetic prejudices of the established bureaucracy and the selfish interests of the individuals controlling the artists' unions, in addition to the usual considerations of national representation and geographical balance, as in the case of federated states such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Where possible, exhibitions toured a number of countries or individual cities for reasons of economy, and little attention was paid either to the suitability of the host venue or the potential relevance of the work on show to the interests and concerns of the audience at the receiving end. A country's openness to the West could be measured by the volume of two-way traffic, but qualitative criteria, such as the nature of public and critical response, took second place in the general scheme of things. The typical package might be tagged with a label such as Modern Paintings and Graphic Art from the CSSR (Munich 1966) or 23 Ungarische Künstler (Bielefeld, 1969). The characteristic Western response, when it was not in like kind, seldom went beyond an affirmation of established values, such as academic abstraction or assertions of a "humanist" faith, as in the case of a figurative artist such as Henry Moore.

The International Association of Art Critics (IAIC) played an important role in sustaining contacts between critics in East and West. Of particular relevance were the three congresses held in Eastern Europe—in Poland in 1960 and 1976 and in Czechoslovakia in 1966—and the exhibitions organized locally to coincide with them. These events not only gave Western critics, such as Pierre Restany and Dan Ashton, the opportunity to meet colleagues and artists who were prevented from traveling abroad, but it enabled them to write up what they had seen in some of the leading art journals on their return. Restany acted as the Paris correspondent for two Czechoslovak reviews in the years of ferment between 1964 and 1968 and introduced his readers to novávek realism, of which he was the leading theoretical exponent. At the same time, he did much to help artists from the region to visit the West and exhibit their work there—most notably, perhaps, Alex Mlynarcik who became actively involved in artistic circles in Paris in the late 1960s and later an influential figure behind the scenes in his native Slovakia in the much changed, repressive climate of the 1970s and 1980s.

Private individuals in the West were generally more successful than the representatives of publicly funded institutions in making the necessary contacts in unofficial circles and bringing back work from Eastern Europe for exhibition. The Scottish gallery owner Richard Demarco, who succeeded in mounting successive exhibitions of Romanian, Polish, and Yugoslav art at a very early date (from the late 1960s and early 1970s onward) within the con-

text of the Edinburgh International Festival, demonstrated just what was possible, given the necessary commitment and determination. He also engineered the sensational first performances in Britain in 1972 of Tatlin's Kantor's distinctly anachronistic Cricot 2 Theater—seventeen years after the company's first clandestine appearances in their city of origin, Kraków. (Kantor became a popular figure with audiences in Britain, as in Germany and Italy, though his impact there had much to do with spectators' own black-and-white preconceptions about conditions under communism and was largely confined to the theatrical world rather than across the whole spectrum of the arts, as in Poland.) The seeds sown by Demarco during this period bore fruit in a major Hungarian arts festival organized by the Third Eye Centre in Glasgow in 1985, which introduced artists such as Miklós Erdely, Ilona Keszeru, and Sandor Pinczeheyi to Britain for the first time.24 Its most notable achievement was perhaps for its inclusion of the sculptor Mikosz Balza, the installation artist Mariusz Kruk, and painters such as Tomasz Cieciernski and Leon Tarasiewicz. However, it may be worth remarking on the political dimension to these events, which were undoubtedly connected not only to the increasing liberalization of East Central Europe, but also to the self-esteem of a Labour-dominated council in Glasgow and Scottish aspirations to greater cultural independence within the United Kingdom. As so often in East-West exchanges, political rather than the artistic agenda dictated the timing and the nature of relations. Indeed, of all the artists shown in Glasgow, only Mikosz Balza has been given a subsequent opportunity of wider exposure in London.25 Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, West Germany was more receptive than other countries in the West to the first tentative signs of liberalization among the communist regimes, though major institutions continued to ignore art from Central and Eastern Europe. Whether some of the initiatives mounted at the time reflected a genuine thirst for knowledge, a desire to escape from provincial constraints, or a predilection for the exotic is a moot point, though there was often a combination of all three. At a later date, Kunst, Europa (1991), a plethora of simultaneous exhibitions of work from twenty countries in sixty-three different German Kunstvereine, was the first and, for some years, only attempt to show contemporary art from all parts of Europe on the basis of open-mindedness and respect for individual achievement.26 The Museum of Modern Art in cooperation with the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest, organized as a series of well-documented exhibitions of contemporary art from Poland (1964–65), Czechoslovakia (1965), and Yugoslavia (1966) on a scale that was not repeated until the Ellingrden Museum near Stuttgart attempted something similar in the changed climate of the late 1980s.27 The Museum of Fine Arts in Essex, its initial politically controversial contacts with Poland going back to 1961, went further still in making a first systematic attempt to collect, exhibit, and reevaluate the work of contemporary artists in Central and Eastern Europe. Essex's small collection was probably the most significant of its kind in a public institution in Western
Europe before the 1980s. As Ryszard Stanisławski, the former director of the Museum Sztuki in Łódź, was to remark later, the geographical radius covered by museum collections of contemporary art in East and West coincided nearly with the lines of the old political divisions. It was not until the 1980s that private (West German) collectors, such as Peter Ludwig and Henri Nannen, began to collect contemporary art from Central and Eastern Europe, and not until the end of that decade did they begin to take an independent line from the advisers and salesmen of the official art agencies, including Artex in Budapest, Art Centrum in Prague, and Desa in Warsaw. Even so, it would seem that the best qualification for acceptance in the West was emigration, to judge by the fact that the painter László Lakner (b. 1936) and neo-constructivist Attila Kovács (b. 1938) from Hungary as well as the performance artist Marina Abramović (b. 1946) from the former Yugoslavia, all of whom have lived in Western Europe for many years, were the only living artists included in the Museum Ludwig’s 1995 catalogue of work by almost three hundred artists. Today, a visitor to Tate Modern or the Centre Georges Pompidou would be unlikely to see on display more than a token example of work produced by any artist who continued working in Central, Eastern, or southeastern Europe up to 1990.

Personal contact between artists and critics is, of course, one of the most effective ways in which ideas travel and develop. It was particularly in this area that so many obstacles were artificially placed in the way of a normal dialogue between East and West, hence, the importance of private initiatives and the few established programs in the West for artists’ residencies, scholarships, and exchanges. Until the late 1970s or early 1980s, it was in fact exceedingly difficult for an artist from Eastern Europe to travel west on a two-way ticket, and the bleeding of talent through emigration and exile was constant and severe, particularly after periods of political turmoil. Twenty thousand Hungarians, including many artists and intellectuals, sought asylum in neighboring Austria after the revolt of 1956, and Austria later provided asylum to a number of signatories to Charter 77). As an example of what could sometimes be achieved, Dieter Huesch, curator at the Museum Folkwang from 1968 to 1975, enabled a number of Hungarian artists, like Imre Bak, László Lakner, István Nádler, and György Javómcovics (all of them born in the 1930s), to visit Essen on short-term awards and make contacts with other artists in the region. He also gave Roman Opałka his first solo exhibition in the West in 1973, before the latter’s emigration to France (1977), and showed in his writings a keen understanding for the specific qualities of his work in its historical context.

Berlin occupied a rather special position in all this, even in relation to the German Federal Republic. In the 1960s and 1970s, it became a place of refuge or transit not only for artists escaping the pressures of communist regimes (including painters from the GDR, such as Georg Baselitz, Sigmar Polke, and Gerhard Richter), but for a number of leading Austrian writers and intellectuals, including several members of the Wiener Gruppe and one of the leading Actionists, Günter Brus, who fled the oppressive atmosphere of Vienna in 1969 and joined the writers Gerhard Rühm and Oswald Wiener in setting up an “Austrian government in exile.” The Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD), the studio program launched by the American Ford Foundation as a cold war initiative and run by the Berlin Senate since 1967, gave residential scholarships to artists, writers, and composers from all over the world, including artists from Poland (Wojciech Fangor, 1963–65), and Karol Broušovský, 1976, Czechoslovakia (Jan Kotík, 1970–present, Jirí Kolář, 1979, and Milan Knížák, 1980–82) and Hungary (Endre Tót, 1979, and György Javómcovics, 1980–81). They all contributed greatly to the cultural life of the city—Fangor’s case, for instance, an informative one.\(^{24}\) One or two of them (like Kotík) chose to stay on, and many of them found connections to artists and dealers in the West. But Berlin was trapped between East and West and was regarded as somewhat provincial, until its reemergence in the early 1980s.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe were generally keen to present “their” artists at international events such as the Venice Biennial, the São Paulo Biennial (from 1955), Documenta (from 1955) and the Paris Biennial (from 1959). Yet, they often found that the expenditure of hard currency and effort involved were considerable in comparison to the meager rewards, usually amounting to aperitifs, press, public indifference, and the occasional minor prize or commendation either as a sop to the conscience of the jurors or as a consolation to the artist concerned. That their national entries were so uninspired was probably due as much to the official nature of their culture as to ideological pressures of any kind, though it was often difficult to separate the two. What could be achieved when professional curators were given a free hand was demonstrated by the engagement of Jerko Dončevski as Yugoslav commissioner for the 1971 Paris Biennial (see below), and Katalin Mészáros as the Hungarian commissioner for the Venice Biennial from 1986 to 1990.\(^{25}\)

Art shown in the West under official auspices was generally regarded as too derivative, too out of touch, or, at most, bait for conservative collectors. Most non-Western artists were passed over in silence by critics who had no understanding of the context in which their work had been produced or the key to its correct interpretation. Even those few who succeeded in making their mark at an event such as one of the international biennials often found that their success was short-lived. Such was the fate of the Polish informal painter Jan Lebenstjniek who was selected for Documenta 2 in 1969 and won a prize at the Paris Biennial in the same year but subsequently dropped out of sight. (According to Ryszard Stanisławski, the French critics completely misunderstood his work by attempting to relate it to杜布菲的.) The Yugoslav sculptor Dusan Djamonja did well enough at the 1960 Venice Biennial to sell a
number of works but was dismissed out of hand by the avant-garde critic Lawrence Alloway for his "ornaments with creasy larval references," betraying "a period style that had lost the crispness of its origins." Perhaps the most fortunate were those artists, like the Polish sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz, whose work conformed sufficiently both to a contemporary (don) and Western expectations of "otherness," in Abakanowicz's case denoted by her "Eastern European" sense of alienation combined with a craft-oriented technique and use of organic materials appropriate to an agrarian economy.42

The Paris Biennial was open to work by young artists outside (or not yet within) normal commercial circuits and to cross-cultural activities, including music, theater, film, poetry, and design. For most of its existence, it attracted contributions from Central and Eastern Europe, as was somehow appropriate, for in those countries there had never been the same rigid divisions between individual art forms as in the West. The highpoint of Central and Eastern European participation came at the time of the seventh Paris Biennial in 1971, which afforded the French public their first opportunity to see a comprehensive selection of conceptual art from all over Europe and the United States and featured an especially strong Yugoslav selection, including Braco Dimitrijevic and four groups of conceptual artists from Ljubljana (the Oto Group), Novi Sad, and Zagreb. Yet Parisian critics and curators had not set their sights on this part of the world, and it had been evident to some people all along that the primary objective of the Paris Biennial was to win back from New York the title to world leadership in the field of contemporary art. As one of the French selectors for the 1980 edition put it, "Rien n'y d'plus naturel à la France que de se prendre pour l'Empire du Milieu: qu'autour d'elle se ressaisisse la vieille Europe pour envoyer outre-atlantique, comme on l'y conjure, quelques Airbus promis au plus grand succès."43

From an Eastern European point of view, Documenta has always resembled a half-closed door through which no more than a maximum of half a dozen artists from the entire region (often émigrés) have ever been admitted at any one time. One of its later directors has recounted: "In the mid-1970s there was an encyclopedia in East Germany, in which documenta was spoken of as if it were an advertisement for the capitalist world."44 And so it has appeared to remain. Even the editions of 1992 and 1997 gave greater prominence to the themes of Eastern European art than to the artistic production of Central and Eastern Europe. It is interesting to observe how the second wave of (American-led) modernism was played out in the 1970s, against a gradual softening up of the confrontation lines between East and West in Europe, and how Western Europeans edged toward greater independence from American cultural dominance. One of the consequences of this was a gradual erosion of the mono-logical aspect of the modernist movement and a move towards the eventual disappearance of the old opposition between abstract and figurative art and

"pure" and "imple" forms of expression. Arte poverta was one of the first European avant-garde movements consciously to stake out an independent position in relation to the power and wealth of the Americanized art market; ten years later, the transavantgarde took the process a step further by undertaking a reverse conquest of that market on its own terms. There now developed among the small, neighboring states of Central Europe a new conception of Mitteleuropa to rival (or supplant) the unpalatable Pan-German version, which had been at the origin of two world wars and the subsequent division of Europe. This new version was based, in part, on a nostalgically tinged recollection of the multiethnic, multilingual Habsburg Empire, pre-1918, and, in part, on Tomas Masaryk's democratic vision—on returning to Prague in December of that year of a "close friendship with our neighbors to the East and Southeast" and an "amicable group of small nations, extending from the Baltic to the Adriatic." As a formula for collaboration, it was based on a recognition of mutual interests and acceptance of different needs and traditions of the various peoples in the region. This notion appealed not only to ideologists and intellectuals in the East, such as the Czech Milan Kundera and the Hungarian György Konrád, but to westerners of various political complexes, ranging from representatives of the international peace movement in the wake of the Vietnam War to conservative politicians, such as the Austrian Christian Democrat Erhard Busek who envisaged a new mediating role for his country. In cultural terms, the growth in regional consciousness was an extension of the postmodernist spirit of the late 1970s and the breakdown of confidence in the existing hierarchies of modern art, the "grand narratives" (Lyotard), and the catalyzing role of the avant-garde.

Joseph Beuys represented an isolated and rare case of a Western artist attempting to heal the breach in European consciousness caused by war and political division. His divided cross symbolized the rift between the Churches of Rome and Byzantium, and a number of his actions, starting with EURASIA (14–15 October 1966 in Copenhagen) and EURASIENSTAB (2 July 1967 in Vienna), represented an attempt, metaphorically, to overcome the divisions of the past. He was also one of the twenty-one artists close to the Galerie René Block in Berlin who took part in a twenty-fifth anniversary exhibition to commemorate the liquidation of the village of Lidice in the former Nazi-occupied Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (others taking part included Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, and Wolf Vostell) and one of the first Western European artists to be extensively exhibited in the East.45 As he expressed it in 1981: "It is necessary to view Western Europe, Central Europe, and Eastern Europe as an organic, and indivisible whole. Starting out from my personal conception of art, I endeavor to establish this on a theoretical basis and develop it further into a new aesthetics." But Beuys's influence only began
to percolate through to Eastern Europe in the early 1980s, and in the end, neither his nor the politicians' vision of a third way prevailed.

So far, little has been said about the artistic situation in Austria, partly because all parts of the country entered the Western sphere of influence after 1995, and partly because, with its negligible market for contemporary art, it endured cultural and economic rather than political isolation. However, the biennial arts festival Triennale in Graz assumed a growing significance as a forum for cultural exchange in the 1970s, first with the neighboring countries of Italy and Yugoslavia, parts of which had formerly belonged to the old heartland of Austria, then with Hungary and other countries in the region. Successive exhibitions and workshops helped Austrian artists not only reconnect with their own past, which had been characterized by the repeated attacks on modernity and cosmopolitanism since the 1930s, but connect up with internationa l postmodernist tendencies. In 1987, the exhibition Expressiv: mittelfr)iische Kunst seit 1960 in Vienna and Washington was an important first attempt to survey contemporary artistic developments in the region embracing the five adjacent countries, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia. Although it placed a perhaps unduly strong emphasis on the expressive painting that had found its way onto the international market, it provided a proper context for this work alongside that of older and more established artists with figurative concerns, such as Arnulf Rainer and Maria Lassnig. It also included senior figures from East Central Europe, such as Adriana Simotova and Karel Malich, who had been cut off from the West and sometimes forbidden to exhibit for many years. (This was only made possible by the organizers' decision to purchase all of the work by the Czechoslovak artists in advance of the exhibition's opening.)

Expressiv was followed in 1992 by another exhibition in Vienna on red Ortodox in the same countries, which placed an emphasis on the strong rationalist and constructivist tradition of much art in the region. Finally, Identität, Differenz: Triennale Graz, 1940-1990: eine Topographie der Moderne in Graz that same year brought out the renewed relevance of art from the region, with all its historical and stylistic discontinuities, at a time when national borders were being called into question and (Western) Eurocentric accounts of the evolutionary development of modern art were under attack.

It was not until 1994 that a systematic attempt was made to chart the history of avant-garde movements in the whole of Eastern Europe from the beginning of the century onward. The impressively ambitious exhibition Europa, Europa: das Jahrhundert der Avantgarde in Mittel- und Osteuropa was mounted, significantly enough, in the initial capital of reunited Germany, Bonn, with substantial government support. In part, it was conceived in atonement for the sins of omission from the major survey WestKunst: zeitgenössische Kunst seit 1929 in Cologne (1981), which had appeared to continue the postwar tradition of equating "good" art with political freedom. Its four-volume catalogue provides an indispensable reference source for the art of the period. However, it failed to do more than fill a gap in information perhaps because its line of inquiry was set in a traditional perspective, which did not accord with recent research techniques and the global reorientation of artistic practice. A fully revisionist view of Central and Eastern European art would involve a thorough reassessment of the Western European tradition as well and might usefully start with Joseph Kosuth's suggestion: "If certain artists from the past are revived, it is because certain aspects of their work becomes usable for living artists." The spirit immediately following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the disintegration of the Yugoslav and Czechoslovak federations, and the resultant turmoil were captured by the director of the forty-fifth Venice Biennial, Achilles Bono Oliv, in basing his concept of "Central Postmodernism" on the closely related principles of cultural and political transnationality, multiculturalism and nationalism. However, Oliva was less than successful in his attempt to globalize the creating structure of the Venice Biennial by asking the foreign commissioners in charge of the regions of the own to share with artists from countries of the postcolonial world, which had not been present at the territorial carve-up of the exhibition grounds in the Giardini earlier in the century. A central feature of this biennial was the exhibition La Coesistenza dell'arte: un modello espositivo curato by L'andr Hegyi, which built on the achievements of Trien and the previous exhibitions in Vienna by assembling recent art from the Central and East Central European region (including the newly independent states of Croatia and Slovenia), with which Vienna was historically affiliated. This marked one of the first attempts to demonstrate some of the contradictory tensions at work in the art of these years and highlighted some of the difficulties that a couple of dozen artists from at least two different generations were experiencing in coming to terms with their fractured pasts. In this effort, there was more than a suggestion that both the problems and the opportunities of the new Europe were reflected in the work of young artists from the region.

In many ways, the 1990s have offered a wholly new range of possibilities in which the old issues of national or regional allegiances—whether political or artistic—have taken second place to those of personal identity and group endeavor. The conditions of production, distribution, and consumption of art also have been changed almost beyond recognition. The ideological battles of the cold war have lost their relevance, and a new generation of artists who have grown to maturity in the years since the fall of the Berlin Wall has moved onto the field vacated by their elders and foes alike. The globaliza tion of both economics and communication has done little to change the inequalities in the distribution of wealth and information, but artists in Central and Eastern Europe are now confronted with many of the same problems as their colleagues in the West and elsewhere in the world and are liable to com-
municate in a language that owes little to the political and cultural determinants of the past. Indeed, the rapid spread of new(s) forms of expression, such as installations, or sophisticated new media, which are accessible to a widespread public and can be manipulated in a domestic environment, as well as new collaborative working methods mark a break with tradition and its hierarchic values. Time and space have been elided into an apparent continuum of the here and there and then and the there and now.

The network of Soros Centers for Contemporary Arts, which was established throughout the region in the early 1990s, sought to confront the structural weaknesses of art institutions in Eastern and Central Europe, the lack of government support, and the difficulty that artists faced with breaking into wider systems of information, sale, and distribution. But the network has not survived intact a severe cutback in funding by its parent organization in New York, and artists in the region still have the greatest difficulty in promoting their work in the absence of a market for it or an effective network of communications.

The 1990s also witnessed the emergence of Manifesta, a Pan-European network and biennial, the aim of which has been to respond to the changed circumstances in Europe for the production and distribution of contemporary art and to provide a platform for young artists from all parts of the continent who had not yet received widespread commercial backing. In keeping with the times, the chief emphasis in Manifesta has been on collaboration rather than competition, process rather than product, and an incremental use of new means of communication, such as the Internet. Manifesta's "open houses," public discussions, and its new journal of curatorship have all contributed to creating regional solidarity and a closer integration with the West.

Regional exhibitions backed by Western and European Union funding, from After the Wall: Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe (Stockholm, 1999) onward, would appear on the face of it to be an increasingly blatant anachronism. However, in Eastern Europe as everywhere else, artists find it necessary, to paraphrase Marshall McLuhan, to drive into the future with one eye on the ravine mirror. The preoccupation with artists of questions of personal identity and with elements of autobiographical and fictional narrative are a reaction to the collapse of the old hierarchies and the ideologies of the past. Each one of us is left with the fragments of memory with which to construct a defense against the totalizing powers of global capitalism and the media. It may just be that artists coming from a background of repeated migrations, exile, persecution, ethnic and religious strife will have something of particular value to say to the rest of us about the integration of cultural difference into our rapidly changing society. What is certain is the need to reassess the entire legacy of our recent past, and we could do no better than to start with the forgotten, neglected, suppressed, distorted, and disrupted cultures of Central and Eastern Europe.

WHEN EAST WAS EAST AND WEST WAS WEST


NOTES
1. In reality, "Yalta" is the commonly used shorthand for the decisions taken by the leaders of the "Big Three" nations of the anti-Fascist alliance at Teheran (December 1943), Yalta (February 1945), and, after the war, Potsdam (June 1945). See Norman Davies, Europe: A History (London: Pimlico, 1997), 1036.
2. Cited in ibid., 1065.
3. Ibid.
4. Demianas Narkevicius's film Europe 54°54'–25°51' (1997) located the new geographical center of Europe at 54°54'25" N, 25°51'12" E, in the middle of the countryside. See Manifesta 2, European Biennial of Contemporary Art (Luxembourg City Casino Luxembourg-forum d'art contemporain, 1998), 103-01.
6. It has even been suggested that an apparent predisposition towards conceptual art in Eastern Europe formed a part of the legacy of socialist realism, with its emphasis on content and narrative forms. See lara Bowdena, "Conceptualism between Despotism and Liberalism," in Crossroads in Central Europe: Ideas, Themes, Methods, and Problems of Contemporary Art and Art Criticism, ed. Katalin Kereszti (Budapest: Association of Hungarian Creative Artists, 1993), 54–59.
7. The Actionists themselves have continued to evoke strong reactions abroad, as when a planned showing of the major touring exhibition Von der Aktionskunst zum Aktionskunstwerk: Wien 1960–1965 at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh was cancelled at the last moment. For French reactions to contemporary Austrian art in general, see Bernard Cezy, "Gedanken zu einer Untersuchung über die Rezeption der österreichischen Kunst in Frankreich," in Auf Brücke: österreichische Malerei und Plastik der 50er Jahre, ed. Tobias Günter Natter (Vienna: Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, 1994), 38–43.
8. Timothy Garton Ash (in Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent (London: Jonathan Cape, 1993), 67, 316) points to the popularization of the term Mitteleuropa by the nationalist German historian Friedrich Naumann in his 1915 book on the subject and to Naumann's opinion that Mitteleuropa "brought Europe from Prussia out." According to Ash, it was only later that the idea of Mitteleuropa was revived in a very different spirit, first by Czechoslovak, Hungarian, and Polish intellectuals and then by social democrats in West Germany, such as Peter Beisler, whom he quotes as saying (p. 316) at a symposium in 1967: "The Renaissance of 'Mitteleuropa' is first a pretext against the division of the continent, against the hegemony of Americans and Russians, against the totalitarianism of ideologies."
Günter Feld, Eckhart Gillan, and Berthold Vermeulen (Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1996), 70. There were to be as many as 650,000 visitors to the swashbuckling exhibition in the series (p. 81).


22. For example, Ungarische Konstruktivisten (Rotterdam and Frechen, 1973), Neue Konstruktivistische Kunst (Dusseldorf, 1975); and Ungarische Konstruktivische Kunst, 1920–1977 (Kunstverein, Munich, 1979).

23. Výmení pírce (Visual Work) and Výmení štúdi (Visual Art).


33. Ibid., 494–500.


39. It is interesting to note in this context that the Hungarian critic János Sárközsi (Zakale Szövetség (Budapest: Képzőművészet) 1999), 211 suggests that Imre Bukta’s arrangements of the low-tech products of socialist industry in a contemporary idiom (installation) have been misunderstood in the West as somehow utopian rather than as a focus of shame or regret.


The great social and political upheavals of 1989–90 in the area we often refer to using the neologism “former East” undoubtedly introduced new possibilities for redefining Europe. Ever since, there have been numerous attempts in the field of aesthetic practice to “introduce,” “connect,” “provide a platform,” “build bridges,” “bridge the gap,” or “develop models of integration” between West and East.1 As these expressions indirectly suggest, many of the initiatives intended to “resolve” the cold war divide were external to Eastern Europe; that is to say, they originated in the West.2 Thus, those in the East to whom the rhetoric of these undertakings was addressed were initially rather alienated. Nonetheless, they pragmatically understood it as an opportunity to efface and neutralize the differences between East and West, after decades of forced separation, to enact a kind of “normalization.” Normalization, however, is a loaded and ambiguous term that implies the necessity to strive for a standard of living and a political environment comparable to what is deemed “acceptable” or “average” in the Western world. At the same time, it requires adaptation to yet another ideological framework. This gap—referred to by curator and writer Bojana Pejic as “the dialectics of normality,” to highlight the paradoxical nature of and the contradictions intrinsic to normalization—affect all areas of daily life and certainly the way of experiencing culture.3 The cultural agents entering the post-communist arena in the 1990s, including the Soros Centers for Contemporary Arts (SCCA), the Syndicate list, and Manifesta, European Biennial of Contemporary Art, to name but three prominent examples, served as platforms for mediating these complex processes. Their role invariably involved negotiating between these two antithetic meanings, which is to say, dealing with conflicting interpretations of what becoming “normal” could potentially mean.

In the early 1990s, the SCCA were established in most post-communist European countries (including parts of the former Soviet Union, countries once behind the iron curtain, and the Balkan Peninsula) to facilitate the processes of transition in the field of contemporary art.4 As part of the Open

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1. Mária Hlavajová

TOWARDS THE NORMAL: NEGOTIATING THE “FORMER EAST”**

Mária Hlavajová

1. See Manifesta 1, Foundation European Art Manifestation (Rotterdam: Foundation European Art Manifestation, 1996); and Manifesta 2, European Biennial of Contemporary Art (Luxembourg City: Casino Luxembourg-Forum d’art contemporain, 1998).

Society Fund created by George Soros, a prominent American businessman and philanthropist of Hungarian descent, the SCCAs have been instrumental in documenting the developments in local art scenes, archiving information about artists of the 1990s (as well as the significant figures of local modernist art), and activating local cultural potential. This was achieved in a variety of ways, primarily through granting financial assistance to individual artist's projects, organizing annual exhibitions, publishing and disseminating the work and writings of local art professionals, and facilitating access to international art venues. The local circumstances in which the SCCAs operated were generally devoid of clear articulations of (international) cultural policies on an official governmental level, a characteristic deficiency in times of such radical ideological repositioning. The overall context was one in which not only institutional infrastructures or the status of cultural producers within society were redefined, but also one in which a fundamental shift occurred from centrally governed systems of state institutions to a field of self-governed dynamics and multiple possibilities. Where once state-supported, supported artists as well as for artistic and intellectual production generally were lacking; contemporary art galleries and local art markets were virtually nonexistent.

The SCCAs simulated many of these changes with a strange mix of (often) contradictory undertakings. Their dual function as grant-giving foundations and ambitious platforms for exhibiting and promoting contemporary art through exhibitions, symposia, publishing, etc. is but one example of the competing agendas of the SCCAs. In addition, the centers at times performed traditionally governmental functions in relation to culture, including providing financial subsidies and selecting national representations at major biennials. On other occasions, they performed some of the non-commercial functions of private galleries (by providing access to materials, documentation, etc.). This ultimately led to an accumulation of power—the often problematic but natural result of immense, productive accomplishment.

Within this framework, the SCCAs have produced a new elite of contemporary artists, theorists, and curators in their local areas—mobile, flexible, and internationally oriented art practitioners capable of not only connecting, but to some extent also translating local meanings into international contexts. It has been argued numerous times that, in the practices they represented and documented, no matter how varied the circumstances (and let us not forget how heterogeneous and multifaceted the contexts within the "former East" are), certain similarities existed in the artistic and intellectual production of the young generation of artistic practitioners in the 1990s. Philosopher Miško Šuvalović's term "Soros Realism" perhaps best conveys what these practices have in common. This expression acutely positions the contemporary artistic practice in the former Eastern bloc during the 1990s in relation to new political circumstances in the context of globalization. "Soros Realism," as Šuvalović explains it, is "a soft and subtle uniformization and standardization of postmodernist pluralism and multiculturalism as a criterion of enlightened political liberalism that has to be realized by European societies at the turn of the [twenty-first] century." Šuvalović points out that

In the artistic context of Europe, there is a shift caused by the decline of Real-Socialism (Eastern bloc) and by the creation of Western institutions whose function is to stimulate, initiate, and provide transition processes...bridging the gap between the East in transition and the West in globalization. What characteristically occurred soon after the creation of the Soros Centers was the appearance of similar new art in entirely different, sometimes even incomparable, cultures. The narrative and the presented cases were different, but the means, i.e. the politics of presentation, expression, and communication were altogether comparable. Šuvalović's "Soros Realism" is perhaps a more pointed term for what Robert Fleck described in the Manifesta 2 catalogue as "international style." Although Fleck's term seemingly exceeds the geopolitical denominator of the term "East," in reality it addressed (as do the Manifesta exhibitions) the same sort of "normalization" in part of the region's contemporary artistic and intellectual production as well as a type of institutional creativity that evolved in Eastern Europe throughout the 1990s, which aimed against isolation from an international context.

The SCCAs have understood the Internet as a crucial channel for free communication; great efforts and large investments have been made to promote actively the spread of new technologies as well as artistic production and discourse embracing new technical possibilities (introduced in both East and West around the same time). To a certain extent, the network of professionals around the SCCAs overlapped with the community of the Syndicate list, which evolved amidst the digital optimism of the mid-1990s, promising to further enhance the possibilities of open and dynamic communication across Europe introduced by the political changes of 1989.

The Syndicate list was an important contributor to the development of networks of people in post-1989 Europe. It began in 1996 and connected practitioners of media culture from both Eastern and Western Europe (and beyond), initially providing an inclusive structure for an online network. As founding members Inke Arns and Andreas Broekmann explain, it was a network that devoted itself to fostering contacts and cooperation, improvements in communication and an exchange between institutions and individuals in Eastern and Western Europe active in the media and media culture. By allowing regular e-mail communication between participants regarding forthcoming events and collaborative projects, the Syndicate mailing list developed into an important channel and information resource for announcing and reporting new projects, events and developments in media culture.
In addition to online communication, the Syndicate organized a number of meetings and workshops for its members, which lead to a series of publications dedicated to various issues but oriented mainly towards documenting and archiving media-arts developments in Eastern Europe. After some four years of existence, however, the list slowly ceased being a platform for discourse in a "network of people and of trust." It gradually transformed into an anonymous marketing instrument to promote the projects and activities of its members. However, when political circumstances called for opposition or constructive debate, as was the case during the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999, the list managed to recapture its role as a powerful tool for artistic and political activism. In 2001, after numerous attacks on the list by the net entity "run" and after many attempts by the list administrators to mediate the conflict, the Syndicate list was terminated. The "imagined community," initially born out of a belief in communication and exchange, collapsed, following abuses of its founding values of open interaction and productive dialogue that destroyed these very ideals. In addition, for example, the Syndicate list illustrated precisely what was possible, even with modest means. Active media-culture communities in the "former East" relied heavily upon it in its flourishing period, even though it was founded outside Central and Eastern Europe. Most importantly, the very fluid character of communicating and collaborating within the Syndicate list fostered inclusion and was a tool for members to move beyond the passivity embedded in self-colonizing attitudes inherited from decades of international detachment, especially among the younger generation of cultural professionals.

Undoubtedly, SCCAs and the Syndicate list shared the same objectives—to create networks of people as well as foster communication, exchange, and dialogue between East and West in Europe and beyond. To some extent, they set the groundwork for Manifesta. Manifesta, a Dutch initiative conceived in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, identified the opportunities provided by the changing political and social climate in Europe in the early 1990s. It built upon research and knowledge that the SCCAs (as well as to, at some extent, the Syndicate list) had consolidated concerning aesthetic practices in individual countries and the larger region as well as on their cultural, political, and economic contexts. The SCCAs thus greatly facilitated the research of Manifesta curators and other professionals on respective art scenes, while providing financial and production support. In the catalogue of Manifesta 2, Robert Flack acknowledged these accomplishments: "In Eastern and Southern Europe, that is not least of all the achievement of the Soros Centers for Contemporary Art, the network of which— as ever to be criticized— achieves epochal fundamental work for a free art concept in these countries, and provides concrete conditions for communication, travel and information on an international level."10

While the SCCAs, the Syndicate, and Manifesta may have shared some of the same ideas about the importance of the construction of new networks between Eastern and Western professionals, Manifesta’s ambitions were of a different order. The initiators of Manifesta readily understood that none of the existing projects or large-scale, major international contemporary exhibitions was capable, prepared, or willing to accommodate the energies of a new generation of artists, curators, and intellectuals in the wake of the post-communist condition. A political instinct for inclusion inspired the establishment of a new platform to present the most up-to-date developments in contemporary art to local and international audiences. The parameters chosen for such an undertaking supplied Manifesta with its distinctively unique profile. As a nomadic biennial presented every two years in a different cultural, economic, and political context, its exhibitions take place outside of what are traditionally understood as the centers of artistic production in Europe. Furthermore, each time, new curatorship and production teams with diverse experiences and interests redefine its theme, form, participants, and structure.

If these distinctions suggest something different goals and models than those the SCCAs and the Syndicate list used, Manifesta did not easily fit into the family of exhibitions that began to appear during the 1990s, despite a shared interest in involving "the other half of Europe." These exhibitions, appearing alongside Manifesta, largely responded to the relative invisibility of artistic developments in the "former East" within the international context, suggesting a real need to address the nature of a form of artistic production largely inaccessible due to the political and psychological disjunctions not only in the post–World War II period, but also in the years after 1989. Seminal undertakings, such as Europa, Europa: das Jahrhundert der Avantgarde in Mittel- und Osteuropa (Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, 1994), Der Riss im Raum (Martin- Gropius-Bau, Berlin and Galerie Zacheta, Warsaw, 1994–95), or Aspekte/Positionen: 50 Jahre Kunst aus Mitteleuropa, 1949–1999 (Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, 1999–2000), were intended as occasions for rearticulating historical connections between East and West and reflecting on the twentieth century or the post–World War II period, respectively. They were also attempts to overcome artificial geopolitical dichotomies, through reestablishing a discussion about the past. On the other hand, Beyond Belief: Contemporary Art from East Central Europe (Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1995) focused on a number of individual artistic positions of the younger generation from Central European countries. The exhibition dealt with the cultural legacy of communism in the artistic production of the early 1990s, which meant not "substituting one belief system for another," but rather "attacking the very concept of..."11

The collective of media-artists and today increasingly that of some political elites, set the least of whom are at the very summit of the world. This is the discourse of neutralization and its partial rejection, hybridity, as well as postnationalism. But what is really happening in the world? Is a new global culture of mixed-up differences really being created, and if this what art should be aiming to achieve? After all, it ought to be a triviality that mixture and confluence can only be meaningful where there is something to mix, something to open up to. Without difference and mortal hatred of some kind, there is nothing to reach. Borders, social more than geographical, define identity, allow us to identify something as specific, allow us to transgress. But all of this weirded thinking is sustained by another perspective on the world. While there are indeed elites who today identify with the world as a whole, not as international but as cosmopolitan, they express their identification’s social position, the consumption of other people’s differences, the decoration and furnishing of their own quite isolated and protected lives, expressing their own national world citizenship. While on the streets below and in the travails zones further afield, agnostic differences of the down-to-earth mode are fast proliferation, financed by the upwardly mobile nation of nowhere, from western to eastern. This is not a harmonious world; it is a dehumanized world, the elites of which would delight in the differences below if only they could be pacified and turned into commodities. Art aims at truth, it must aim at an insight into reality rather than its mere reflection.

Jonathan Friedman, director of studies, Ecole des hautes etudes en sciences sociales, Paris, and professor of social anthropology, Lund University, Lund
of ideological structures," as curator Laura Hopman wrote. After the Wall: Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe (Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1999–2000) focused on the post-communist period in the entire former Soviet bloc and revolved around particular issues, including subjectivity, identity, and gender, among others. The exhibition juxtaposed the political and cultural differentiation of the "former East" against the backdrop of the historical and political framework created by the fall of Berlin Wall. Despite debates that After the Wall generated about the "ethnification" of art from the Eastern bloc, it became an important point of reference for understanding how art produced in the East could be approached and a critical milestone in the histori- cization of art developments in the first decade of the post-1989, post-Soviet era. However, Piotr Podoberski is correct when he argues that "the end of the last decade of the twentieth century was really the last moment such a show was possible" and declares that this exhibition is "closing the post-war history of Central European art" mainly because "the political geography of the post- Soviet world is disappearing." Manifesta, itself concerned precisely with these shifting political geographies, soon abandoned the narrowly defined narr- ative of the East-West divide. Furthermore, unlike the abovementioned exhibi- tions, Manifesta has chosen to neither engage in recapturing the past nor to isolate the "former East" from a larger European framework. On the contrary, it has focused on examining the very "now" in contemporary Europe, of which new political constellations are constitutive.

After five editions of its biennial, Manifesta has managed to test some of its claims about the possible role of exhibitions in a global context, while criti- cally distancing itself from the ideologies of the two largest perin- onial exhibitions, the Venice Biennial and Documenta. This divergence, to a great extent, resides in Manifesta's attitude toward Central and Eastern Europe, on the one hand, and the character of artistic practices in the region, on the other hand, which in part defines Manifesta's objectives. The Venice Biennial, since its inception a disparate assembly of national representations accompanied by an international exhibition, provides rather narrow insight into contemporary art currents. It tends, instead, to be a parade of national mythologies and nostal- gia for an international avant-garde—a conflict that exemplifies the difficulties inherent in establishing a new global system of representation beyond nation- states and national representation. Furthermore, the national selection of artists as well as the realization of presentations in individual pavilions take place in radically different political, cultural, and economic circumstances and often create distinctions not necessarily related to the quality of the art being exhibited. The international exhibition at the Biennial is aimed at repositioning the nationanism of the pavilions and synthesizing the current state of art, both of which inevitably have led to a focus on the dominant artistic tenden- cies of the time. This tendency has kept the displays from breaking much new aesthetic ground and maintained the Biennial's dual position as maker and protector of the canon. Documenta, conversely, is a cultural product of the cold war, created specifically as a cultural counterpart to the use of art as propaganda under communism. In part as a result of this history, it has tradi- tionally presented a curatorial selection of what are considered masterworks by great artists, exhibited without being specifically bound to a nation, style, or movement. The works at Documenta, as previous editions have largely shown, represent art history's "priorities" and produce what Walter Grasskamp has called "art-historical extracts." In either case, the art world flockes to a glistening Italian island or a depressed German town to find confirmation of what is, in many ways, already familiar.

Again, Manifesta's point of departure was different. It was conceived as a response to an explicit political demand to open the channels of cultural, artistic, and thus political dialogue between West and East and to build "one of the few platforms accessible for East European artists." Its task was to establish a forum for emerging artistic positions from Eastern and Western Europe (or, if speaking in terms of geography, from north, south, east, and west) as well as to define a project that would allow for a flexible format capable of absorbing the ever-changing landscape of art and its contents. Thus, over time and as Europe changed in the face of globalization, so Manifesta's geographical points of focus changed. Its initiators had correctly assessed, from the very beginning, that it was dangerous to see either contem- porary Europe or the world as a set of established positions. Rather, the fabric of contemporaneity needed to be acknowledged as a complex mix of persistent mutations of powers, centers, and constellations. This vision has, from the beginning, demanded a fluid, flexible, horizontally structured organization with a symbolic center (in this case, an advisory board), itself international and made up of members from diverse cultural backgrounds and institutional experiences. As a result, Manifesta has been able to operate with extraordi- nary dynamism, occupying a space between static, commodified, and weighty institutions. In other words, and as Eastern European artists like Švajkó were aware, in comparison to the Venice Biennial and Documenta, "it was necessary to create a 'mobile' and 'open' institution which would integrate on a global level: (a) young artists, (b) artists of those marginal Western European cultures which are not 'great' (as German, French, Italian and perhaps Russian are), and (c) artists of the transitional former Eastern cultures." Manifesta was the initiative poised to take on the task. For Švajkó, the results were clearly clear, "a high international second league was created." The phrase "high international second league" reflects the contemporary artistic practices that appeared following the paradigmatic shifts of 1989.

Although reformulation of the function of contemporary art after the collapse of communism in Europe is usually assigned to the "former East," processes of the time. This tendency has kept the displays from breaking much new aesthetic ground and maintained the Biennial's dual position as maker and protector of the canon. Documenta, conversely, is a cultural product of the cold war, created specifically as a cultural counterpart to the use of art as propaganda under communism. In part as a result of this history, it has tradi- tionally presented a curatorial selection of what are considered masterworks by great artists, exhibited without being specifically bound to a nation, style, or movement. The works at Documenta, as previous editions have largely shown, represent art history's "priorities" and produce what Walter Grasskamp has called "art-historical extracts." In either case, the art world flockes to a glistening Italian island or a depressed German town to find confirmation of what is, in many ways, already familiar.

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with the new political, economic, and technological possibilities of the 1990s took place in parallel throughout Europe. Art, following Šukavčič, has become anew 'a matter of culture' with certain functions of mediating the positive social interest in the sense of public or general politics and ethics.²²² By involving social functions, mediating between disciplines, employing new media, technologies, and strategies of communication, adopting process-oriented, activist strategies, and, further, by registering, mapping, and archiving instead of merely displaying, Manifesta exhibitions have, generally speaking, sacrificed some visual sophistication in favor of outlining a wider picture of cultural perspectives. Manifesta positioned itself against popularly held concepts of what constitutes art and its presentation. By subjecting its exhibitions to this type of practice, Manifesta created an antipode, to invoke Šukavčič again, to the "first league" of large-scale international projects that focused not only on spectacular ways of exhibiting, but also, producing—in the social, political, and economic sense—grand works and great masters.

Since Manifesta was, from its inception, imagined as more than a series of perennial exhibitions, its very concept constitutes a singular cultural phenomenon. This larger concept includes building a network of artists, curators, theorists, cultural collectives, and art institutions in Europe, organizing regular debates and conferences about theoretical topics of relevance to Europe and exhibition making, sponsoring an internet-accessible artist archive, and other things—all of this while also giving artists and curators the freedom to experiment in mounting exhibitions that reject the all-too-common contemporary art spectacle and the dictates of the market.²²⁳ Manifesta's policy of holding exhibitions outside of artistic capitals, so as to culturally activate and support places otherwise considered to be at the "margins," has become its critical feature. However, in considering how such a policy has impacted Central and Eastern Europe, beyond the fact of exhibiting the work of artists from local regions or including those regions in its network, it must be said that there is a conflict between how Manifesta conceptualizes itself and its actual activities. To date, for example, only one edition of Manifesta has actually taken place in the "former East." Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, hosted Manifesta 3 in 2000. Professionals visiting the region for the first time might have experienced it as Eastern European. But in reality, Slovenia (and the former Yugoslavia, for that matter) was never entirely part of the Soviet bloc, and within Eastern Europe it has always been regarded as relatively Western. (In the communist era, Ljubljana was a place to which we could travel without the usual obstacles of obtaining a visa. We easily could acquire foreign currency to buy our blue jeans, the ultimate sign of Western economic and cultural superiority.) In that respect, the choice of Ljubljana was extremely low risk. Located in relative proximity to what one in the West imagines to be the East, Ljubljana in reality had a quite developed institutional infrastructure (certainly in comparison with other "Eastern" cities such as Rigà, Bratislava, Zagreb, Skopje, or Sofia) as well as a local art scene fully operating/flourishing within the international context. Most importantly, unlike other capitals in the region, Ljubljana was economically capable of buying Manifesta, a necessity given the structure Manifesta organizers articulate the very basis of their project, is defined in the case of exhibition venues, by cities bidding for the right to host an important cultural event, which can become in turn an effective marketing instrument and lead to high-level political positioning.

Securing financial means for a profiled international cultural occasion in this way is not necessarily wrong; rather, the discrepancy between Manifesta's self-adged function of "hosting a discourse of hospitality and how these are actually carried out within current European conditions need to be recognized. The downside is alarming. Many countries, namely those in southern and Eastern Europe "grappling," as director of Manifesta 3 Igor Zabel acknowledged, "with the economic aftermath of communism and the region's ethnic wars" simply do not have the necessary financial resources or infrastructures to host Manifesta exhibitions, as they have been hitherto conceived.²⁴ Orticj Susan Snodgrass noted that Zabel's "observation raises important questions about the function and purpose of Manifesta, and echoes many of the same issues being played out in the international arena regarding European unification. If the goal is to create a biennial that indeed includes all of Europe, then imposing a structural framework based on Western-Northern systems of cultural production only reinforces the cultural divide and creates expectations that currently cannot be met." She further added, "if instead, Manifesta were to remain nomadic, as well as open and flexible, then it could adapt to the needs and means of its host site, where the absence of traditional infrastructures may be seen as a challenge rather than a difficulty.²²⁴" In this respect, Manifesta must ask itself at this critical point in its history: Who is actually inviting whom and why? And perhaps even more importantly: Can it radically re-imagine itself so that this kind of financial transaction (contradicting the theoretical promise of Manifesta's selection process) is not needed at all? Without the discourse on the conflicting nature of normalization, can one see a model of intervention that is sensitive to the context in which it is to take place, instead of imposing (as Manifesta did with its first five editions) the principally traditional option of a large-scale, institutionally grounded, Western-type biennial exhibitions? And if so, what would a path "towards the normal" then look like?

Within the "former East," one can perhaps, if generalizations of this kind are at all possible, speak of two directions in negotiating this "normalization" dilemma, both repeatedly invoked and believed equally viable. On the one hand, the real rapid integration of these countries into the EU took place quicker than the possible development of new institutions or the evolutions of existing commercial systems, thus disabling some of their potential. Throughout this period, other systems of associator developed: residency programs, conferences, travel exchanges, and various forms of crosscut collaborations between institutions and artist groups seem to have been the best able to meet the challenges of the new geopolitical situation. The condition of possibility for these to emerge was perhaps the presence of existing networks, even as these ambitious attempts at institutionalizing, at "bridging the gap," can be said to have now outlived their usefulness. The SCCA has practically finished, the Syndicate line has ended, and Manifesta is searching for new paths and principles for its biennial. That said, I feel fairly optimistic that many new networks are developing that will grow and provide new understanding and openings on both sides of Europe.
Ostblocker’ strategic option, with an implicitly imposed identity, is not as an ‘artistic Ostblock’ (Eastern European), an identity imposed on others by them, but simply as a human being: ‘I’.

While assuming a ‘critical Eastern identity’ might be a constructive option, I tend to believe, following Ondřejka’s critique, that the notion of Eastern European art as an artificial construction, a product fabricated through post-1989 reposessions. The paradoxes of “normalization” under discussion might explain how the SCCAs, the Syndicate list, and Manifesta, the three main international cultural agents performing in the region and disregaged as advocates of change, actually have contributed, from various perspectives, to the creation of this phantom which we now desperately grapple. As a political and artistic imaginary, the notion of “Eastern Europe” certainly brought about catalyzing discussions inevitable for re-envisioning contemporary Europe. Zabel suggests that divisions in Europe, which we like to think have disappeared since the fall of the Berlin Wall, actually have not been overcome at all: “After the radical changes of the geopolitical situation in Europe they have only been transformed and rearranged” into new divisions. If this is true, Manifesta faces a unique opportunity, especially if, on the basis of the negotiations of the last decade, it manages to build new strategic alliances with new agents—the youngest generation of artists, curators, intellectuals, and art administrators with no pre- or (immediate) post-1989 memory. The cultural exchange addressing new constellations and opportunities must, however, take place through a redefinition of balance and traffic that flows in both directions. The new political urgencies and earnest longing to become “normal” in the “former East” could thus be understood as a challenge to the West to recategorize itself, despite its economic superiority, as the “former West.” The task would then be to find ways of overcoming the asymmetry residing in the chronic Debbie of post-cold war divisions in Europe. This cannot happen by repressing the differences, nor by absorbing them into the Western narrative, but rather by constant dynamic remixing of changing aesthetic, cultural, and political positions in Europe, itself in flux. Given Manifesta’s avowed ambitions in this regard, its future lies in assuming that responsibility.

In the beginning of the network, there is the Evert. Encounters, long evenings, exchanges of ideas, email address, and other fluid material. But then, one starts to wonder: What is this label “contemporary artists”? Where does it come from? (New York, the 1970s, some whisper?) Suspicion grows. What’s the point of Eastern Europe being integrated into a closed circuit of contemporary art spaces? Why exactly this agenda and not countless other possibilities? The power game starts. Who’s in and who’s not, in the land of biennials? Those in charge of definitions rule. “You are contemporary. You’ve just a pastic; and you, not there, new media.” “Dive in and conquer,” that’s the tactic of curators. New media and internet artists never really fit into this logic. True conceptual artists, they produce operational work that remains being collected. There are links, collaborations, workshops, friendships, but little or no acceleration of “value.” Thus, there is a steady rise of “cultural capital” in new media, but, however, the question “is it art?” has haunted the new-technology scene, in “deep Europe” as much as anywhere else. Is video art painting art? No, after all; there are the wrong questions. Elevation begins to grow, networks fall apart, and promised rewards fall to reality. It’s just another gray day. There is this wish to crash. Where is the novel before? Soviet, many thousand, yet critics, authors, and director, Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam

NOTES
1. The cited expressions or similar ones can be found in the numerous press releases, mission statements, or catalogue texts for exhibitions, symposium, and other projects (Manifesta included) initiated in the West and attempting to involve the “former East,” in the years since 1989.
2. Given that the point of this essay is to address the relationship between Manifesta and the “former East,” I concentrate on initiatives (like Manifesta) concealed outside the region. This is not to say that no activities originated from within these local contexts, contributing greatly to changes in the region.
4. In 1989, the Soros Foundation Fine Arts Documentation Center was established as a result of cooperation between the Soros Foundation (later the Open Society Fund) and Múcsarnok in Budapest. In 1991, it was renamed the Soros Center for Contemporary Arts (SCCA). Between 1992 and 1999, nineteen SCCAs were opened in seventeen Central and Eastern European countries (in the cities of Alma-Ata, now Almaty, Belgrade, Bratislava, Bucharest, Chisinau, Kiev, Ljubljana, Moscow, Brno, Prague, Moscow, Sofia, Skopje, Tbilisi, Vilnius, Wroclaw, and Zagreb). Together they formed the Soros Centers for Contemporary Arts Network. In 1999, the network became the International Contemporary Art Network (ICAN), registered in the Netherlands as a non-profit organization. This move was a result of George Soros’s withdrawal of funding for contemporary art activities in the region. Some of the centers subsequently ceased to exist and others transformed radically. ICAN is based on the unique resources (documentation, knowledge, and expertise) accumulated by the SCCA Network. ICAN’s mission is to encourage, support, and provide a framework for international collaboration in the field of contemporary visual arts and culture, involving artists, art critics, writers, theoreticians, curators, and art administrators from Central and Eastern Europe. It is aimed at fostering collaboration among its members, encouraging them to actively participate in international contemporary art discourses, promoting contemporary art from Central and Eastern Europe, and advocating constructive change in cultural policy on regional and international levels. It is important to note that the ICAN is currently inactive for several reasons, mainly because most individual members struggle with their own financial survival in charged circumstances.
5. The role of the SCCAs has yet to be comprehensively evaluated in the context of
the developments in the field of culture during the 1990s. Among the many questions that remain to be answered is whether powerful agents of this kind, operating with virtually no other stakeholders, did not essentially postpone, at least for a decade, the generation of locally sustainable, functioning art and cultural scenes with both multiple institutional contexts and various actors.


7. Ibid.


10. See ibid., 203-22.

11. As mentioned in note 4 above, towards the end of the 1990s, George Soros practically withdrew from financing the SCCAs. Some of the centers transformed or merged with other institutions, others ceased to exist. The SCCA Network never managed to recover fully from this withdrawal of Soros funds, despite many attempts; the reason for this lies, in my opinion, in the network's conception. While facilitated by local actors, it was always a project funded "from above" and rather than "outside" its own context, a fact contrary to the generation of sustainable networks. In addition, the use of an outmoded concept of "East and Central Europe" in the Network's organization shifted opportunities to create new models for conceptualizing and theorizing art and cultural production in the region.

12. Fleck, "Art after Communism?" 197.

13. Ibid., 194.


15. Piotr Piotrowski, "Central Europe in the Face of Unification," first delivered as a conference paper at MIT in October 2003 then published in Artmargins (January 2003). The text is available online at www.artmargins.com/content?publisher=piotrowski2.htm and reprinted in Who If Not We...? 271-81.


18. By establishing an official headquarters in Amsterdam, Manifesta seems to have lost none of its early informal character. The increased institutionalization of its permanent headquarters and its accompanying official administrative positions suggest that Manifesta and its administrators may have succumbed to the seduction of power.


20. Ibid.

21. Boris Groys ("The Post-Communist Condition," in Who If Not We...? 163-70) argues that the term "post-communist condition" is applicable to Europe as a whole and not only to the parts that suffered under communist regimes.


23. The official descriptions of the Manifesta project outline the stakes involved. As executive director of the International Foundation Manifesta, Heidwig Fijen ("Decoding Europe?" in Manifesta 5, European Biennial of Contemporary Art, With All Due Intent [Donostia-San Sebastián: Centro internacional de cultura contemporánea, 2004], 16) explains: "For Manifesta in general, the worldwide growth of large-scale art projects and cultural festivals with an orientation toward marketing has persuaded us to step back gradually from this sort of event, lowering the expectations of all kinds of stakeholders and concentrating our activities. Consequently, Manifesta has opted for closely integrating artistic practice in a more compact and more articulated community in order to des-territorialise [sic] itself from commercial constraints and to reclaim its humanity. Over the next few years, this means a policy of inviting distinctly transitional areas to host Manifesta, and slowly withdrawing from the Western art circuit in order to create closer connections and collaborations with new communities."

24. Igor Zabel, quoted in Susan Snodgrass, "Manifesta 4: Defining Europe?" Art in America 91, no. 1, January 2003, available online at http://www.findarticles.com/ articles/mi_m1248ls_/1_91ja_/9025434694w_3. Zabel also suggested, in this context, that every European country should be charged a participation fee.

25. Ibid.


All identities are ultimately an effect of power, since their inner homogeneity—what gives their members the sense that they belong together because they are all "the same"—is the effect of symbolically excluding difference. Identities are thus constructed through difference: they are what they are because of all the things they are not, because of what they lack. But in so far as identities depend on what they are not, they implicitly affirm the importance of what is outside them—which often then returns to trouble and unsettle them from the inside. Nothing could be more true of Europe, which has constantly, at different times, in different ways, in relation to different "others," tried to establish what it was—its identity—by symbolically marking its difference from "them." Each time, far from producing a stable and settled entity, Europe has had to re-imagine or re-present itself differently.

—Stuart Hall, "In but Not of Europe: Europe and Its Myths"

When we think of nation-states we think first of those which make up the mythical concept of "Europe." It is those which make the essential internationalism that we have known. Thus nationalism comes as a defensive strategy one of against the others, like Mafia families. This internationalism is in the first instance competitive, like the Venice Biennale, and in the second, fearful and hermetic. Now Europe-the-myth attempts to re-create itself as a concrete "community" wherein competition is more ordered. The current debate about who might be allowed into this community, and who might be forced out, exposes the roots of internationalism. If internationalism is a requirement for civilization, what nation is civilized enough to participate?

—Jimmie Durham, "A Friend of Mine Said That Art is a European Invention"

Europe's national identities are in a state of turbulence, unsettled from below by the complex, transnational identities of its shifting citizenship and, at the same time, overshadowed from above by the forces of globalization that per-
vade the world with little regard for the discrete borders of nation-states. In Brussels, the constitutional heart of the European Union, politicians continue to debate and negotiate the boundary between the national and the supra-national, circumscribing national identities as distinct entities that converge or diverge from the collective interests of an increasingly federalized Europe. And yet, the nationalism of states is gradually eroding away due, on the one hand, to the shifting, heterogeneous cultural identities of urban populations and, on the other, a profound transfer of political and economic power from the governments of nation-states to multinational corporations. Noneone Hertz writes:

Propelled by government policies of privatization, deregulation and trade liberalization, and the advances in communication technologies over the past twenty years, a power shift has taken place. The hundred largest multinational corporations now control about 20 per cent of global gross national product. Assuming, for the purpose of this shifting Europe through another example, that of Movelfa, the first contemporary art biennial to build itself around and celebrate the new ideas of Europe. Movelfa was, in a way, championing, defending an expanded, enlarged, and endangered Europe rather than hewing strictly and formally a future ideal. When I visited Movelfa in Italy in the fall of 1998, together with Maria Vrankic, Kofresi Rhenhoud, and the Bauhaus, we opted for the title "Berlinite Spectrum. In retrospect, our choice was a bold provocation: the latest rationale that eventually developed around the very idea of Europe, which, like Sauron, sought to devour its own children. Since then, Movelfa has moved back and forth between the borders of "old" Europe and "new" Europe, between places like the Biennale—See Solomon, where the question of Europe invites a met topic before other cultural identities can be defined, and Nicola, Cyprus (for the 2000 edition), where a borderless syndrome is still a reality and European identity even more fictional than in Slovenia five years ago.

So what does this all mean to Europe's cultural identity? It tells us what we have always believed: An event or project like Movelfa needs to remain a moving target; it cannot be defined as a homogenous cultural identity. Movelfa has, by itself, made a contribution to a renaissance of the postmodern, by the ideological freedom of becoming part of the establishment. The voices of Movelfa lies in its capacity to stay underground, in its lack of real or mimetic, the movement that has been designated a separate identity, marked by "their" difference from a designation of pure, unaffiliated Frenchness. In recent years, this concept of pure Frenchness has been challenged on the soccer pitch, but as yet not within the hallowed domain of cultural identity. As it was for the World Cup with a team of players that contested the notion of French nationhood as an undifferentiated, mono-cultural entity. France questioned its own image in the most public of domains. The day following France's spectacular victory, a commentator in a British newspaper remarked that the triumph of France's multi-ethnic soccer team united the nation, suggesting it was the start of a new era. But this was not a new era, and how did effect France's representation of itself? The rest of the world as a paradigm of cultural and linguistic unity embodied in its citizenship? How did this newly articulated, multicultural identity imagine, in measuring this distance from Rotterdam, we will be able to say "yes" and on that already celebrate Europe as no new entity, but as a new kind of truth and a new version of itself.
France reconfigure the concept of French citizenship and reflect the French language differently?

We repeatedly failed to secure private or public funding for Parisen(ne)s mainly because the project contested the accepted definitions of "Frenchness" and, more specifically, of "Parisan-ness." The work of the artists in the exhibition did not address either the question of their individual identities or the impact of living in Paris on those identities. Rather, their art, in more ambivalent ways, reflected upon the question of place and displacement, an increasingly dominant theme in modern lives that, like the displaced object of Archimedes's principle, has an equal impact upon the environment surrounding it. In other words, the presence of Parisians of non-French descent has altered our conventions of what constitutes a Parisian identity, and, hence, the identity of the city itself. Just as the French Academy cannot defend the French language from the daily incursions of English and other cultural invasions, French society cannot defend French citizenship from the infections and transformations brought about by successive generations of immigrants who are remodeling the idea of "Frenchness" for the twenty-first century.

In Britain, "Britishness" is equally contested, although questions of race and nation are articulated in subtle but significantly different ways. In 2000, English newspapers (as opposed to their Scottish, Welsh, and Irish counterparts) were immersed in a heated debate about Britishness, provoked by the publication of the Runnymede Trust's independent report entitled The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. In the opening chapter, the authors maintained that the term "British" was racially inflected in the public domain and did not reflect the changed condition of contemporary British society as multiethnic. This caused a public debate, in some quarters of the English press, which accused the authors of trying to undermine British nationhood and rewrite history. In some respects, the details of the debate are less important than the sentiments of outrageous nationalism that the report provoked. At a time when Britain had devolved power to its constituent parts, the question of whether the pound remains as a single currency as an equal partner in Europe, race and nation remained high on the political and cultural agenda. The debates that raged in the press followed the report's publication indicating the fragility of the multiethnic society that politicians and institutions on the other side of the Channel have been so proud to proclaim. In a speech at the London School of Economics, Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown announced that he saw Britain as the first country in the world that was a multicultural, multilingual, and multinational state. But the very public success of artists like Chris Ofili and Steve McQueen masks the reality of the deep-seated racism of the British art establishment and major institutions' lack of investment in culturally diverse artists from all parts of the world, as reflected in their exhibition programs, staffing, and permanent collections.4

On the evening after the fall of the Berlin Wall, groups of East Germans wandered down the Kurfürstendamm, Germany's Change Places, for the first time. Shops were open late, offering take-out gifts such as small shopping bags with samples of cosmetics and perfumes. This odd gesture of victory anticipated how cultures and national identities formerly considered almost monolithic would, in the years that followed, deal with the invasion of peripheral, hybrid ones. Whoever has outside traditional European boundaries and cultural models—so if they could be isolated from their historic interrelations with the rest of the world—is given a simple product and is considered a potential customer but not integrated as an equal partner in the inner circles of the system. Europe has been looking down at its novel size since the fall of the Wall shifted the world forces towards it, making regions such as Central America—the people of whose bodies and lives looked out—to almost complete invisibility and disregarding their centuries-old experience in cultural integration and creation. While post-Wall Europe met the post-cold war US-USSR divisions with "multiculturalism" to deal with the diversity of cultures that accompanied migration (rarely mentioning, however, that this migration was often the result of their repressive political and economic policies), many of the migrant populations originating from multilingual and multiethnic societies, which existed before the term "cultural" was coined, attempted to negotiate into the "developed" societies that in fact have never stopped considering them potential threats. In relation to the position of the "other," the German-Brazilian writer Artur Lúcio suggested that the 2016 lecture "The Other" at Pompidou's Centre de programmation définitions de monochrome "blue," and the cultural products that seem to have integrated a dominant culture too well are suspiciously judged. Virginia Fuchs-Hallus, founding director of ITOR/Office and independent curator based in San José, Costa Rica
must be seen in the context of global capitalism. In a move to build collective symbolic capital, these new art institutions participate in a process of constructing capital that derives its value from relying on the characteristics of uniqueness and authenticity. In other words, to attract financial capital, cities must present themselves as unique and distinctive and offer an authentic, urban experience. In presenting Century City as its inaugural exhibition, the Tate Modern offered precisely such a series of "authentic" urban experiences distilled as mini exhibitions that revolved around the central construction of the Tate Modern and London as the authentic hub of cultural innovation in the twenty-first century.

Two forms of strategic displacement operated in Century City, both of which have wider implications for our understanding of institutional discourse around contemporary art from different parts of the globe. First of all, cities replaced notions as the organizing principle for considering international artworks. In Century City, Lagos, Mumbai, Rio de Janeiro, and Tokyo replaced Nigeria, India, Brazil, and Japan as the curatorial frame through which the Other was viewed. Organizers, however, invoked cities, not as subservient spaces where the global/local dichotomy is problematized and disrupted, but as vessels for what David Harvey terms "collective symbolic capital."9 By substituting metropolitan for nationhood, the contemporary art institution is thus able to avoid the troubling questions of race and nation, which threaten to agitate the re-presentation of these city-states as floating signifiers of different geographical and historical moments.

Cities displace nations, and the global usurps the local. Brushing aside any notion of international or cross-cultural intersections across the temporal and geographical spaces of cultural production, cities are presented as self-contained and autonomous formations. In this context, the global assumes new significance as the generic marker of value, taking the place of the modernist definition of the universal as the passport for entering the canon of Western art history. In this new cultural economy of signs, the local can only operate as a satellite of the center, like the various Tates and Guggenheims dispersed respectively across the U.K. and the world, with their parent institutions at the center. Mumbai, Rio, Lagos, and Tokyo provide the veneer of difference to a cultural regime that manages and defines the ways in which that difference can be articulated and presented as essentially different. In this way, a second displacement takes place, namely, the substitution of global difference for local difference. In a double turn, the Other "out there" eclipses the Other "in here" as the authentic sign of difference, with the difference at home is repressed as fundamentally "inauthentic." Relying on a notion of essentialized difference to disenfranchise local difference, this new cultural regime refuses to recognize any notion of difference that might threaten its own perceived cultural integrity and hegemony. Put another way, the cultural institution privileges the "authentic" Other from elsewhere—Africa, Asia, South America (in fact, anywhere as long as it's not here at home). While difference from outside can be fixed, managed, controlled, and isolated, difference at home is more slippery, elusive, and threatening. As Stuart Hall writes:

Nothing is pure difference; there is no essentialized difference. Difference remains, but not fixed immediately by its origins, not imaged in an unchanging "tradition," because it is open to movement and located within other dimensions which cut across that, which literally connect you with other people. I no longer believe in some abstract universal set of values that you can import into the conversation to trump every other particular.... I think the only way in which people who are different could come to constitute a common conversation is by recognising the inadequacy of each of our positions as well as what is not translatable. The moment you take the radical identity, the "trace" of your own position into account, there is a broadening, a widening, an ethical reach for that which is different from you but which also constitutes you.9

The unsettling of what appeared settled, or at least has been presented as being settled, a continuous European culture and identity, has given rise to xenophobia and racism across the Continent. Not only far-right groups but also neo-liberals are invoking a mythical and rose-tinted view of Europe’s past before migration, glossing over Europe’s continuing history of anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and racism, which is as old as the Continent itself. Like other times in recent European history, minorities and immigrants are being blamed for socioeconomic changes, including unemployment, the loss of social welfare, and the drop in educational standards.10 They have also given rise to what Sarat Maharaj has termed “multicultural managerialism.” In other words, the management and regulation of cultural difference have become equally a function of European government policies within the arena of “managing” migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers as well as within the sphere of cultural policy.11 Multiculturalism and racism have been increasing, at one and the same time. The celebration of cultural difference, its assimilation into governmental thinking at national levels around Europe, and the proliferation of images of cultural diversity within advertising and popular culture—the Benetton effect—paradoxically have gone hand-in-hand with a rise in racially motivated violence. In other words, the increasing “cosmopolitan” prominence given to Europe’s diverse populations has not been matched by an equal shift in their political, social, and economic standing in European life or, indeed, in Europe’s cultural institutions. Perhaps it is only through a sustained cultural and historical contingency of Europe and its Others that we can come closer to realizing the potential of European culture and society as it is and it is becoming rather than as it was or as it has been constructed.
In coping with identity crisis, what counts for people are blood and belief, faith and family. People rally to those with similar ancestry, religion, language, values, and institutions and distance themselves from those with different ones.

— Samuel Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order

These are days of great anxiety in Europe and for Europeans. Samuel Huntington has located this anxiety in the clash of values between Europeans and non-Europeans who recently have settled on the Continent. But what exactly is the basis of this clash? Is it the resurrection of old antagonisms or the historical return of the repressed? Like the rest of the world, Europe is deep in the convulsive throes of a collision of worlds, cultural values, and shifting historical currents. And like all the rest, it is bewildered by the immense challenge of creating a coherent, federal super state to rival the United States. To understand why the European Union is worried about this convulsion in the global order, we would do well to understand Huntington who believes that the proper response to the identity crisis that Europe is undergoing is a return to some pure, atavistic past. He writes:

In the new world, cultural identity is the central factor shaping a country's associations and antagonisms. While a country can avoid Cold War alignments, it cannot lack identity. The question, "Which side are you on?" has been replaced by the much more fundamental one, "Who are you?" Every state has to have an answer. That answer, its cultural identity, defines the state's place in world politics, its friends, and its enemies.

Could there be a more enervating sense of cultural relationship in a globalizing world than the one sketched above, in which contact between peoples is grounded in some nativist understanding of friend and foe? It would appear that the political task of the state, henceforth, is to be based precisely on the
characteristics of a fundamental separation within the body of the polity between the friend to be protected and sheltered and the enemy who must be dominated and deracinated. Within this bleak scenario, Europe has gone to search for answers and perhaps to discover the enemies who so trouble its cultural coherence. In this quest, the immigrant has emerged as the spectral epiphany of its self-doubt, its cultural integrity, its identity. This immigrant has emerged in the name of the postcolonial subject across the territories of the European Union.

Increasing hostility towards this subject in Europe has moved beyond the threshold of phenomena to that of a norm. It appears that a once-consoled Western modernity is out of sorts, enervated by this postcolonial mongrel: the non-European immigrant who first arrived in the late 1940s and 1950s as cheap labor or, in more fanciful parlance, as a "guest worker" on factory floors and in menial jobs after World War II to help rebuild a ruined continent. These guest workers, from countries like Turkey and regions such as the Caribbean, South Asia, and Africa, filled crucial labor shortages throughout Western Europe following World War II. They were often enlisted to make the journey with promises of residency and economic opportunity. Moreover, as "guests," they were expected to reside only temporarily; in time, it was assumed, they would return to their respective lands. While many of these workers went back home, many others stayed and settled into their new cultures.

Today, these guest workers have grown old enough to have children and grandchildren who carry seeds of their parents' and grandparents' cultural heritage but who know no other home but Europe. Fifty years later, globalization has added to this social transformation of codes of cultural attachment. But no longer will that old idealism, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses," suffice. Liberé's beckoning call also comes with a demand for égalité, even if the third component of the liberal trinity, fraternité, has long been discounted, producing an antagonism that has engulfed Europe in debates about its political future and social networks. In the examination of the relationship between friends and enemies, hosts and guest, integration and resistance, a shift in the cultural ecology of the Continent has produced its own countermeasures, such as tough immigration rules, deportation laws, detention in hostel barracks, denial of entry at ports for boats smuggling humans, and, finally, the creation of a vast cordon sanitaire, which in a sense is a blockade in international waters to prevent those wanting to land on the European continent from reaching its shores.

These are extreme measures, and they are growing increasingly dire. Let us take as an example the recent French law proscribing all religious symbols from state schools, but most especially headscarves worn by Muslim girls. Paradoxically, the French policy to ban religious paraphernalia in its public schools in order to maintain the apparent neutrality of the secular state as well as to maintain a clear boundary between the church and the state or, as some see it, the mosque and the state effectively bans practices of conscience and freedom of personal religious expression guaranteed by European law. But in spite of the seeming even-handedness of the new policy, Muslims, the most recalcitrant of all European immigrant groups, were clearly the principal target of the French law. Under the law, while Christian students can wear discreet crosses to class, Islamic girls are not allowed to don headscarves, which are deemed too conspicuous for the Catholic taste of the supposedly secular state. What this law portends for future cultural politics in the European Union remains to be seen, especially if Turkey joins in the coming years.

Though there have been attempts to mediate the fallout from this law through calls for tolerance and intercultural dialogue, it is clear that Europe has to recognize that, for European countries, Islam is perceived as a threat to the secular traditions of the Continent. And if Islam is a threat, one must see it through the prism of immigration. Effective immigration policies constitute the first line of defense against Islam's incipient radicalism. But to frame the state's antagonism to Islam as an enemy requires a certain form of willful agnosia, given the recent atrocities against Muslims in Russia and Islamic history in European cultural traditions. But that is another matter. For now, I want to concentrate on the effects the hysterical debate on immigration have had on political and cultural discourse.

I will begin with politics. If the immigration question in Europe has produced a growing disenchantment with the auguries of pluralism, once celebrated by postmodernism, and the insouciant militancy of postcolonial discourse, the events surrounding the attack on the United States on 11 September 2001 and the combined wars on "terror" in Afghanistan and Iraq have rent the fragile fabric that formerly held out the possibility for those who persist in their daydream of a multicultural Europe. For many Europeans already opposed to or suspicious of multiculturalism or pluralism, 9/11 made clear that immigrants, especially Muslims, are anathema, as Huntington argues, to the survival of a stable European identity. Populist politicians, such as Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands, Jörg Haider in Austria, Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, Filip Dewinter in Belgium, and Nick Griffin in Britain, along with a motley crew of far-right political parties working across Europe, all united in their singular hatred of immigrants, have exploited this electorally. On the one hand, there is the insurgent rhetoric of nativism on the part of certain groups, wielding xenophobic discourse, and on the other, a rising jihadism among young Muslims. With equal vehemence, those young Muslims, enacting their own nativist retreat to some pure past, have engaged the spectacle and speciousness of rightwing attacks on immigrants. This is perhaps what Tariq Ali meant in his book, The Clash of Fundamentalisms? The paradox of fear and loathing that often accompanies anti-immigrant
attitudes and policies is not new. Xenophobia has always had a great appeal on the Continent, despite attempts at papering over its cracks, as the 2004 murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh and public reaction to it clearly remind us. His murder has precipitated a great deal of soul searching, spawning many reassessments and reevaluations of integration programs. Do they go far enough or are they hopelessly doomed to failure? Again, a new urgency surrounds the debate—decades old already—across the Continent. What is to be done with Europe's immigrant populations, the ranks of which continue to grow at a prodigious rate?

Europe's immigrant community is vast and varied, ranging from South Asians, such as Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis, to Africans and Caribbean populations. Muslims are currently the most visible of these groups, for obvious reasons. According to population and most economic studies, Muslims comprise the largest group of immigrants living in Europe today and are often committed to their ethnic and religious identities. While their host cultures perceive many of them as hostile to the ideals and values of Western modernity, further testing the ideal of tolerance long cherished (perhaps in delusion) as part of Europe's heritage of political liberalism, a majority, it is often noted, are comfortable with such ideals and values and see no contradiction whatsoever between their cherished Muslim identities and their European identities. This certainly has done little to assuage the fear that Islamic radicalism has eaten more deeply into the lives of young European Muslims, a matter of both political and cultural concern.

The debate on immigration and immigrants is a complex one, to be sure, even if much of it has been reduced to cultural and loyalty tests. What to do with immigrants is not only a matter of how to assimilate them culturally and instill in them European values, it also raises the question of how to live with them as neighbors, with full recognition of their cultural and political rights as Europeans. While laying bare the ethical limits that mark the topology of European tolerance along with its myths of openness to other cultures, strange and abhorred neighbors make for uncomfortable shared space.

However, the immigration question, like "the Other question," is one side of the coin of dissonance being played out in the relationship between Europeans and foreigners. The other side concerns the eastward expansion of the European Union. As the Union expands to the east, moving ever closer to the edge of the Levant in Turkey, it is also experiencing another profound shock: a crisis of identity within its territorial map. Donald Rumsfeld's slashing dissection of this crisis allowed him to frame Europe less in the monadic fantasy of Euro bureaucrats based in Strasbourg and Brussels than in the oppositional terms of realpolitik: as a struggle between "new Europe" and "old Europe," a distinction, no doubt, with which Huntington would have agreed. In other words, taking a page from Huntington, Rumsfeld sought to express Europe's confusion as the difference between the incumbent and the outsider.

My metaphor of slashing for Rumsfeld's mode of discourse is apt, for his sword is not original, but merely an expressive power implement unshackled to remind Europeans of the terrible tear at the core of their Union. French President Jacques Chirac, knowing firsthand the terrible truth of Rumsfeld's claims, more than obliged the pugnacious defense secretary with his Gallic condescension toward his seemingly subservient Eastern partners in the Union who, rather than keep quiet and maintain the façade of European solidarity, sided with America and, therefore, missed a vital opportunity to "keep quiet" in the debate surrounding the Iraq war.

Of course, one can also read the American defense secretary's Munich insult as calculated and deliberate, intended to dramatize and to highlight not just European weakness in the politics of power, but also its weakness as an effective super state speaking with one voice. If Europe, unable to unify behind a common foreign policy, how can it ever hope to manufacture a common culture with shared values among its disparate peoples? Is it not delusional to conceive of culture in the same manner as common currency, markets, foreign policy, citizenship? If Europe is to become a forceful player on the world stage, its identities, far more resistant to any totalizing, common bureaucratic discourse?

With due deliberateness, Rumsfeld carefully exposed and cruelly exploited this weakness in the present conception of European identity. As he knew and we all know, when we take a grand tour of Europe, from Istanbul to the Russian steppe, Cardiff to Lillehammer, Lille to Bucharest, what we encounter is not consensus as to what constitutes its identity, but disensus: Europe as multiplicity, a concatenation of traditions that no officious fenestration manufactured in Brussels will ever bring to a totality. But how did this once powerful imperial force come to be so blind to the profound set of cultural differences that inhibit the multiple traditions of its various nation-states, not to mention the visibly present immigrant communities produced as a result of its violent colonial adventures? The contortions and agonies that Europe is now undergoing in its difficult attempt to integrate the Other within its borders are not unexpected. But they do beg the question, given the political hysteria surrounding immigration and religious minorities, whether all the public flagellation is not a case of amnesia or arrogance.

I will now turn to the second part of this discussion: culture. What follows is partially set in the configuration that is Huntington's conception of identity. I shall examine how a politician frames social relations within a cultural toponography and how an artist does the same. It is important, in this context, to note Europe's recidivism in response to its non-European communities: During moments of unease, it tends to revert to political hysteria, oppose the value systems of Europe and its immigrant communities, prove them inconcilable, and test the loyalty of those who may be deemed dangerous to the res publica. In so doing, suddenly the enemy is revealed. Lord Norman Tebbit's "cricket test," a shibboleth of blatant racialized connotations, offers a useful
precedent and is worth revisiting. Tebbit conceived his cricket test not just as a test of Britishness or, as it were, Englishness, but also as a means by which to discover the enemy within. The full scope of the British peer’s test hinges on two notions: the first is tribal, given his ethnocentric instincts; the second, which is more profoundly disabling, disarticulates the non-trivial British person through a test of loyalty. To test not only if a British immigrant belongs to Britain, but his or her loyalty to it, we are called to adjudicate which side he or she should support during a cricket match between England and, say, Pakistan, India, or the West Indies. If the immigrant supports any team other than the British one, he or she fails the test of loyalty. Amartya Sen has shown the fundamental flaw of this thinking. He was correct to take Lord Tebbit to task, by pointing out:

The plurality of competing as well as non-competing identities is not only not contradictory, it can be part and parcel of the self-conceptions of migrants and their families. For example, the tendency of British citizens of West Indian or South Asian origin to cheer their “home” teams in test cricket has sometimes been seen as proof of disloyalty to Britain. This phenomenon has led to Lord Tebbit’s famous “cricket test” (to wit, you cannot be accepted as English unless you support England in last matches). This view involves a remarkable denial of consistent pluralities that may be easily involved in a person’s self-conception as well as social behaviour. Which cricket team to cheer is a completely different issue from the demands of British—or any other—citizenship, and different also from a socially cohesive link in England. In fact, in so far as Tebbit’s “cricket test” induces an exclusionary agenda, and imposes an unnecessary and illogical demand on immigrants, it makes social integration that much more difficult.*

The cricket test points to the tenuous concept of what constitutes “home” for immigrants living in Europe. It articulates the possibility of their exclusion from home’s banner of protection, should they fail its test of loyalty. As Sen makes clear, this evident distrust of immigrants erodes the networks of goodwill necessary for social integration. But let us turn the cricket test around and place the spotlight on a country like Germany, where the consequences of the literalization of home and a people has left a lasting impression on the possible abuse of the notion of home and a common heritage shared by a people. How should the Turkish or African immigrant living in Germany interpret the ambiguous inscription dem Deutschen Volke (to the German people) etched on the façade of the Reichstag in Berlin? Is the Volk of the Nazi past the same as the Volk of today? If they are the same, what were the lessons learned from the Nazis’ numerous denationalization of its Jewish populations in an attempt to exclude them from protection and thereby thoroughly annihilate them from their erstwhile “home”? If the Volk of the Nazi past is different from the one of today, what is the appropriate designation for those who came

in the aftermath of National Socialism from elsewhere and settled in Germany? Hans Haacke takes up precisely these questions in his Der Bevölkerung (1999–2000), a permanent sculpture installation on exhibit in the courtyard of the German parliament in Berlin. Haacke’s sculpture performs a crack in the mirror that seemingly reflects the self-image of the German people. The cool white lettering spelling the words der Bevölkerung (to the population) produces both a soothing and acidic effect. It is soothing in its attempt at historical responsibility and acidic because it wounds and shocks memory. The specificity of the wording is both the subject and object of the work; the word and image, text and object, are intertwined in rendering the open terrain of cultural citizenship in Germany. This work simultaneously evokes the memorial and the monument. In a city like Berlin, littered with memorials and monuments of all kinds, this double resonance is crucial to the work’s explicit artistic efficacy. But what was the reason for Haacke’s gesture, and what are its other ramifications?

Haacke’s proposition is a meditation on the Holocaust and what it means to be German today, where all references to cultural heritage are darkened by the stain of the Nazi racial interpretations of belonging and citizenship. In conceiving the sculpture, it would appear that Haacke’s principal aim was to confront and transform the pristine dem Deutschen Volk, which has come to haunt German public memory and the question of inclusion. Transforming dem Deutschen Volk and its connotations of blood and exclusion to the more open, inclusive concept der Bevölkerung was not, however, a fait accompli, as the debate in the Bundestag surrounding its approval proved. To view the sculpture, the visitor has to traverse the corridors (of power), come to an expansive glass window, and look down the courtyard, where the piece is installed. Seen from the top, the sculpture declares its counter-discourse of citizenship, opposing the Nazi exploitation of the Volk for der Bevölkerung, an alternative, positively more inclusive idealism of social belonging. Much debate surrounded this critical work because it addressed both the matter of German reunification and its postracial immigrant identity. But Haacke’s intervention in the debate on immigration presents a striking irony. If, in the act of naming, the designation “people” calls up traumatic events in European history, the seeming neutrality of “the population,” rather than serving as an inclusive and welcoming designation due to its seeming benignity, calls up other uses of the term in relation to population control. More specifically, the move by right-wing parties to curtail the rising population of immigrants, to block their entry into the Union, to deny them protection and access to legal recognition and equality all reveal the dark side of the concept of population. Foucault has shown the modern biopolitical deployment of the population at a time when the state saw that, henceforth, its power was no longer defined along the limit of life and that it had to direct its attention to the health of the population. As such, if the immigrant population in Europe is a threat to the
government in 1995 as a Pan-European platform for contemporary art, one is of the institutions that emerged in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Empire, attempting to reiterate those questions and elaborate possible answers to them. The goal of Manifesta is to build a network that links together various strands of institutional and artistic production within territorial Europe. Furthermore, the goal to integrate the newly “liberated” Eastern European countries into the Western European context is equally clear. But the definition of the topology is not only abstract. It is unhelpfully vague, when it comes to other communities not represented as nation-states. Perhaps this is intentional. Or perhaps the founders of Manifesta, in their search for a European ontology, deliberately chose to avoid illuminating identity as such. Or it may owe to the extreme conservatism of European institutions regarding this matter. For sometime, we have heard from the neurotics of political incorrectness, who lately have become culturally intolerant as well, that identity politics is foreign to Europe, it being a specifically Anglo-American obsession. Yet, the challenge of identity politics to European cultural discourse cannot be overstated, especially now that tolerance alone is not sufficient for inclusion. Articulating the inherent tension in both its identification and cognitive atlas, Manifesta has respectfully repudiated “the Other question” and the presence of “Other people” working within the European artistic context. This repression has one striking quality; it exposes the inherent provincialism in current discursive formations in the European artistic sphere. And no document illustrates this better than the text on the International Foundation Manifesta regarding the history of its initiative. It is reproduced here in its entirety:

Manifesta grew out of an early Dutch initiative, to create a pioneering, pan-European platform for the contemporary visual arts. The concept of an Itinerant Manifesta first took shape in Rotterdam, in consultation with a specially appointed International Advisory Board (the forerunner of the present International Foundation) and with the support of thirty National Governmental Arts organizations and Ministries of Culture in Europe.

Manifesta developed into a fast-growing network for young professionals in Europe and one of the most innovative biennial exhibition programmes to be held anywhere. This is due, in no small measure, to its pan-European ambitions and its uniquely nomadic nature; both the network and the exhibition, with its related activities, are equally important components of this Itinerant event. Manifesta offers a platform for emerging artists, on the basis of a networking organisation, which is able to respond flexibly to new artistic, technological and cultural developments. The most obvious aspects of Manifesta’s indistinct flexibility is the fact that a new, pan-European theme or concept is developed on each occasion by a team of out-

During the last decade, we have seen a rapid proliferation of biennials and triennials, especially in so-called economically challenged regions, both Western and non-Western. Does the “universal” symbol of contemporary art resonate of the “past,” both temporary and impractical, or is it proof of a globalised visual culture expressed through contemporary art? I guess both. In contrast, rich societies create histories, often in an effort to market the cultural attractiveness of a given place. For German collector and curator Rudi Blesh, one of the main forces behind Manifesta both as an idea and an organisation, such developments could not be brought to a halt. Rather than complaining, Blesh and his collaborators sought to “discover” the contemporary art and artists of the new member-states of the EU, mainly Eastern European countries. While it was still and is true that we tend to standardise Europe from the perspective of visual culture, we should also deny the different histories and modernities of the eastern regions. I do not know if the Manifesta editions succeeded in their mission, but they definitely brought to the fore artistic practices of transformational hibridisms. And yet, in order to achieve politically and economically, the organizers were dependent upon the fiction of a “new Europe.” I do not think however, that the essence of such a fiction differs much from other cultural endeavors, which lie at the basis of most current and even “progressive” biennials. The more important and pressing issue is that contemporary art, more than other disciplines, is the most valuable to fit in those fiction.

Chris Dercon, director, Rudi Blesh, Rudi
in the context of Europe. At the same time, immigrant particularism cannot simply be embraced as the response to discrimination and marginalization. Immigrant essentialism and ethnic ghettos also require critical scrutiny and careful interrogation. Immigrants are responsible for opening themselves up to their host cultures, for working to understand the values of their new homes and the importance of those values as a way to build an open society. I am interested in how a careful historical examination of Europe's relationship to its immigrant communities can, at the level of the curatorial agenda of Manifesta, generate a more engaging, open exhibition model that does not confine itself to building networks with official institutions, but can equally extend itself into communities long denied proper recognition as part of the reality of contemporary Europe.

New networks of cultural participation, such as Manifesta, can articulate what is possible in contemporary Europe's relationship to its immigrant communities, while directing us to the instability of any fixed meaning of identity. But it requires the recognition as well of the bankruptcy of the antagonistic and exclusionary view of identity and culture offered by Huntington and Lord Tebbit: between enemies and friends, between loyalty and disloyalty. The upheavals taking place in different cultural communities in Europe alert us to this. As we rethink the radical potential of a politics of difference, the task then is to dismantle the paradigm of the concentration camp (from deportation camps to deportation trials) that has been dominant in the conception of citizenship and immigration in Europe.31 In Der Bewältigung, Haacke offered one possible proposal to overcome the paradigm of the concentration camp. However, Der Bewältigung fails well short of its own goal, for it merely proposed inclusion and tolerance rather than the assimilation of other forms of difference into the norms of belonging, those which can never be wholly or exclusively absorbed into the discourse of the state and its institutions. The future radicality of Manifesta in European cultural discourse is to make possible and viable those forms of difference that cannot be ethically incorporated into the predetermined rules of its official networks. The goal for Manifesta, therefore, is to surpass the institutional limit (the concentration camp) and enter the city (the community) composed entirely out of a tremulous politics of difference. Such an exhibition model will then allow it to vanquish the ghosts of Lord Tebbit's cricket test as well as guide it past the treacherous path of a nativist impulse that argues for an identity secure in the fantasy of a coherent European cultural past.

The continuous frustration with the aspatial mode of the network and the organizational characteristics of flexibility may indeed become a curatorial tool. By fostering convivialities between disparate nodes, networks allow homogeneously to spill beyond its previous territorial contours. If insted upon as the principal mode of social practice, it would either reduce friction, conflict, and differences or leave them outside.

Flexibility, understood as the capacity of organizational forms to emerge transformations in response to social and political forces, may become the real-time graphic representation of such network-areal tendencies for convergence.

Contemporary methods of cultural interrogation may look beyond the social organization of tolerance and cooperation to answer Europe's topography of similarities and the city as common arena of conflicts. As most political repulse geopolitics, the city has already become the unrepresented target of political violence and the helpless victim of its countermeasures—replicating and sharpening identity differences and folding them into the physical technology of alienation in its fragmented peripheries of extra-territoriality. Conflicts are also spatial practices beyond this phenomenology of the extreme.

Indeed, below the register of the existing framework of Europe's "legitimate" politics and its "strategic" conflicts, a multiplicity of micro-political organizations and community groups of overgrowing aims are engaged in local, provincial, low-intensity urban conflicts for their rights and interests. The rapidly transforming spaces of our daily lives could be seen as monuments of these invisible conflicts. Critical intervention in this urban arena must make clear statements and take sides, support the struggle of political actors in exercising their differences rather than reproducing their similarities.

Tebbit's Ghost
NOTES
7. The Whitney Museum of American Art's biennial exhibition is the closest to Manifesta in its national orientation, yet even the Whitney has began to wrestle with what "American" means in the exhibition's designation, self-questioning which Manifesta unfortunately still has not reflected on sufficiently.
10. For a more succinct reflection of the concentration camp as a dominant paradigm of our time, see Giorgio Agamben, Means Without End: Notes on Politics, trans. Vincent Bianetti and Cesare Casarino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).
HOW A EUROPEAN BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART BEGAN

René Block, Hedwig Fijen, Henry Meyric Hughes, and Kata\nlin Néray discuss the creation of Manifesta, a history in which many of the participants have played a crucial role. In this interview with the editors, participants speak of the European context out of which Manifesta emerged, its curatorial model, the network it established, and other themes tracing the genesis and recent developments of Europe's first biennial of contemporary art.

How did a 1991 governmental initiative of the Dutch ministry subsequently come to be a European-wide biennial of contemporary art, carried out by art-world participants? How did it differentiate itself from other biennials that have had strong national and governmental backing, both financially and organizationally?

René Block: The question already touches on the difference between Manifesta and other biennials. As far as I know, biennials largely have not been inventions by governments, but instead formations instigated by individual people or private initiatives, as in Sydney or in Istanbul. For the Venice Biennal, which is indeed a municipal foundation, I assume that it was an initiative emanating from the citizens, although today we don't know which individuals were responsible for encouraging the mayor of Venice more than a hundred years ago. On the other hand, the germ of Manifesta can be found in the cultural department of the Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands. As far as I remember, it wasn't begun at the ministry's instruction, but as an idea of two art lovers, Gijs van Tuyl and Els Barents, who at that time worked at the Netherlands Office for Fine Arts and who were horrified about the conservative direction taken by the Venice Biennal and its closing down of "Aperto," the part of the biennal showing younger artists, at precisely the moment when Europe was in a phase of full change and optimism.1 From the beginning there was a conscious effort to create a new type of biennal that would respond to this new European situation and reflect it in terms of cultural policy.

Henry Meyric Hughes: The prehistory of Manifesta is somewhat nebulous, but the outline is clear enough. In the period 1990–91, the members of the Netherlands Office for Fine Arts, the director of which at the time was Robert de Haas, held a series of internal discussions about the possibility of launching a new European art project in the Netherlands. It would take account of the political changes precipitated by the fall of the Berlin Wall, the gap created by the demise of the Paris Biennal after 1985, and the failure of other events, including "Aperto," established in 1980 at the Venice Biennal or Documenta, to take its place.2 To this end, preparatory discussions for this project had in fact already begun in an informal level at the 1990 Venice Biennal, between Dutch commissioner Gijs van Tuyl, his colleague Els Barents, and a limited number of other national commissioners, of whom I was one. In 1992, after Gijs van Tuyl left the Netherlands Office for Fine Arts to take over the direction of the new Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Els Barents went on to visit some seven countries in Europe, with a view to establishing the feasibility of the proposed European event. At the same time, things were rapidly changing.
at the Netherlands Office for Fine Arts, which from 1993 had been compelled by changes in Dutch government policy to abandon many of its traditional functions, including the promotion of Dutch art abroad. The event now proposed for Rotterdam assumed greater urgency, as there was a need for the Netherlands Office to demonstrate its commitment to the work of living artists on an international level. At the constituent meeting of the Foundation European Art Manifestation in The Hague in 1993 an official Dutch board was set up, with De Haas as chairperson. Hedwig Fijen would be the main force behind the project, was introduced. She took over from Els Barents as project manager and was among those to advocate on establishing an International Advisory Board. Besides Barents and De Haas, the International Advisory Board members invited to attend the first meeting in November 1993 comprised René Block (Germany), Sven-Eric Lundquist (Sweden), Michèle Paris (France), who represented Michel Moulin from the Association française d’action artistique (AFAA), and me (United Kingdom).

Basic to the creation of Manifesta and its artistic aims and objectives were established at the first four meetings of this International Advisory Board, which took place between November 1993 and the end of 1994 in The Hague, Stuttgart, and Rotterdam – at this last location, in conjunction with the newly appointed curatorial team of Manifesta 1.

Hedwig Fijen: The prehistory of Manifesta is not a lonely story, but it has never been clearly written and made publicly available. Its origins go back to the time when Gijs van Toyt was head of the department in the Netherlands Office for Fine Arts that dealt with the presentation of Dutch art abroad, including representation at the major international biennials of contemporary art. Gijs had already worked on the 1983 edition of the Paris Biennial as well as the final 1985 edition. In a recent conversation, he told me that the demise of this event in the 1980s inspired him to propose a new concept based on the same model, with its focus on the presentation of younger artists and its emphasis on developing a new format and network for exchange between artists and other professionals, including teams of independent curators. Gijs asserted that his first ideas were never meant to counteract the putative failure of other events, such as Documenta or Venice. It was an attempt to create a space for positive experiences with the Paris Biennial and a desire to continue such an event that inspired him.

From the end of the 1980s onward, the project that would later be called Manifesta was conceived of as a reinvention of the project that had failed, with special focus on younger generations. Els Barents, who as one of the curators working for Gijs van Toyt, investigated its feasibility and laid out, along with seven European colleagues, the first draft of the project, which was discussed and published in an internal paper in 1991. On the basis of this, De Haas allocated a budget to underwrite the initial steps of this biennial project. And when Gijs left that position, and proved to have fallen out with Koolhaas and of which Van Krimpen had been soon to become director.

On the basis of the parameters defined during the first meeting of the International Advisory Board, in November 1993, I organized an in-depth feasibility study to be presented at the first European gathering in January 1994. With more than fifty-five representatives from national arts organizations and governments in attendance, the concept of the new biennial was introduced to our colleagues. To convince them of the viability of our plans, I defined a new model, the European Arts Foundation, which would be realized in the form of the Office for Fine Arts. In the meantime, Els continued to support the project, although from a distance, as her minister was removed from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands and was stationed part-time as cultural attaché in New York. Finally, during the summer of 1992, an independent Dutch foundation called Stichting Europese Manifestatie

**How a European Biennial of Contemporary Art Began**

Brechtend Kunstmakkers (European Art Makers) was established to ensure the further development of the new biennial project. Its board would be composed entirely of Dutch members. The allocation of a budget of fifty thousand Dutch guilders made it possible to invite over some of the people Els had contacted. In November 1993 the first International Advisory Board, a consulting body rather than a legal entity, was set up and represented the European cultural institutions in the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Hungary among others. Lively discussions took place during that meeting, questioning what was needed at that point in Europe, for which large-scale projects were being developed, for the formation of rather than other large-scale events. Soon after, the first locations for the new event were investigated. Amsterdam and Maastricht were both considered, but we finally decided on Rotterdam. Board member Willem van Krimpen lobbied to have the opening of the first edition of Manifesta, scheduled for late 1994, at the new Kunsthall Rotterdam, designed by Rem Koolhaas and of which Van Krimpen had soon to become director.

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Katalin Néray: Due to the fact that the first Manifesta exhibition was organiz-

ized five years after the initiative began, we had a certain experience with what happened in Central and Eastern Europe in the period after the Wall. With the passing of the euphoria that it brought on, signs of a hanging appendix of a larger picture of the drama of a vacuum, disenchantment, ethnic conflicts, bloody wars, xenophobia, and political life. In his wonderful essay "Enjoy Your Life as Yourself" pub-

lished in Taneggy with the Negative (1993), the eminent Slovenian philoso-

pher Slavoj Žižek puts both the ques-

tion: Why was the West so fascinated by the collapse of European communist systems? His answer to this is that the West presumed to discover its own idealized image of democracy, a treasure it had long forgotten. Manifesta had the ambition to react to this situation, to develop the new platform, and thus to become the chief curator of the first edi-

tion. We wanted to take Katalin's place on the board and represent the Soros Centers for Contemporary Art (SCCAs) to those who had committed Rossf to developing the first edition of the event, respecting the link established with Rotterdam. Wim van den Bosch, the then Dutch delegate to the board of the Soros International represented the Soros Centers for Contemporary Art (SCCAs) and asked Joop van Caldenborgh, the Rotterdam-based curator and chairman of the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, to join the board. He appointed me, the former curator of the Netherlands Office for Fine Arts, as the first project manager of the van Leusen fund, and offered to join us at the end of 1994 as production manager, which made the enormous task of managing and execut-

ing the event within the specified time frame possible.

In 1994 and 1995, Van Caldenborgh invited the Dutch artist Marlene Dumas, Chris Dercon, then director of the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Herman Wessels, Vincent Vlamislov, and Gert Dalé, who at the time was the director of the Stichting Fonds voor Beeldende Kunsten, Vormgeving en Bouwkundig Amsterdam (Amsterdam Fund for Visual Art, Architecture, and Design, or EAM), to join the board. His existing board and help him oversee the start-up of Manifesta 1 in Rotterdam. As a member of the International Advisory Board, I felt that this was the most important intermediary with the European specialists, including Suzanne Meszoly, the representative of the Soros Centers for Contemporary Arts (SCCAs) who played a vital role in forging the connection between the SCCAs and Manifesta.

Henry Meyric Hughes: Just to return to one point that Hedwig mentioned: Gijs had already chosen a topic in which the comparative failure of Venice and Documenta [first of all, in Venice itself], as cultural activities to show the work of many young artists, particularly those from Eastern Europe who were usually not included in the commercial network or even in the "Apertures."
The title of the biennial changed over time. What was the title Manifesta originate? We would like to know more about the implicit relationship that was set up between this title and something like Documents. Is it true that there was the sense that the name should suggest a biennial meant to manifest art as opposed to documenting it?

Hedwig Fijen: The title of the biennial changed in 1989 from Documenta to Manifesta, to reflect the emphasis on documentation biennial (the Dutch translation of the French Biennale des Jeunes) to European Manifestation for Young Artists and European Art Manifestation. During the January 1994 meeting, René Block finally proposed the title Manifesta, and members of the advisory board accepted it in March of that year. For René, it was also important to include in the title the dual sense of making the present visible and non-European, thus derived from manifestus, Latin for “clear or palpable.” It also resonated with mowire, Latin for “to move,” and he additionally made the association with the notion of an art event as a manifest (statement) or manifesto.

René Block: It was obvious that the project needed a handler title than its initial working titles. The simpler and more meaningful title was Manifesta. I admit that we nodded to Documents. We thought the title should be a demonstration and suggest the biennials aims: to be young, dynamic, international.

Katalin Néray: As far as I remember, we all felt that Manifesta was the right title for what we wanted to do, since we wanted to manifest rather than just document the new situation in Europe, without being Eurocentric, but also show the multicultural face of Europe and to involve non-European artists living and working on the Continent.

Generally speaking, for the art world of the 1980s, the impact supposed to support Manifesta financially with a fee of five thousand Dutch guilders every two years. Furthermore, art organizations were sometimes meant to pay without having a so-called national artist represented in the event. Not all organizations eagerly accepted the arrangement. For example, Andrea Rose, director of the British Council, reacted by writing a letter stating that she did not intend to send a blank check to Manifesta 1 and allow others to select an artist from the United Kingdom. And so this model never entirely worked. Although more than twenty countries paid their participation fee for the first Manifesta, an equally balanced and shared budget was never possible, and the majority of the finances were organized through the Dutch foundation.

And even though the Dutch organized the event, it was presented as a new European initiative supported and financed by a wide range of national, international, and European arts organizations, including the new SCDA network.

How did Manifesta deal with issues of national representation? For instance, how have the number and origin of those artists who can or cannot participate in a “European Biennial” been determined? And if there are no protocols, how can one avoid a potential inconsistency between the decisions of the curatorial team and the institutional ambition of Manifesta to represent Europe?

Katalin Néray: From the outset, the board decided that Manifesta would not be based on national representation. There were no quotas determining either in the case of artists per country or the countries themselves that had to be included. In the case of the first edition, we were particularly aware of this problem and tried to do as much research as possible within a relatively short time, sharing the responsibilities based on our respective backgrounds.

The curators of later editions were even more radical in this respect. A possible conflict was inscribed in the system because it was presented as a European biennial, which European Union (EU) and other governmental funds financed. However, despite its compromises, I remain convinced that Manifesta’s itinerant model as well as the growing importance of the EU context where its edition take place are important ways of overcoming this.

Hedwig Fijen: The inconsistency between the decisions of the curatorial teams and the so-called institutional ambitions of Manifesta were never actually experienced because Europe at large was included on many different levels in the network, in the research methodology, or in the financial construction of the event, as I mentioned earlier.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Manifesta responded to the new geographical condition of Europe and its newly defined relationships between center and periphery by establishing a multilateral curatorial team, which was Manifesta 1 included, among others, Katalin Néray from Budapest as chief curator and Viktória Miszlayo from Tübingen, who was convinced and composed such a team was quite atypical at that time. It was the first curatorial team to do extensive research in Central and Eastern Europe, which at that time, in 1994–95, was not a very common practice for large contemporary art events. It even seems unheard of today. The curators of the first edition were not asked to follow quotas, as there were none, but they documented the new situation in Europe, including non-Europeans. Jolie van Leeuwen and I encouraged the curators to take research trips to the most marginal places in the new Europe, which sometimes created hilarious situations, like...
the famous trip of the first curatorial team to Wouter Minnar's ditch at the edge of Moscow in the summer of 1995. Another interesting aspect in this context was the methodology of the Open and Closed Houses, which were organized in ten places in Europe to help the curators of Manifesta 1 set up forums with many different professionals from the international art world. The format was sometimes misinterpreted, but during these meetings, the curators of Manifesta 1 sought suggestions from different local communities about the topics they should concentrate on in the exhibition instead of conceptualizing a theme.

It has sometimes been argued that Manifesta resembles the European Cultural Capital project, but this has never been a true comparison. Manifesta was not initiated by the EU, but is instead a concept that emerged from a close collaboration between national art organizations throughout Europe. This was reflected in the initial nominations to the advisory board, the members of which were representatives of these organizations and as such were often responsible for and commissioners of their respective national participation at any future edition, the model of which they wanted to change.

Manifesta did not adopt the common model of a singular curatorial voice. Instead, from the start, it provided a collaborative working platform for curators, which Manifesta selected and organized for the first five editions. It is not secret that this created some conflicts between curators who were forced to find a way to develop a coherent project with other curators with very different backgrounds, experiences, or aesthetic tastes. Indeed, one can understand this collaborative situation as putting more emphasis on the process and dialogue between curators than on the exhibition itself. In the latest selection of curators for the sixth edition, Manifesta has stepped away from this model. Can you speak about why this change came about and in what ways it will impact future editions?

Hedwig Fijen: As project manager, I was involved with the process of selecting the curators from the very beginning. I recall the basic ideas behind letting the board as well as the coordinators of the host cities select the individual curators and compose a curatorial team for them. It was intended as a learning enterprise, bringing together individuals from different generations and cultural back-grounds, encouraging the mutual collaboration of individuals with different professional experiences—either from institutions or as independent curators—and also allowing younger curators to work on an important project with a considerable budget early in their careers. The idea was to provide these professionals with a platform to create a network that could be of importance to their future careers. Last but not least, instead of creating a structure of consensus, we imagined that the possible confrontations that might emerge within the curatorial teams could be productive and in fact lead to new perspectives and working methodologies.

This original collaborative model caused some difficult situations between the curators, it is true, and not only because of the lack of an adequate explanation about how and in what ways they were supposed to set the parameters of collaboration. Manifesta is a changing event that involves setting up a new structure every two years, so the transfer of information and working structures from one edition to another are complicated to organize. Unfortunately, it was not always as efficient as it might have been.

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Now, with the preparation of the sixth edition in Nicasia, we have stepped away from Manifesta’s original procedure for forming the curatorial team, deemed by some as too artificial. We hope to give international professionals more space to invent their own structures and modes of collaboration within a broader interdisciplinary framework. It is our experience we had with the architects and urbanists of the Rotterdam-based Manifesta Institute, who played an import-ant role in the first edition in Donostia/San Sebastian, influenced this decision. The fact that we chose Nicasia as the next location for Manifesta—a clear attempt to create relationships with Europe’s immediate neighbors—stimulated the idea of involving younger curators from professionals, including academics, writers, or, for example, political activists.

Henry Meyric Hughes: It might be added as well that in the beginning, we all felt that there were large gaps in our knowl-edge. Communications between differ-ent parts of Europe had been so poor for so long that it was necessary to offer a variety of different perspectives and above all give a voice to some of our younger colleagues working on the mar-gins of the art-world economy.

Moreover, this was not just an opening up in one direction, from East to West. It should not be forgotten that the Young British Artists (YBA) phenomenon had already begun, the first international congress, new programs with courses in curating were started, and the role of the inde-pendent curator took off. It should not be supposed, however, that the curatorial model remained static, from the first edition of Manifesta to the fifth. Rather, it was subtly modified on each occasion, partly due to chance and partly to take account of the reality that more young curators were more familiar with each other’s work and less associated with certain paradigms. The result was that collaborative work was being recognized. The norm. Of course, none of this detracts from the observation that a few curators have been more successful in their approach.

When we decided to publicize the concept of the EAM to all its potential European partners, the main question was: who does it mean to be a member of the network? In this respect, at the first public meeting in 1994, all the representatives were invited to create a consensus between all of them. We intended the idea of a multi-funding organization based on a democratic principle. We also specifically needed the commitment of all the partners to adopting an equal financial share to the table, and Suzanne Meszoly, as the overall coordi-nator of the Soros Centers, guaranteed that this and the SOCA also would wholeheartedly support the EAM. All the SOCA had quick access to essential information and the ability to act as a guide to visiting curators, which made it possible to complete intensive research throughout Europe in the 1990s. The SOCA also had their own budgets for artistic production.

Artists, from all the regions involved could be funded by their own organization. The so-called “author” attitude of having Western curatorial councils pay for their colleagues from Central and Eastern Europe was, as far as I knew, this was the first time that Eastern Europe was profoundly involved in a Pan-European art project, even though the original democratic concept did not completely succeed. Only twenty national organizations from former Eastern countries, among them the SOCA’s, co-produced Manifesta’s first edition in Rotterdam.

In the press releases, catalogues, and public statements that accompanied the first few editions, there was curiously little said about the reasons why Manifesta was established. There was no attempt to present such a remarkable feature of the biennal. How and why did the idea to make Manifesta itinerant come about?

Rene Block: In Stuttgart, we decided upon the itinerant aspect as one of the hallmarks of the Manifesta con-cept. There is a little anecdote to talk about it. In the middle of the 1990s, the French artist Robert Filliou had the idea to take his “artistic capital,” which was a book with each edition through the north, south, east, and west of Europe. Filliou, who had this idea before the fall of the Berlin Wall, hoped to set up a project of the art of Public Biennials. Using the more deliberate title Approaching a
Biennial of Peio, the first edition took place in 1987, and it seemed likely that it wouldn't continue after Fillioz's death in 1987, but as he had planned for a second edition to take place in Amsterdam in 1990, an event that took place three years later. The idea of a traveling biennial thus traced its roots to Fillioz. Whiting was intrigued to think about a new biennial for Europe some years later, I suggested the idea as the model that Manifesta could develop.

Henry Meyric Hughes: I like René's anecdote, which is very fitting, but the idea of an itinerant biennial was also discussed at our first meeting in November 1993, when Svendron Lundquist raised this possibility (maybe because we already knew that Rotterdam would only host the event once) and was, of course, supported by René, among others. We sometimes do not like to admit this, but the idea of the European Cultural Capitals (first launched in 1985 by Melina Mercour, then the Green minister of culture) also played a part in our early discussions, though we consciously maintained a critical distance. That was also a belief that it might be possible to gather fresh sources of financial support by moving around, coupled with a realization that it would be necessary to establish a firm administrative base somewhere, ideally in the Netherlands – something we finally achieved when the International Foundation for the Museum of Modern Art/Manifesta (IFM) was set up in June 1999.

Hedwig Fijen: One might ask: How can we continue to justify the nomadic character of the biennial? The nominal aspect of the biennial came about also, in part, because the biennial is organized as a collaborative endeavor among European countries. The idea was that every European country should potentially be able to have the chance to host the biennial at least once. But does the term "nomadic" now exist as an illusion, or was it merely a handy metaphor for a traveling art show, superimposing a kind of nomadic quality of European thought onto a willing local community? Some believe that neither perception is valid today, since each host city seems to strictly control and negotiate this nomadism. They see Manifesta as a tool in their own cultural marketing, and they attempt to outdo the competition with higher and higher starting budgets. Manifesta is aware of these machinations. So it has become necessary, in order to remain unique, extra, conceptual framework to further distance the biennial from the European Cultural Capitals project. Manifesta looks to its own exceptions to be able to attract a public that may not have a strong infrastructure or offer massive funding, but have an artistic tradition in which small communities are experimenting with new ideas. We also recognize that it might even be necessary to select a site where regional funding organizations do not necessarily wholeheartedly welcome the biennial. Politicians and their expectations need not be feared, but dealt with.

Hedwig Fijen: As plans for the second biennial exhibitions often attract the professional art world but also typically finally build a broader audience over time. How was Manifesta's itinerant model envisioned so that it would establish a continuing dialogue with a public beyond the international art world?

René Block: An itinerant biennial, it goes without saying, follows different rules than classical, recurrent ones. An itinerant biennial is, by definition, a singular guest performance and as such it is often less effective, in terms of the local cultural milieu, as could be seen in the mid-1990s in the Nordic countries. The artistic context of its community was the most important factor, and new art was generated by an innovative approach towards reinventing the model and a willingness and capacity to create a structured context for the curators allowing them freedom and integrity.

René Block: I agree with what René stated about the difference between itinerant and classical biennials. Manifesta's first editions were largely attended by professionals and had around thirty thousand visitors. The biennial is sometimes compared to other large city events attracting a cultural support, but it must be stated that its first five editions cost a fraction of most other major biennials. It started out as a smaller alternative project with different rules and never tried to compete with the attendance figures of other large-scale events. By the same token, it has existed for ten years so far, so Manifesta remains quite a young project. The fifth edition in Donostia-San Sebastián was an exception to accept them. In the year 2000, more than 120,000 visitors attended, a majority of whom came from the region and local communities. According to its organizers, this was mainly due to the active two-year involvement of the regional media, Manifesta's positive reception in the press in general, and the efforts of local guides and volunteers.

The selection of a host city for Manifesta has often been compared with the bidding process for the Olympic Games. What are the selection criteria that will be able to appropriately accommodate a Manifesta edition, and how have those criteria changed over time?

Hedwig Fijen: The criteria for judging the host cities have indeed changed over the years. In the early years of development, we were looking for cities and regions that showed a specific dynamic character in terms of their artistic milieu, as could be seen in the mid-1990s in the Nordic countries. The artistic context of its community was the most important factor, and new art was generated by an innovative approach towards reinventing the model and a willingness and capacity to create a structured context for the curators allowing them freedom and integrity.

How would you say the Manifesta model continues to change, mostly in the context of new and emerging artists in their careers and their practices?

Hedwig Fijen: The ways in which Manifesta has developed over the years have been tied to the emergence of new and emerging artists in their careers by commissioning new works and by creating a context in which they are able to develop their own thinking and work (in relation to curators and other artists) is one of the measures of its success. For many artists, it was a chance to work within a Manifesta project in a large-scale, international event, and for others, it was the confirmation of a career path that was still in its early stages. But above all, it started to become complicated, for example, the Manifesta provided the exposure and the context from which their artistic practices could develop in interesting ways.

Why, despite the proclaimed importance of creating a real and equal dialogue between East and West, can a post-Soviet country never host Manifesta? The only edition to take place in a city in the former East was in Lublina, the flourishing cultural and economic capital of Slovenia which was itself the most economically prosperous region of the former Yugoslavia, never attached to the Soviet Union or part of the Warsaw Pact. Its relatively bloodless ten days of war before gaining its independence from Yugoslavia in the early 1990s also made it an exception in many ways to the history of the nearly entire surrounding region. All of which seems to add another ingredient to the Manifesta, given its stated ambitions with regard to the former East.
Katalin Hlevay: After the Rotterdam edition, we looked into Budapest with the possibility for the next host city. I tried my best to convince the Hungarian cultural ministry about it. Unfortunately, this coincided with a change of government, and the new people had no courage to take the financial responsibility. It was a big mistake. The budget of Manifesta was relatively high compared to local art exhibitions, but not more than the budget for, say, a minor conference. Similarly, contemporary art never had the same reputation in our countries as literature, music, and film. So the reason was both conceptual and financial. It was a pity really because the original idea was to organize Manifesta in the former Eastern bloc countries as well. I know that Anda Rottenberg made similar efforts in Poland, without success.

Hedvig Fijten: Earlier, we spoke of Manifesta's itinerant nature, and here we might speak conceivably of the reality of that exhibition model since reality does not necessarily always represent our desires or even our best intentions. At the heart of the trade-off of survival and continuation for the biennial is the truth that since its inception, Manifesta has predominantly taken place in Western cities. Economic factors were considered to be a real risk for potential host cities. In the years that followed, numerous Eastern and Western European cities were invited to consider hosting Manifesta. Helsinki, Oslo, Helsinki, Belgrade, and the joint ventures between cities such as Bari and Tirana or Saint Petersburg and Prague were serious contenders to host Manifesta. Additionally, several unexpected Western cities included Amsterdam, Glasgow, Gateshead, Manchester, Palermo, and Syracuse were also seen as serious options. None of these materialized. Why exactly is the lack of financial input accounted for seventy-five percent of the Manifesta budget. Today, more than fifty percent of the budget comes from institutional grants and sponsorship. When the continuity of Manifesta at large was in question, sometimes feasibility won out over wish fulfillment.

Henry Meyric Hughes: The advisory board was keen to open up new possibilities for artists, curators, art professionals, and young people from all over Europe who felt marginalized by the art world. We aimed to facilitate the participation of artists, curators, and the scientific structure of organized bilateral artistic exchange mechanisms. Manifesta was always intended to be something more than a biennial exhibition, and the challenge was to open up a multilateral network at a variety of different levels and to bring people with fresh ideas. After 1999 and all that, this meant emphasizing the West-East dimension above all, of course, but we were also aware of the urgent need to make north-south exchanges as well. Our colleague Sverrobert Lundquist spoke for Stockholm as a whole, when he described this region as "only a background player and nobody's watching when we score the goals." There was an urgent need to make some of the players run up a chance to move up to center field. From the beginning, what mattered more were our efforts to achieve balance in the distribution of roles between the members of the advisory board and the changing venues and bears. Some of these decisions were coupled with political uncertainties elsewhere and occasional problems with the local infrastructure prevented Manifesta from straying far from the center of Western Europe (the Europe of Charlemagne) in the initial stages, but this was not we didn't try it. Negotiations with Budapest and Warsaw respectively were taken to be a very advanced stage on different occasions, but at the end of the running day financial accounting for seventy-five percent of the Manifesta budget. Today, a little more than fifty percent of the budget comes from institutional grants and sponsorship. When the continuity of Manifesta at large was in question, sometimes feasibility won out over wish fulfillment.

Henry Meyric Hughes: I think the changes are striking and dramatic, but not what I would call structural. Sometimes, we have played it safe with location and taken risks with the curatorial process, and sometimes it has been the other way round. The important thing has always been to try to arrange the right kind of creative environment for the curators and artists and enable them to actively engage with an audience. The choice of location has frequently been a determining factor, as in the case of Ljubljana in 2000 and Donostia-San Sebastián in 2004. But the curators and their new partners, rather than the board, will decide whether or not to deal with specific issues (you mention postcolonialism as an example). As I see it, the most significant features of Manifesta 6 are the decision to match the budget and scale of events more closely to the local potential; the decision to appoint a self-selected curatorial team (albeit on the basis of a competitive call for proposals), instead of turning over complete control to individual curators who have never worked together before; and the choice of a team that emphasizes the processual and performative aspects of the project and engages with the issue of public space and the plans for the creation of a study or archive. The geopolitical situation of the island of Cyprus and its position at the crossroads of a wide range of cultural influences have also quite possibly come into play for this particular site. All in all, I would say that as long as Manifesta can remain lightweight and responsive, it will remain a very valuable and inspiring project for all concerned. In general, I would say that as long as Manifesta can remain lightweight and responsive, it will remain a very valuable and inspiring project for all concerned. In general, I would say that as long as Manifesta can remain lightweight and responsive, it will remain a very valuable and inspiring project for all concerned. In general, I would say that as long as Manifesta can remain lightweight and responsive, it will remain a very valuable and inspiring project for all concerned.
Manifesta 6 to Nicosia was intended as a challenge to Manifesta to renew itself on many levels, change its specific format, and create a more intensive and binding relationship with local and regional collaborators as well as with the artistic community by emphasizing long-term, educational priorities. Despite the fact that Nicosia is a divided city, with UN troops present along the so-called Green Line, Manifesta, even while it will be set within and respond to this context, does not intend to serve as mediator for the more than thirty-years of conflict.

To me, the notion of cultural diversity is very much alive in this region and will play a decisive role in rethinking the future of European integration. In this respect, Manifesta might be able to play a modest role in developing new cultural partnerships, not only within the new Europe, but between Europe and its immediate neighbors, something we have initiated in the last year with many institutions in the region.

NOTES
1. The now defunct, Hague-based Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst (Netherlands Office for Fine Arts) (1985-1997) was an independently run arts organization separate from the Ministry, the various departments of which oversee all the tasks related to conserving, presenting, and promoting Dutch art (a bit like the Association française d'action artistique in France). Ed.

2. The first Bienalle of Paris: manifestation biennale internationale des jeunes artistes, also known as the Bienalle des jeunes, opened in 1959 at the Musée d’art moderne de la ville de Paris and was held at regular intervals thereafter until its demise in 1985. André Malraux inaugurated the biennale in his capacity as minister of culture, and secured its participation to artists less than thirty-five years old. Conceivably at a time when the United States was perceived to be in the process of “stealing” the position of artistic dominance so long held by France, the event was also an attempt to sustain Paris’s continuing relevance on the international art scene. While the Bienallists in Venice and São Paulo paid homage to established artists whose influence had already marked the art of their time, the Paris Bienaliat chose to focus on the emerging generation and artistic experimentation. Ed.

3. Jean-Hubert Martin attempted to direct the Paris Bienial in a more thematic direction in the final years of its existence. His Magiciens de la terre (1989) was originally conceived as just such a biennial exhibition but it was ultimately mounted as a museum show.

4. When speaking of the early years of Manifesta, it is important to distinguish between the membership of the board, which dissolved itself shortly after the end of Manifesta 1, and that of the International Advisory Board (later known as the Board), composed, then as now, of senior international curators. Both bodies were considered elements of the original European Art Manifestation (EAM) in 1993. The first EAM board included Robert de Haas, director of the Netherlands Office for Fine Arts, Amsterdam, Wim van Krimpen, soon-to-be director of the Kunsthalle, Rotterdam, Martijn Sanders, collector and director of the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, and Rob Scholte, an Amsterdam-based artist. Ed.

5. The project still bore the name European Art Manifestation (EAM). Ed.

6. The expression “new Europe” was first defined in 1990 at the Paris summit of the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Following the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the countries at the CSCE used the term to refer to their participation in a new era of democracy, peace, and unity in Europe. They included: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, the Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Principality of Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, USSR, United Kingdom, and the United States. Ed.


A TALE OF TWO CITIES: MANIFESTA IN ROTTERDAM AND LJUBLJANA

Thomas Boutoux

In a series of radio lectures broadcast in 1967 on the BBC as part of the annual Reith Lectures Series, British social anthropologist Edmund Leach reflected on the culture of intellectuals and warned that they were likely to soon become "petrified observers of a runaway world." The idea of a "runaway world" captured well the moods of optimism and fear that characterized the 1960s, as established structures, norms, and values appeared to be quickly breaking down, while a much more pluralistic pattern of relationships among the world's peoples seemed to be emerging in forms that remained ominously indeterminate. The pressing issue for Leach lay in the commitment of intellectuals from all disciplines to invent new forms of practice and social engagement and to reconnect their projects to the democratic impulses of a world then emerging from a phase of state dominance originating in World War I.

Though not immediate, answers to this appeal were forged in the decades that followed. Among the intellectual fields, anthropology and contemporary art are two that unmistakably have tried to adapt to the thorough economic and political interconnectedness of the world, especially since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union after which these changes have moved at an increased pace. As fields that have defined themselves as motors for the production of knowledge and as bridges between individuals and the world in which they live, anthropology and contemporary art have both been struggling to cope with the sense of dispersion, particularity, complexity, and decades that the accelerated integration of world society induces. Moreover, they have strived to overcome the difficulties of discerning the implications of the analysis of culture, of how people see things, so as to respond to and judge them. However, the two fields have responded to the post-1989 shifts in highly different ways: Whereas anthropology plunged into years of epidemiological crisis and anxious introspection, contemporary art can be said to have inaugurated an unprecedented era of vitality and expansion.
Throughout the 1990s, the anthropological world found itself in a quandary, when asked to explain how it contributed to the understanding of the world in which we live. Anthropology was caught up in endless debates regarding the repercussions of integrated globalization, spurred by flowing capital, people, and culture, on its practices, its distinctive method of inquiry, its typical mode of writing, and above all its definition as social praxis. Practically every newly elaborated epistemological remedy was tried out to treat this disciplinary feverishness, including post-postivism, postmodernism, poststructuralism, cultural studies, postcolonialism, and globalization theory. Anthropologists fumbled in every possible direction, while still trying to project the coherence and unity they imagined the field once had—a global view of human life, at once social, cultural, biological, and historical. The only tie that bound this wide range of contemporary attempts to integrate epistemology, practice, and politics within new anthropological research seemed to be a shared concern crystallized by questions such as: What role can anthropology play in the multipolar, globalized, postcolonial world we now inhabit? How should anthropology respond to the shifting political determinations of representation and the production of knowledge?

During the same period, the contemporary art world enthusiastically embraced "the global," taking this new phenomenon as an opportunity to reinvent itself. Rather than being shaken, like anthropologists, by the size and power of emergent global circulation, the art world's protagonists were impressed by the pervasive raggedness of this new world, focusing on global coherence and using it as leverage to integrate sites of artistic production previously considered marginal to Western modernism. For the art world, the desire to establish an intimate connection between a variety of artistic contexts around the globe marked the 1990s. The art world radically transformed itself from a universe principally organized around a few Western centers and metropolises, virtually excluding contributions of individuals (artists, curators, art critics, and historians) from the Americas, Asia, or Africa, into a remarkably dense international web of institutions within which professionals from all continents and almost all nations move about, work, and debate the role of art in the larger world.

As curator Olwai Ewezo has demonstrated, the antiquated model of the Exposition universelle has inspired this restructuring of the art world on a global scale, in the form of large-scale contemporary art exhibitions, often organized in the context of contemporary art biennials and triennials. In the pioneering tradition of the Venice Biennial (1895), the Whitney Biennial (1932), the São Paulo Biennial (1940), and the Bienal of Sydney (1973), such a model cropped up with remarkable success around the globe, especially in the 1990s in non-Western cities (Shanghai, Johannesburg, Istanbul, Guangju, Havana, Dakar, Tehran, Sharjah, Cairo, Yokohama, Tirana, Moscow and in the West at the periphery of traditional art centers (Lyons, Liverpool, Berlin, Oslo, Valencia, Prague, Santa Fe, San Diego, Brisbane). To this list should be added Manifesta, European Biennial of Contemporary Art, which has been hosted in five "peripheral" European cities since 1996 (Rotterdam, Luxembourg City, Ljubljana, Frankfurt, Donostia-San Sebastian). These new biennials form a common universe.

A more interesting shared feature among these geographically remote art manifestations is the fact that they have assumed the unique position of both reflecting globalization as a reality and adopting it as an idea or theme. Under such an umbrella, a variety of works produced by artists from a plethora of geographical and cultural locations have been combined to address either the programmatic advancement of an integrated globalization or the effects of globalization, its sprawling proclivities, and numerous related processes. The emergence of a new generation of curators and fueled by this trend, they quickly assumed a crucial role in the organization of the global art world and redefined the parameters of exhibition making. Nomadic and independent, or at least without too many constraining institutional ties, the curator of the 1990s traveled the world without respite, recording the changes in the many new sites of artistic production and embracing the model of the large-scale exhibition and the international biennial in particular as the most appropriate means by which to reflect on globalization.

During the 1990s, despite the semblance of very different reactions towards globalization in the disciplines of contemporary art and anthropology, numerous intersections between these fields were elaborated. In part, the same concerns raised in anthropology during this period have preoccupied the art world in its attempt to reflect on globalization, concerns regarding how to go about understanding the rapidly expanding (art) world in which traditional criteria no longer apply, how to invent new means of producing knowledge in such a context, and how to provide critical insight into the processes of globalization. The hyper-reflexive stance in recent anthropology, with its seemingly boundless ability to reinvent itself, or seemingly so, its modus operandi, and constituencies, has been valued as highly promising and regenerative for the art world. In the 1990s, contemporary artists increasingly were praised and evaluated for their roles as expert witnesses and analysts of the macro-social transformations induced by phenomena such as globalization, "disaparitization," or "creolization," trends that explicitly followed the trend in anthropology toward postcolonial and globalization studies. The number of anthropologists contributing to contemporary art exhibition catalogues or references to recent anthropological research in the footnotes of curatorial essays grew exponentially in the second part of the 1990s, when the art world turned its interest to globalization as a topic. This process of self-identification did not touch only artists, but also art critics and curators. As Francesco Bonami recently admitted in a guide to curating, "The role of the curator today involves such enormous geographical diversity that the curator is now a kind of..."
visual anthropologist—no longer just a taste maker, but a cultural analyst. This change in the nature of anthropology has been introduced into discussions of the contemporary art world during the last decade, as a way to articulate changes within the postmodern, transnational cultural flows and the turn towards globalization. As a result, in recent years, the affinities or intersections between the practices and concerns of contemporary artists, curators, and critics and those of anthropologists have been consistently elaborated within the art world, but only marginally explored by anthropologists themselves. The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology (1995), a book of essays edited by George Marcus and Fred Myers, has been the only substantial attempt to explore the overlaps of the two fields from the anthropological point of view. However, the research it presents was carried out mostly in the late 1980s and very early 1990s and thus does not fully address the most recent and radical transformations of the art world. In this book, as well as in much of the anthropological writing produced on contemporary art since, the principal focus centers on questions like: How did (tribal and now contemporary) art produced in non-Western societies enter the (supposedly fixed) Western art market and become part of its discourse of aesthetic judgment? Or, how do curatorial practices lead to the de- and recontextualization of artworks in museums and exhibitions? Recently, the discussion has also touched upon how contemporary artists use the anthropological notion of fieldwork as well as quasi-anthropological research to "engage with and represent events, experiences and others." Still, such studies have only very superficially or inadvertently addressed the contemporary art world itself, its transformations through the process of globalization and how, through these evolutions, it has contributed to the understanding of the contemporary world. Anthropologists have, with few exceptions, completely overlooked how the art world's rules have changed, even while this evolution offered an almost perfect model of the multifield, globalized, postcolonial contemporary world that anthropologists try to grasp and describe. Today's contemporary art world provides a useful subject for anthropology, especially with regard to, among other things, the recent, wide-scale development of an international community of professionals forming a truly global network of scenes and actors; a community representing one of the very few real and homogeneous global and well-traveled social groups in today's world; a structural organization based on a distinguishable set of evolving power relations between various subgroups within a global community (artists, curators, critics, art historians, dealers, and collectors); and a common culture that has undergone profound changes as it has become more and more event-driven (through the phenomenon of biennials and art fairs).

The comparison between the equivocality of contemporary art and the limitations of current anthropological practice may be flattering to the art world, but it should serve as a wake-up call to anthropologists. Much of the debate on contemporary artistic practices within anthropology has tended to take an absolute position, with critics either celebrating the mobility of culture or denouncing the loss of authenticity. The neomodernist position that weighed heavily in the classical anthropological imagination confirmed its engagement with hybridity as evidence of damaged or weakened cultures. The art world's enthusiasm for hybridity privileged neo-modernist assumptions while it also contributed to the problem of authenticity. The new wave of anthropological writing produced on contemporary art since, the principal focus centers on questions like: How did (tribal and now contemporary) art produced in non-Western societies enter the (supposedly fixed) Western art market and become part of its discourse of aesthetic judgment? Or, how do curatorial practices lead to the de- and recontextualization of artworks in museums and exhibitions? Recently, the discussion has also touched upon how contemporary artists use the anthropological notion of fieldwork as well as quasi-anthropological research to "engage with and represent events, experiences and others." Still, such studies have only very superficially or inadvertently addressed the contemporary art world itself, its transformations through the process of globalization and how, through these evolutions, it has contributed to the understanding of the contemporary world. Anthropologists have, with few exceptions, completely overlooked how the art world's rules have changed, even while this evolution offered an almost perfect model of the multifield, globalized, postcolonial contemporary world that anthropologists try to grasp and describe. Today's contemporary art world provides a useful subject for anthropology, especially with regard to, among other things, the recent, wide-scale development of an international community of professionals forming a truly global network of scenes and actors; a community representing one of the very few real and homogeneous global and well-traveled social groups in today's world; a structural organization based on a distinguishable set of evolving power relations between various subgroups within a global community (artists, curators, critics, art historians, dealers, and collectors); and a common culture that has undergone profound changes as it has become more and more event-driven (through the phenomenon of biennials and art fairs).

The art world constitutes an ideal site for investigation, a field in which to develop an anthropology that could "study up," while remaining tied to what used to be the main locus of anthropology—the peripheries of the Western world; a field to track down and analyze, among cultures long characterized by their geographical or political isolation, any "infections" (manifestations of conflicts, misunderstandings, and reappropriations) sparked by their abrupt entry into the new economic and cultural circuits of today; a field by which to conduct an ethnography of "complex connections" that requires the fieldworker to be mobile and multi-sited in his or her research trajectory; and, last but not least, a field where sophisticated attempts at understanding and representing ways of seeing and acting in the world are elaborated and in which understanding could potentially be highly profitable to anthropology's redeployment of the role it wishes to play in today's world.

Taking Manifesta, European Biennial of Contemporary Art as a Case Study Manifesta, European Biennial of Contemporary Art represents a particularly interesting case study for an anthropological investigation of the recent changes in the contemporary art world. The seminal exhibition's theoretical links to the post-1989 changes in Europe, its beginnings as an idea in 1991, concrete foundation in 1993, and first public exhibition in 1996 embody many art-world developments in that period. Manifesta's structure—itinerant, conceptualized as a network—but also its rhetoric, its insistence on being more than just a showcase of new art, its desire to be a response to and a tool of reflection for the political, social, and cultural changes that took place in Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, and ultimately an instrument to transform East-West relationships in the realm of art, is a new vision of art that is potentially highly profitable to anthropology's redeployment of the role it wishes to play in today's world. Taking Manifesta, European Biennial of Contemporary Art as a Case Study Manifesta, European Biennial of Contemporary Art represents a particularly interesting case study for an anthropological investigation of the recent changes in the contemporary art world. The seminal exhibition's theoretical links to the post-1989 changes in Europe, its beginnings as an idea in 1991, concrete foundation in 1993, and first public exhibition in 1996 embody many art-world developments in that period. Manifesta's structure—itinerant, conceptualized as a network—but also its rhetoric, its insistence on being more than just a showcase of new art, its desire to be a response to and a tool of reflection for the political, social, and cultural changes that took place in Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, and ultimately an instrument to transform East-West relationships in the realm of art, is a new vision of art that is potentially highly profitable to anthropology's redeployment of the role it wishes to play in today's world.

The original idea for Manifesta, as a new type of itinerant event with a flexible organization structure. Each successive edition was to be held in a different city and put together by a team of curators from different parts of Europe. Manifesta's complex task was to set up an alternative event, whose aim is to explore the mental and geopolitical boundaries of the new Europe, as well as the cultural interrelationships between different regions. It is important to mention that Manifesta is an ongoing process, whose impact is cumulative and is carried over from one edition to the next. Each successive edition of Manifesta will be repurposed.
by the regional cultural context in which it temporarily becomes embedded. In addition to promoting an exhibition in different European cities every two years, Manifesta is in the process of developing a dense network of information and exchange. This cultural web is accessible to everyone and ensures the continuing growth and development of Manifesta, as an idea and as a living entity.18

Manifesta is characterized by its ambulatory nature, which offers the possibility to conduct fieldwork in several of the locations where it took place, such as Rotterdam and Frankfurt, to more peripheral and institutionally less equipped sites (like Ljubljana, Donostia-San Sebastián, and Nicosia, where the sixth edition was held in 2006). In what follows, I examine these encounters and frictions, focusing on the reception of Manifesta within artistic communities in Rotterdam, where the first Manifesta took place in 1991, and Ljubljana, where Manifesta 3 was held in 2000. These two sites of research were chosen for their distinctive qualities. It seemed important to study how the inauguration and experimentation of Manifesta in Rotterdam was remembered by that city and its inhabitants, nearly a decade after the exhibition first opened, while Ljubljana was the only Eastern European city to host Manifesta. It also seemed important to investigate how Manifesta was remembered and retrospectively evaluated in these two contexts and to assess what lasting effects Manifesta has had both on the development of the local art scene and on its relationship with other sites of production in Europe.19

Since its founding in 1993, the project to construct a “network,” to enable “artistic cooperation” and “international dialogue” has been essential to the definition of Manifesta as well as by means of which to distinguish itself from existing art events, such as Documenta or the other European contemporary art biennials, including the Venice Biennial, the Paris Biennial, or even the Lyon Biennial (organized for the first time just a few years earlier). One of Manifesta’s initial purposes was both to extend the scope and change the nature of the European art world. From some of its earliest internal documents, one discovers that it was founded on the grounds that “the abolition of the political division between Eastern and Western Europe created untold opportunities for co-operation between the various members of the entire artistic community” and that “such co-operation is crucial not only to the development of artists but also to the vitality of the international dialogue regarding contemporary art.”20 Manifesta was thus initiated to serve as “a stimulus to the free exchange of people, ideas and works of art” and as such it meant to “organize a more continuous dialogue about the current mentality in the European state of the arts.”21 Most of these initial goals have remained at the core of Manifesta’s evolving self-definition.

Besides its itinerant nature, several other parameters in the organization of Manifesta were imagined to assist in achieving these objectives: Each edition was to be conceived by a team of curators from different parts of Europe, working closely with collaborators without necessarily knowing each other prior to their appointment; alongside them, small- and large-scale institutions in each host city would serve as local organizers of the event, thus allowing the possibility for the chosen curators and local institutions to conceive the exhibition or its accompanying events in relation to the particular needs of the context. The financial model for the Manifesta biennial—to count on the collegial support of the different Ministries of Culture or Foreign Affairs without that support being tied to specific artists—was novel in a world of biennials-as-national-showcases and ultimately short-lived. This utopian financial model, initiated for the first edition in Rotterdam, had to be abandoned for further editions, and ever since Manifesta has had to rely primarily on the interest and investment of a city willing to host the event. Not only did this evolution change the organizational nature of the biennial, which then became less of a shared project sponsored and "cared for" communally every two years to what country the exhibition opened, but it also changed the nature of the international links—from diplomatic to more circumstantial—that form between each city, from one edition to another. All of the interlocutors interviewed in Rotterdam and Ljubljana, despite the nature of their professional affiliation with Manifesta, have had to play an active role in participating in an international exhibition platform to a director of an institution and a local political official—shared the same assessment. The network Manifesta established during its ten-year history is not one between countries or even cities, but rather between people.

"On the level of the city government, officials, city halls, politicians, etc., Manifesta didn’t have much effect," confided Kees Wouda, former Rotterdam cultural administrator. "There hasn’t been a big spin-off. But in my opinion, it’s very seldom that these things can happen between cities today."22 It also appeared very clear that the art institutions that hosted the Manifesta exhibitions have not really fostered preferred relationships with other institutions in other cities that hosted Manifesta. In Rotterdam, for instance, none of the institutions involved, including the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Wите Capital produces goods, and also subjectivities, both are produced naturally enough. Text of political subjects, we get "prosumers" (from producer and consumer) and "cultural entrepreneurs," which are caught in a pathological circular vicious of global capitalism in which producing and consuming coincide. The prosumer (pace Antoine Costa) presents a deadly hybridization that allows us to say that we are not political subjects at all, but mere prosumers. This presence is the penetration of contemporary executives of the political subject, its radical art practices, and its self-historical. In such a situation, creativity and resistance in contemporary art are polar apart, dissociated one from the other. In light of this, rather than analyzing two Manifesta exhibitions with reference to anthropology, I suggest adopting something like Beatriz Preciado’s specific genealogy of power, the body, and capital [(re)analysis. In her text "Gender and Performance Art" (2006), Preciado calls for "genderology," a specific genealogy of the field of gender in order to understand the institution of capitalist power provoking and coordinating it (and anthropologization is precisely about genealogy). I propose then to think about Manifesta in terms of "Machistology," a genealogy of a specific global capitalist condition that produces such exhibitions. I thus recommend not simply clarifying the origins of Manifesta and its connections to the European Union, but also tracing the emergence of specific discourses and exhibition platforms in relation to capital, art markets, and precarious labor conditions. Manifesta 3 in Ljubljana, as I argued in 2005, was an international multiculturists’ legitimation of the local, enlightened (nocturnal) tactics of post-socialist. Manifesta’s presence there was a sign of the approval of the international community, a kind of Schengen agreement in art and culture, demonstrating, furthermore, that Slovene could play the game. It showed a radical discourse between the potentials of resistance and the institutions and mechanisms of power that provoke them, as well as the complicity of power, private capital, and thought with mastery. Marina Gilchrist, artist, media theorist, curator, and researcher, Institute of Philosophy, RCM, Ljubljana; and professor, Akademie der Künste Berlin, Venice.
de Wit, the Kunsthal, the Nederlands Fotomuseum, and the Nederlands Architectuurinstituut, have established new forms of cooperation with institutions in the cities where later editions of Manifesta were held. Very few of their staff members (unless directly committed to Manifesta as board members of the International Foundation Manifesta) have even visited the subsequent editions of Manifesta, unless specifically invited. The same is true for the officials involved in the cultural departments of the different cities.

It seems obvious that Manifesta's initially stated wish to institute and develop novel forms of cultural institutional partnerships within the new Europe and to sustain a dialogue necessary for investigating and improving the exhibition's process have not been fulfilled, at least not from one edition and one host city to the next. And with this failure, a real opportunity has been missed. In this sense, Manifesta has not really distinguished itself from the common criticisms of biennials as "sizzling commodities that every city desired to create (or host) in order to boost their profile in search of a place on the map of global art tourism and the creation of cultural currency."25 However, if we shift the focus from the city-to-city agencies-cultural departments or art institutions-it is obvious that Manifesta, more than any other existing biennials maybe, has strongly favored the creation and the development of relationships between the different cultural sites where it took place, but through a person-to-person network.

"In the 1990s, Rotterdam started to be known as a great city for young artists and Manifesta was very important in building up this reputation, and I would say that the most important spin-off of Manifesta was for a small number of local artists who were brought into the international network then: Jeanne van Heeswijk, the artists Bik Van der Pol, Jaap van Lieshout... They all made important contacts with curators through Manifesta," explained Thomas Meijer zu Stolterfoht, director of TENT, Centrum Beeldende Kunst in Rotterdam.23 In Ljubljana, the same analysis was also made but in a less clear-cut way. As the Slovenian independent curator Nataša Petresin stated: "I think Manifesta clearly raised the awareness of the artists, suggesting that Slovenia would now be on the map, that international curators would have a more attentive eye on them from now on. But as for careers, clearly it didn't have much impact. Most of the Slovenian artists that are known today were already internationally known before Manifesta 3, and most of these artists were not so involved in Manifesta here. On the other hand, the Slovenian artists who were in Manifesta in Ljubljana aren't so visible today." In previous editions of Manifesta, curators exhibited the work of artists already well known in the host countries, such as the IRWIN group and Tadej Pogacar in Manifesta 1 in Rotterdam, Marko Peljhan and Aponija Šturtelken in Manifesta 2 in Luxembourg City, and Marjetica Potrč in Manifesta 3 in Ljubljana. The latter certainly played a role in enhancing the international reputations of artists with work on display in Ljubljana, but it nevertheless seems to have benefited local curators more than local artists, in terms of connections with the international art world, as certain analyses corroborated. Borut Vagenik of the IRWIN group claims: "Manifesta was very, very positive in terms of a network for Igor Zabel and several curators from here. They became internationally connected, and so it's through their activity here afterwards that we could sense the effects of Manifesta, maybe." Petresin confirmed: "I think Manifesta here did a lot for the international visibility of local art professionals, especially curators. This is probably the main difference with events such as Venice and Documenta. There, no one really meets the local art world professionals, whereas here we were constantly solicited; I made a lot of contacts during Manifesta." Slovenian curator Igor Zabel, who was a member of Manifesta's board and helped coordinate the exhibition in Ljubljana, acting as liaison between the local art world and the international curators responsible for the artistic direction of the event, acknowledged this shortcoming and confirmed that Manifesta essentially helps trigger professional encounters.

It's something that we should not forget: Manifestas are not made for locals, they're international projects, and they succeed when they work as an interface between the local and the international realms. Regarding the participation of the art scene here, there was this criticism that Manifesta didn't involve the local potentialities enough. Part of this was true, but it wasn't so essential. I think, it was much more important for the art scene that Manifesta established a point or core of interest that could be used by anybody around. They could use Manifesta. The top of the art world was here.

According to Petresin, this is not only the case at the local level, but internationally: "I think Manifesta is much more than an exhibition, in the sense that it brings all these connections. When I went to Frankfurt or to San Sebastian, coming from Ljubljana, I had this kind of Manifesta passport that gives us Slovenian art workers a certain instant credibility. I have this sense of 'being part of it,' although at the time I wasn't directly involved in Manifesta." Acknowledgement of Manifesta as a potentially productive interface between the local and the international art worlds is generally shared both in Rotterdam and Ljubljana. But the issue of how productive the interface has been or could have been leads to a wider range of reactions, contestations, and problematizations. For many of the participants, it is not enough that Manifesta functions on a person-to-person basis, connecting local professionals to more influential ones who visit during the opening days of the event. Already foreseeing the danger of that possibility before the first edition and understanding a real need to activate the role of artists in a biennial, a group of Rotterdam artists, including Jeanne van Heeswijk, Wopke Feenstra, and Karin Arik, saw that connections between artists themselves could be missed with Manifesta. They initiated NESTWORK, an independent project backed by
the curators and aimed at triggering interaction between the various cultural workers in Rotterdam and the foreign artists taking part to Manifesta. Specifically, they conceived a project that operated throughout the duration of the exhibition and not only during the opening days, like so many other Manifesta networking opportunities.28 It included My House: Your Home at the B.a.d Foundation, an artist-run studio complex in Rotterdam where twenty foreign artists exhibiting in Manifesta resided during their stay in the city. As Feenstra recalls, "It all started when the curators came here to explain their plans about Manifesta, and they were all talking about exchange and communication and the new Europe, etc. So we wondered: 'Is this supposed to happen only thanks to the artworks presented in the exhibitions?' We knew how it would work: Foreign artists come here, they go to their hotels, and we go to our houses. There's one opening, and we will all stare at each other thinking, 'Who is this guy?' And that's it, end of exchange. So we thought, 'Why not invite the artists to stay with us and really have the chance to spend a lot of time with them?'" For both the Dutch artists who initiated this program and the Slovenian artists who participated in it, interviewed almost ten years later in Ljubljana, this initiative was a success, as it created communal and networking activities substantially different from the ones traditionally offered during events such as contemporary art biennials. "It was really important to us," Aniké revealed. "At that moment, we [the artists running B.a.d] were working rather traditionally; we were mainly painters and sculptors. The contact with the artists taking part in Manifesta, through those crazy days and nights when we all hung out together, that really opened our mind and influenced our practices as artists. Those weeks triggered several collaborations between artists afterwards and in relation to other exhibitions in other countries." Tadej Pogacar, one of the Slovenian participants in Manifesta 3 who happened to take part in My House: Your Home, also acknowledged the singularity of the project and the effects it had: "In the contemporary art world, it's very hard to make things change, but I think that the first Manifesta at least tried to make these changes. From the point of view of an artist involved in Manifesta 1, its greatest achievement was how it involved the local community of artists through the NextWork project and how it was all about communication and connection between artists from all different parts of Europe. And so this was another kind of economy. But it's something that the following Manifestas never achieved later." 

In Rotterdam, the interviews I conducted strikingly reveal that the NextWork project was the only feature of Manifesta 1 distinctively remembered by everyone, ten years after the fact, whereas the general look of the exhibition, the names of the artists involved, the artistic projects presented, and issues presumably debated during Manifesta 1 were almost completely forgotten. The experience of NextWork as a central element in the inaugural edition of Manifesta stands today as a point of reference in assessing the achievements or failures of subsequent editions of Manifesta. In Ljubljana, for example, some have recognized the failings or missed opportunities during Manifesta's presence there as not merely regrettable aftereffects, but as potential dangers to the local situation. As Pogacar attests,

The curators of Manifesta didn't collaborate with the existing independent art structures here, such as P74, Kopeleka, and the Sluč Gallery. This was not only a missed opportunity, but it even harmed their long-term commitment to the development of the art scene here. The reaction of the local politics, the authority of the town, and the Ministry of Culture, because basically they hate contemporary art, was: 'OK, we are going to give money for Manifesta but no more after that.' Manifesta was somehow a good excuse to get rid of contemporary art. And obviously, and we will all say that Manifesta, there was less money for the local scene, the independent art scene.

For several interviewees, the fact that Manifesta institutionalized itself after its first edition and hardly fulfilled its self-definition as more than another large-scale exhibition are significant problems. According to these critics, Manifesta quickly veered from its ambition to be an instrument in the actualization of the idea of "Europe" and the artistic development within it (as such, it occasionally was to take the form of a large-scale contemporary art exhibition, but only as part of its mission) to being just one among many comparable exhibitions, including the traditional biennials from which Manifesta initially wanted to stand apart. Slovenian artists were quite articulate about the shifts in Manifesta and the limits that such shifts imposed. As Pogacar said, "Since its second edition, Manifesta has become very shaped, very fixed, not an open-form institution or experimental manifestation anymore. In Ljubljana, it was much too rigid for here, too closed. Here, they missed the local history and the local politics and the local art world altogether." Vogežnik added:

I think that the shift toward a more international openness that we all witnessed in the 1990s has principally brought pragmatism into the art world. Events such as Manifesta are the new salons. How can we understand it in any other way? This is their function. They are professional congresses. And expectations should be based on that. I'm not cynical, I'm realistic, and frankly there's nothing bad in it, and Manifesta is certainly a brilliant tool for this. And, of course, it wasn't a bad show. Of course, it didn't change the scene completely, but it was an important step in putting some professionals from Ljubljana on this list, or rather on the B list, of the European contemporary art circuit. My expectations of Manifesta were not higher than this; I never believed that Manifesta would touch the most serious issues here in the Eastern European countries, which is the lack of discourse and of public dialogue on issues about art, and what people consider art. But I don't think that Manifesta actually had the potential to do that, or that exhibitions
can change that; only discourse can do this, I believe. An exhibition cannot make a difference.

In the interviews conducted, Manifesta was perceived to have evolved along this line because of the dominant role of the curators. Like most contemporary art biennials in the 1990s, Manifesta became above all else a "curators' affair." As Pogačar put it,

I think that the first Manifesta was very successful because its curators had quite some experience already. They knew what they were doing. Ever since, the curators of Manifesta have been a lot younger. They don't have the experience; it's their first major exhibition, so they just try hard to show the whole world that they know the job and can make a correct exhibition. So they're not willing to take a lot of risks because they fear that if they fail, they will never get a job afterwards. And the position of the curators is really crucial for this type of project. Not to mention the fact that the curators keep fighting most of the time, because they are competing with one another rather than working together to produce something else or something more than what an exhibition can do.

One conclusion, although partial, can be drawn from my research: Manifesta unmistakably has fulfilled its initial goal of developing a dense network of information and exchange. While it connects curators (both those who organize the different editions and those who happen to visit) across Europe more than any other existing biennials, it has proven to be unable to genuinely help establish and foster intellectual or professional exchange in artistic communities between cities where previous editions have been held.

Manifesta embodies particularly well some of the main evolutions of the contemporary art world since the 1990s. Its considerable development as an international network of an increasingly mobile and well-connected elite of professionals certainly parallels recent developments in the art world at large and, to some extent, has been a driving force of such an evolution. It also echoes the changing role of curators, an unprecedentedly decisive and influential position in this professional world, thanks especially to the proliferation of biennials, but one that is often put into question within artists' circles.

Above all, Manifesta illustrates how biennials, despite their regularly declared intent to stand as an adequate framework and platform to address and engage issues extending far beyond the realm of art, have acted more tangibly as an accelerator in the transformation of the art world into a more cultural industry and its culture as more and more event-driven.

While biennials are recognized as successful and relevant artistic events almost exclusively on the international level, they consistently fail to meet local expectations. As the biennial phenomenon increased during the second part of the 1990s, so did the great suspicion that they could produce mean-

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

ingful dialogues between local and international art worlds. But even if biennials are systematically criticized by the local communities in which they take place, this does not imply that they cease to generate attention, continue to attract more visitors than any other forms of contemporary art exhibition, and trigger fantasies as well as reflexive scrutiny in the professional art world. The fact that they disappoint, more often than not, does not seem to affect this phenomenon, as illustrated in Ljubljana. When it was announced that the city would host Manifesta 3, a group of Slovenians, consisting of critics, artists, curators, and researchers associated with the Soros Center for Contemporary Arts (now the SCCA-Ljubljana Center for Contemporary Arts) who were very aware of the shortcomings of such events, initiated the research project entitled Manifesta in Our Backyard, anticipating these kinds of tensions and seeking to encourage "a critical discourse on the contemporary art system and the institutionalisation of art."

The research unfolded through three issues of PlatformsSSCA, exploring various aspects of the influence of Manifesta on the Slovenian art world. Although frequently mentioned in the interviews conducted in Ljubljana, the content of PlatformsSSCA was only vaguely remembered, since all eyes, paradoxically, are never focused on Manifesta's past editions, but on future ones. The examination of the determinations and implications of this apparent contradiction would probably prove the most productive, in terms of analysis, for an anthropological study of the culture of the contemporary art world and its transformation as a cultural and tourist industry, an evolution that clearly derives from its global expansion as well as its attempts to grasp the larger economical, political, and cultural changes within which it is situated and situates itself.

NOTES

2. Both a series of disturbing reflections on the entanglement of anthropology with colonial regimes during the heyday of imperialism and imperialism's problematic imprint on any anthropological research carried out in the post-independence era spurred the crisis in the discipline. This anxiety soon precipitated a more general crisis regarding the representation of "the Other" in anthropological discourse. In 1950, Michel Leiris ("L'Ethnographe devant le colonialisme") [Les Temps modernes 58 (1950), 357-74] published what is perhaps the first extended analysis of the involvement of anthropological research with colonialism. It is fair to say, however, that it is only in the 1970s that this reflexive turn surfaced in a series of publications, including Rabinow's Anthropology, ed. Didi Hervès (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972); Gérard Leclercq, Anthropologie et colonialisme: essai sur l'histoire de l'ethnographie (Paris: Fayard, 1972); Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter, ed. Thad Ayyad (New York: Humanities Press, 1973); Anthropologie et impérialisme, ed. Jean Copans (Paris: F. Maspéro, 1975); and

3. Anthropology's traditionally method of inquiry involved a long period of participation and study within another culture. The publication of Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) constituted something of a watershed in anthropological thought. It exhorted anthropologists to reject their traditionally authoritative, realist, and objective style and to develop new forms of representing their subjects, forms that might better include the multiple voices of those being represented and thus more aptly account for changes in the world on the eve of the twenty-first century.


6. Of course, after the 2001 attack on the New York World Trade Center and the ensuing U.S. leadership in worldwide militarization, the story of an inevitable, peaceful transition to global integration has seemed more and more like the dream of a particular historical moment.

7. The exhibition Magiciens de la Terre organized by Jean-Hubert Martin in Paris at the Centre Georges Pompidou and the Grande Halle de la Villette during the summer of 1989 is commonly cited as the starting point of the contemporary globalization in the 1990s. Although it is certainly a simplification to consider the exhibition as such, its legacy was nevertheless crucial not because it contributed to the emergence of a new type of exhibition model (very few curators adopted Martin's approach toward conception of art and internationalism), but because the exhibition gave rise to an unprecedented array of debates and reactions developed by both Western commentators and, for once, by a new generation of thinkers, social theorists, artists, and curators from all continents.


10. For a discussion on this issue between some of the main protagonists of this trend, see "Global Tendencies: Globalism and the Large-Scale Exhibition, A Roundtable with Francesco Bonami, Catharina David, Okwui Enwezor, James Meyer, Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Martha Rosler, and Yinka Shonibare," Artforum 42, no. 3 (November 2003): 153-63, 206, 212. For another interesting analysis in the same issue, see, in the same issue, Pamela M. Lee, "Roumey Invigo: The Art World Under the Sign of Globalization" (164-67).


13. Francesco Bonami, in Words of Wisdom, 32.

14. This was the theme of the symposium Fieldworks: Dialogues Between Art and Anthropology held at the Tate Modern, London, in September 2003 and organized by anthropologists Ann Schneider and Chris Wright. See http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/event/exb strengthenfieldworks.

15. The notion of "studying up" comes from Laura Nader’s pioneering appeal (“Up the Anthropologist: Perspectives Gained from Studying Up,” in Reinventing Anthropology, 284–313) to anthropologists to study “from the bottom upward, which is to say, the colonizers rather than simply the colonized, the culture of power rather than simply the culture of the powerless, and the culture of affluence rather than simply the culture of poverty.”


19. By no means is my research a thorough anthropological examination of Manifesta. Classic anthropological research requires long-term participation in and intense engagement with the field, two conditions that could not be possibly be fulfilled in the context of this essay. Rather, this text was conceived as the beginning of an anthropological study of the contemporary art world. This is the reason why it deals principally with the fallout of Manifesta. The research was based on a series of interviews realized specifically for this essay in Rotterdam and Johannesburg, respectively eight and four years after Manifesta took place in those cities, with a variety of individuals who had been involved with the organization of Manifesta or keen observers of the event, including artists, exhibition curators, and politicians. Within this text, all quotations lacking endnotes derive from these interviews.


22. Huffman, "Running on Empty.

23. In fact, Van der Pol and Van Luijk never did ever take part in Manifesta I. They merely had shows that opened at the same time in the city. If one can attribute some of their increased profit to Manifesta, this suggests that, beyond connecting participating artists to curators within the official frame of the exhibition, an event such as Manifesta can bring international attention to local events and practitioners by ensuring a steady flow of curators, art professionals, and other visitors to a city.


25. It is very indicative that M – Manifesta Journal, Manifesta’s recently developed device for sustaining itself as a network in between editions, is explicitly addressed to curators, its subtitle being, "Dedicated to the Network of Independent Exhibition Curators." Although co-produced by the Modena galleria Libiajana, Ljubljana, and the International Foundation Manifesta, this quarterly is still virtually unknown in artists’ circles in Ljubljana or in Rotterdam, despite having received four issues already. Other instruments for sustaining this activity include Manifesta’s website, which recapitulates the previous editions of the project; the permanent office opened in Amsterdam, which serves as a documentation center; and the series of private symposia organized biannually in Liverpool under the name Manifesta Coffee Breaks.

26. This complaint is often waged against biennials, and their openings are often the occasion for heated debates among locals about what “their” biennial actually brings them. See, for instance, the very interesting, comparative analyses of the biennial phenomenon in Johannesburg and the Nordic countries (Momont) recently published by Farnsworth, "Phantom Points." Another important publication addressing this subject was produced in South Africa, in the aftermath of the second Johannesburg Biennial.


THE RHETORICS OF MANIFESTA*

Camiel van Winkel

Biennials don’t work, so why start another? The inaugural statement or manifesto by the advisory board of Manifesta, published in the catalogue of Manifesta 1 (Rotterdam, 1996), contains all the rhetorical elements that today, almost ten years later, continue to make its premises rather paradoxical. Manifesta is an institution built on the critique of institutions. According to the 1996 statement, the existing “large-scale international exhibitions” were inadequate to respond to the political, social, and cultural changes that had taken place in Europe after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact in 1989. Manifesta was thus founded as an alternative to institutions like the Venice Biennial and Documenta, which were seen as slow, bulky, bureaucratic, inefficient, and implicitly nationalist. The advisory board stated that these large-scale periodic exhibitions too often hovered “somewhere between the average art-fair and the sacro sanctum of the museum, (so that) the real problems posed by these shows kept being covered up by the bedazzling merry-go-round: memory is short when it comes to these exhibitions—after all, there’s always a next time.”

Even if Manifesta was to be a biennial event too, implying that there would always be “a next time,” the members of Manifesta’s advisory board saw their enterprise as radically different. Their aim was to disentangle the muddy relationships between economic and artistic forces, meaning, for instance, that countries would sponsor Manifesta without knowing in advance the names of the participating artists. Manifesta was launched with the ambition that the institutionalization of this new biennial would remain limited; it would never suffer from the inertia and massive scale of its counterparts in Venice and Kassel. The advisory board of Manifesta felt its responsibility was “not only to appoint the curatorial team and select future sites for Manifesta, but also to come up with a means of keeping the procedure open and flexible, and the organization as small as possible.” For them, Manifesta was intended as an “ongoing process, one designed to clarify artistic and curatorial positions within Europe; it is definitely not an internal monologue, but rather aims to keep an open eye and mind to surrounding cultures.”

The stress on lightness and flexibility continued to dominate the official
rhetoric of Manifesta even after the organization, having survived its initial phase, had started to mature. Manifesta applies the critique of institutions to itself, or so it claims. It thinks of itself as an organization that continuously evolves and evaluates itself in a critical and open manner.4 This, in combination with its "nomadic" structure and international curatorial team, is perceived as the main distinction between Manifesta and other periodic, large-scale art exhibitions.5

Open Ends

The Manifesta organization has devoted itself to "the development of open-ended, democratic procedures" in a collaborative and communicative spirit.6 Democracy is one of the metaphors underlying the discourse of Manifesta. The ambition to create an atmosphere of openness and transparency— one of the main preconditions for democratic systems—is more important than a literal adaptation of democratic procedures.7 In this respect, Manifesta wants to connect to the antidogmatic nature of contemporary art production in general.8 Several of its additional aims, such as the creation of "closer connections and collaborations with new communities," likewise correspond to this democratic ideal.9

Given the link to the historical events of 1989, these objectives take on special significance. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, democracy in Eastern Europe had to be completely rebuilt. Manifesta could indeed be seen as the manifestation of this new democratic ideal of openness or pragmatism in the field of the arts.10 The board members of the International Foundation Manifesta (IFM) claimed to respect cultural diversity, seeking to bridge the gap between various European populations. "Manifesta was to provide a new platform for young artists who had been disenfranchised by the old political and economic divisions of the Cold War and who now became alienated as much by mediatisation in the West as by the lack of it in the East."11 The format of an itinerant biennial was chosen in order "to create the means for responding flexibly to the needs of contemporary artists, the ideas that they wanted to express and the ways in which these might be communicated."12

In the official self-image of Manifesta, the metaphor of democracy is coupled with the metaphor of the network. Manifesta was conceived as an organically growing medium of exchange between artists, curators, cities, and local institutions, a medium for the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and information "between local configurations and external networks."13 However, it is not obvious that these metaphors fit at all. Networks are not inherently democratic. On the contrary, a network is exclusive rather than inclusive, built upon a set of privileged relations between selected individuals. What place does the public occupy in relation to the network? Manifesta's rather straightforward rhetorical trajectory typically leaves little room for such questions. The net-

work is described as simply open to the public, to "everyone." "Manifesta is in the process of developing a dense network of information and exchange. This cultural web is accessible to everyone and ensures the continuing growth and development of Manifesta, as an idea and as a living entity."14 The discourse is such a general and abstract nature that any notion of privilege or exclusion evaporates. "If one perceives the world as an interdependency of forces, an intriguing weaving of structures, ideas and reactions, Manifesta aims to be the shuttle that moves through this fabric and network," the project office wrote in 1996.15 This notion of the network seems to group together rather diverse connotations, such as Deleuze's concept of the rhizome, George Soros's idea of the open society, Manuel Castells's theory of the network society, as well as the more mundane awareness of the importance of networking. (To what extent the ingredients of this mix of connotations have changed over the years would be an interesting topic for research.)

In the Manifesta language game, "democratic" means "open" and "inclusive" but also "open-ended." Both the IFM and its successive boards have promoted a process-based approach to exhibition making. Instead of deciding about matters in an authoritarian manner, so they claim, all options are kept open until the end. In 1996, the project office of Manifesta 1, approvingly wrote that its curators "kept the research process as open as possible, for as long as possible."16 The gathering, exchange, and evaluation of knowledge never stop, not even after the exhibition ends: "Manifesta is an ongoing process, whose impact is cumulative and is carried over from one edition to the next."17 The curators tend to produce a similar discourse. Katalin Néry, one of the curators of Manifesta 1, talked about "creating[ing] a process which at a certain moment appears in the form of an exhibition."18 Six years later, the curatorial team of Manifesta 4 (Frankfurt, 2002) stated: "We have been working with the idea of a project which is permanently under construction, capable of incorporate in itself new individual and collective articulations and debates."19

The members of the 2002 team—Lara Bondyova, Nuriya Enguita Mayo, and Stéphanie Moidan Tremble—decided to start their research without any circumscribed concept and to attempt to stake out a collective trajectory that could proceed. Afterwards, they did not refrain from saying that "doubt, displacement and conflict" characterized their experience, just as Francesco Bonani, curator of Manifesta 3 (Uljana, 2000), had suggested before them.20 In a process-based approach, the final result is valued less than the path followed in order to achieve it. With it, the possibility of failure can be openly acknowledged and even theorized. "It is possible that our self-analysis has failed at many levels," Bonani admitted in the catalogue, "yet failure is an integral part of the process of understanding."21 Thus the built-in
option for curators to admit and elaborate their own "failure" paradoxically contributes to the rhetorical construction of Manifesta's success.

**Metadiscourse**

The curatorial team of Manifesta 4 decided to create an exhibit out of the files of all the nine hundred to one thousand artists they visited during their trips across Europe. The democratic ideal behind Manifesta received its most substantial incarnation in this administrative monument, for which the French artist Mathieu Mercier was commissioned to design a spatial setup. The curators wanted to create an atmosphere in which nobody felt excluded, not even the artists who hadn't made it into the show. "The logic of the archive...will make the exhibition less restrictive and more immediate." In his catalogue essay, Jochen Voiz described the archive as an "attempt at radical transparency...based on a mistrust of the structures of the established exhibition system which is marked by the binary opposition of inclusion and exclusion." He added: "A making visible of the process of genesis, a laying bare of the structures of the exhibition, and a dialogue with the host city, Frankfurt, take the place of a well-defined thematic orientation." With the possible exception of Manifesta 3, all curatorial teams have stated quite clearly their disdain for a thematic approach toward curating. They consider "themes" as equivalent to the one-dimensional blurbs and sound bites that the entertainment industry produces. Marina Frits, general coordinator of Manifesta 4, wrote: "In contrast to the shiny surfaces of the world of commodities and the short-lived intoxication of an event, Manifesta 4 remains committed to contraritiveness and personal stimulation." Ergolta Mayo pro-claimed her "aversion to the great curatorial ideas that reduce individual proposals to mere illustrations," she objected to the tendency of curators to present artistic "propositions" along with "a theoretical alibi that encourages a quick, digestible reading." Manifesta curators feel they are able to transplant the complexity of the artistic and cultural situation almost without modification or qualification into the space of the exhibites. According to them, the heterogeneity of contemporary art should not be squashed into a randomly chosen thematic container, as this would prematurely halt the process of dialogue and exchange. "Art exhibitions are made of complexity," Barbara Vanderlinden, curator of Manifesta 2 (Luxembourg, 1998), wrote, "there are so many forces involved that it seems natural they should reflect this." In a similar vein, Marta Kazma, curator of Manifesta 5 (Donostia-San Sebastian, 2004), talked about "embracing a conflicting plurality of projects, relational points and possible futures" as well as "working with contingency." Statements like these reveal the anti-authoritarian exhibition format for which Manifesta stands: the exhibition as a network of interconnected fields that the visitor can "shuttle" through, creating a highly personalized trajectory.

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**Local/Global**

Five editions of Manifesta have taken place since 1996, in Rotterdam, Luxembourg City, Ljubljana, Frankfurt, and Donostia-San Sebastian. Nicosia will host the sixth edition in 2006. Given the explicit link between the founding of Manifesta and the end of the cold war, it seems curious that, so far, not one edition has taken place in a former member state of the Warsaw Pact. The reason for this has never been clearly explained. However, in texts published by the Manifesta organization, one can trace a gradual shift in geopolitical priorities. The board announced this shift for the first time in the catalogue of Manifesta 3. The political and cultural context in which Manifesta operates, this text indicates, has never been invariable. "Since its inception, Manifesta has had to take account of the changing parameters of artistic exchange. Our initial emphasis on stimulating an East-West dialogue is gradually being replaced with a broader concern for negotiating the shifting borders between centre and periphery, wherever these happen to be located, at the time." The change of parameters required for this "broader concern" became clear two years later. In the board's introduction to the catalogue of Manifesta 4, Eastern Europe is definitively abandoned as a special priority:

Manifesta was founded almost ten years ago, in response to a specific moment in European history...Quite quickly, the initial goal of facilitating artistic exchanges between West and East gave way to a realization that cultural marginalisation and the shifting of individual expression were every bit as prevalent on the North-South peripheries as to the east of the Rhine or the Danube; it also lay at the
very heart of those western democracies, which had been artificially protected from the consequences of their own behavior.32

A case, therefore, could be made on every part of the Continent for organizing an edition of Manifesta, with its "inclusive" approach and its "open-ended, democratic procedures." While the political objectives of Manifesta thus appeared to become more explicit - namely, countering "cultural marginalization" and advancing the freedom of expression - in fact, they lost their geographic focus and became more gratuitous than before.

Despite these shifting geopolitical priorities, the official agenda of Manifesta has always revolved around the same fundamental presupposition: the notion that cultural and geographic differences are crucial for a critical understanding of contemporary art.33 The curators, however, tend to be less convinced by this idea, especially after having extensively traveled across Europe and having met with countless artists. On their trips, they are confronted with the fact that, in some respects, globalization leads to homogenization rather than diversification. The curators of Manifesta 2 were the clearest about this:

Certain generations of artists have always developed common sensibilities, but changes in political geography and developments within the media and information technology have today reinforced these shared elements. For the last fifteen years, street aesthetics and mass communication have indeed undergone a process of homogenization that even the Situationists could not have foreseen. From Tel Aviv to Lisbon, passing through Istanbul, one finds the same TV stations, similar shop windows in city centers, the same computers and the same materials. Former European peripheries, ranging from Bulgaria to Ireland, from Norway to Poland, are no longer remote, at least in terms of infrastructure and the possibility of exchange. Unlike during the 1960s, an artist today no longer needs to emigrate to become international.34

Since 1991, when the initial idea for Manifesta was born, it has become easier for artists to travel and spend time abroad; international programs for artists' residencies have sprung up everywhere. Robert Fleck, one of the curators of Manifesta 2, stated that "the fundamental aesthetic differences between the various parts of Europe has disappeared and that "typical" Eastern European art no longer exists." It is an outcome of the 1990s that the origins of artists no longer play any major role.35 Speaking in the context of the same edition, Vanderlinden referred to "the erosion of a sense of place," stating that "the local has disappeared."36 But on the other hand, she added, "the simultaneous appearance of analogous concepts" in various European regions "should not be taken to imply that these things mean the same everywhere. "It is exactly the 'slightly different' that (is of interest)."37

As Vanderlinden's statement shows, the paradoxical notion that globaliza-

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tion reduces the impact of local differences, while at the same time increasing the interest in those differences, is a recurring element in the curatorial discourse of Manifesta. In their exhibitions, Manifesta curators have wanted to investigate precisely this dual transformation. Depending on the context, they have stressed either the homogenization of the European cultural field (which allowed something like Manifesta to happen in the first place) or the diversity of artistic practices (which only something like Manifesta would be able to register). In this way, artists are simultaneously seen to be part of their culture and to float above it.38

The Curatorial Position

Manifesta is an institution and, as such, it communicates more easily with other institutions than with individuals or unorganized groups. Major strategic decisions are made on the basis of institutional priorities. This weakens the position of the curators, as some of the most basic parameters of the operational process of Manifesta - not to mention the major geopolitical objectives - are beyond their control. By the time the curators appear on the scene, fundamental issues, such as the choice of the host city, have already been decided. They must follow the agenda established by the advisory board. The fact that they are grouped with colleagues with whom they have never worked before further marginalizes their position. Still, the institutional logic and the official self-image of Manifesta require that curators be selected for their independence and autonomy. Within the terms set by the board, the curatorial teams are completely free to determine the form and content of their exhibition projects.

Iara Boubnova has pointed out the underlying paradox: "It seems that we have been invited/contracted to be independent."39 Others have also noted the contradictory and perhaps absurd aspect of the curatorial position. A critic reviewing the fourth edition of Manifesta evoked the ultimate "bigbrotherization" of the contemporary European art scene.40 He alluded to the fact that a largely male board had selected three young women, who were unknown to one another, and had given them the task of visiting, in an extremely brief period of time, more than one thousand young artists throughout Europe, creating a dossier on each of them, and bringing together work by a select group of them in an exhibition in Frankfurt. This comparison with specific formats of reality TV was partly unfounded, in the sense that the Manifesta board did not impose on the curators the task of visiting over one thousand European artists; the curators took it upon themselves, thus internalizing the official Manifesta rhetoric. On the other hand, the absence of a radically different selection procedure in all five editions of Manifesta suggests that, even if the curators were not pressured to conform to a pre-established model, they voluntarily acted as if they were under such pressure.

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In an interview published in the catalogue of Manifesta 4, Moisdon Trembley described her personal experience of the curatorial scouting trips. “Often, it was like being at a casting session, in an absurd or superficial position, in unfamiliar contexts.” She spoke about “the absurdity of this supposedly ‘open situation’ and confessed some disappointment both with the artists whom she and her colleagues visited during their trips and with the small number of real discoveries they made. She also evoked the ineffectiveness of repeating the intensive trans-European survey that the curators of the previous Manifesta edition had performed only a year and a half before. “As an art scene, or contest, doesn’t renew itself that quickly.” The reader is struck by the harsh contrast between the glamorous image of contemporary curating and the banal reality of the actual process of scouting artists and asking myself basic questions like, why invite a young artist who is manifestly strongly influenced by Fischli/Weiss when you can invite Fischli/Weiss? Moisdon Trembley confessed she had sometimes felt “pathetic,” “an intrusive stranger acting on an assignment without knowing its contents.”

Even if sending a number of young curators from different countries out together on a demanding expedition may bring to mind reality TV, the idea behind it was very serious: to have the groundbreaking geopolitical objective of Manifesta transform the organization itself. Only a collective of curators from various European regions would be a credible mediator of cultural differences.

Ironically though, if curatorial teams mirror the European context that they are supposed to probe, they risk being infected by the same political indifference and cultural discord from which many believe Europe suffers. Criticism over the years of some Manifesta curators for lacking a clear concept and avoiding strong choices confirms this fact. Regardless of the validity of this critique, the belief in networking that fuels the Manifesta organization plainly tends to induce a state of self-centering. The curators of the fourth edition publicly pointed out this risk. “The pressure under which we have been working (can cause) our work (to reflect) only the echo of our own presences in the different contexts we have visited,” Eugenia Mayo remarked in the catalogue. Considering the years of some Manifesta curators for lacking a clear concept and avoiding strong choices confirms this fact. Regardless of the validity of this critique, the belief in networking that fuels the Manifesta organization plainly tends to induce a state of self-centering. The curators of the fourth edition publicly pointed out this risk. “The pressure under which we have been working (can cause) our work (to reflect) only the echo of our own presences in the different contexts we have visited,” Eugenia Mayo remarked. Using the example of Manifesta 2: “During our research we encountered the lifestyle of the new nomadic elite.” The danger to which Eugenia Mayo referred is clear: no matter how many kilometers they travel, how many cities they visit, or artists they meet, Manifesta curators often bring home nothing but a confirmation of their own preconceptions—and an echo of their own lifestyle. The institutional format of Manifesta has contributed to this curatorial tunnel vision.

Do many levels, one can only agree with a text like Comité van Minkel’s. It is true that Manifesta has adopted a curatorial jargon that at times has verged on empty rhetoric. On the other hand, though, criticizing Manifesta for such a thing is a bit like criticizing the Romans for speaking Latin or attacking the surrealists for believing in Freud. In its short history, Manifesta appropriated and exploited many of the concepts and ideas that were in the air at the time. The metaphors put forward by Manifesta’s curators are deeply rooted in the culture of the late 1980s. Their language was spoken by almost everybody in the art world spoke the key words, slogans, and tics that are often reverberated in Manifesta’s catalogues circulated among a wide variety of artists, art professionals, critics, and curators. Even Documents, which Van Minkel credits for its stronger political profile, on numerous occasions fell into the same linguistic trap as Manifesta. Moreover, one could easily argue that the third edition of Manifesta anticipated many of the premises of Documents 11. Seen in this perspective, Manifesta reveals itself to be one manifestation of a particular phase in the recent history of contemporary art. Arguing that Manifesta was uniquely responsible for spreading and preventing a certain agenda is misleading, by no means.

It is also unjust to suggest that Manifesta’s interest in democracy and openness is nothing but a pose. Certainly, too many echoes has been put on democracy in the discourse surrounding Manifesta, especially considering that there is nothing particularly democratic about an exhibition-based — whether we like it or not — on the idea of selection. In fact, it’s fundamentally incumbent. But then again, I don’t know many institutions that would publish an essay as critical as Van Minkel’s in a volume devoted to documenting the first decade of that institution’s existence. Such an essay in such a book testifies to Manifesta’s commitment to revealing its history. In other words, one could say that Manifesta has embraced self-criticism to an almost monastic degree. I have to add if this is a sign of democracy, but it’s certainly a clear example of openness.

Finally, Van Winkel argues Manifesta and its future curators to address the need to generate aesthetic experiences. Once more, one can only agree with Van Winkel and hope that in the coming decade Manifesta and contemporary art exhibitions at large will be deeply concerned with basic, horizontal questions, avoiding both self-referential discussions and curatorial blah blah. But again, it’s quite unfair to assume that this has been the main focus for all the artists, curators, individuals, and groups involved in Manifesta from the beginning. The memory of Manifesta is not simply contained in the forewords and introductions to its catalogues. Its history is, first and foremost, an aesthetic experience, visual revelations, and sometimes simply thinking works of art. While I have seen a few editions of Manifesta even on curatorial one, I must confess that I don’t remember any of the curatorial essays or forewords. However, I vividly recall many of the art works on view. Now, I don’t know whether this means that Van Winkel is right or completely wrong. For sure, it means that Manifesta, with all its limits, has created a few spaces in which art and aesthetic experiences have flourished. Some might say that making space for art is not enough, but could you imagine exhibitions without the Curators’ Debate? Manuel de la Cruz, curator, and editor-in-chief, and not only Curators? Nicoletta Mazzarino, curator, and editor-in-chief, and not only Curators? Nicoletta Mazzarino, curator, and editor-in-chief.
toward self-promotion and self-conservation. Demonstrations of "real" openness were primarily staged for their rhetorical effect, even if in some cases, such as the personal confessions published by the curators of Manifesta 4, they proved embarrassing more than anything else.

In the first decade of Manifesta, "independent curating" has become a full-fledged institutionalized affair. The abundant growth of contemporary art biennials all over the world has created plenty of professional opportunities for independent curators, the group that, during the 1980s and 1990s, built up the important role it plays today. While artists increasingly showed signs of a passive, even submissive attitude with regard to the institutional field and mostly refrained from producing (critical) discourse, curators were able to take over this avant-garde position, which artists no longer seemed to aspire to or find tenable. As a result of this, avant-garde rhetoric took on a new institutional bent. After all, it makes quite a difference whether it is Robert Smithson or Robert Fleck who speaks about "non-sites."

Today, mainstream critics perceive curators as powerful figures who tend to overshadow the artists they are supposed to serve. In reality, it would be more accurate to speak of a tiered system of instrumentalization: Curators may instrumentalize artists, but they are instrumentalized themselves by the (biennials) organizations that hire them. Both artists and curators mitigate this experience by circulating from one international art event to the next, thus building up their track records (and, of course, increasing the efficiency of the instrumentalization).

In their writings, Manifesta curators have often acknowledged and even appropriated popular objections against the dominance of the curatorial position. The result, as shown above, is a bizarre cocktail of modesty, delusion, and pomposity. This generation of curators barely alludes to the fact that curating entails showing works of art to an audience; they seem to be the more interested in other aspects of their job. The notion that curators are primarily mediators between artists and audiences might undermine the avant-garde rhetorics they use to define who they are and what they do.

This also explains why the desire to generate aesthetic experiences is completely absent from the Manifesta discourse. The curators see the aesthetic experience as a static and private moment that makes the process of dialogue and creative exchange—and thus the social dimension of the work of art—turn inward and evaporate. Manifesta has turned virtually every single aspect of the "industry" of contemporary art into a rhetorical object, except for the aesthetic experience, which may have been the most in need of such a transfor- mation. If Manifesta wants to survive for another decade, the rhetoricization of the aesthetic experience and the pleasures it can provide, however "nomadic" the context, might be a crucial precondition.

* My analysis of the discourse of Manifesta is based upon a close reading of its official publications, specifically the introductions and editorials published by the advisory board, the project office, and the curatorial teams in the catalogues of the first five editions of Manifesta (1990-2004). The relative transparency of these texts (and the coherence of their rhetorical elements) has allowed me to proceed as if there existed a single and unified Manifesta discourse. Whichever this presumed unity falls apart and gives way to clear differences in position or even to contradictions—for instance, between statements by curators and by the board—I have attempted to identify contradictions, and, if possible, explain their causes in my text. My analysis has been limited to the written discourse, a collapse of the exhibitions themselves is beyond the scope of this essay.

NOTES
1. I am paraphrasing the advisory board of Manifesta 1. See Elis Barents et al., "Manifesto of the Advisory Board of Manifesta: Why Another Biennial Called Manifesta?" in Manifesta 1, Foundation European Art Manifestation (Rotterdam: Foundation European Art Manifestation, 1996), 12-23.
2. Ibid., 14.
3. With international exhibitions, curators customarily first finalize the list of artists they want to invite and then approach the respective countries with a request to consider the participation of their artists. Whatever its merits, Manifesta's alternative model of funding was abandoned after the first edition.
5. As recently as 2004, Hedwig Fijen ("Decoding Europe?" in Manifesta 5, European Biennial of Contemporary Art: With All Due Respect [Ostfildern-Sibau, Centro internacional de cultura contemporànea, 2004], 15), executive director of the International Foundation Manifesta, speaking on behalf of its board, referred to the need for "continuous self-re-evaluation, re-examining [our] methodologies and adapting [our] critical apparatus."
6. The nomadic or itinerant nature of Manifesta would appear to be one of its crucial defining characteristics. Quite remarkably, however, the official introductory texts in the catalogue of the first edition do not mention this fact at all. The advisory board (Chris Dercon et al., "Preface," in Manifesta 2, European Biennial of Contemporary Art [Ljubljana: Center for Contemporary Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, 1998], 1) addressed this omission in the catalogue of the second edition, writing: "The original idea for Manifesta, The European Biennial of Contemporary Art, was to create a new type of bin-
nennial event with a flexible organizational structure. Each successive edition was to be held in a different city and put together by a different team of curators, from differ- ent parts of Europe."
7. Chris Dercon et al., "Preface," in Manifesta 3, European Biennial of Contemporary Art: Borderline Syndromes: Energies of Defence (Ljublja: Center for Contemporary Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, 2000), 9. The text (p. 150) notes that it is "based in part on an interview between Christine van Dijck and Barbara Vanderlinden, which appears in the June issue of Art Press to coincide with the opening of Manifesta 3."
8. Martin Fritz ("The Yarn Game," in Manifesta 4, European Biennial of Contemporary Art: Disappearing Borders [Vilnius: Literature and Art Foundation, 2002], 8) describes the place: "It remains on questions and on giving priority to an open process of dialogue as opposed to papering over all the cracks."
9. Barbara Vanderlinden ("Futurabili," in Manifesta 2, 21) explained: "This... non-obedience (of art) to ideological tendencies expresses a deliberately chosen absence of dogmatism, indicating there is not one singular identity."
10. Fijen, "Decoding Europe?" 16.
11. This "democratic" approach implies that every single "point of view" will be re- presented. As Hedwig Fijen and Jolie van Leeuwen ("Project Office Manifesta," in Manifesta 3, 341) claimed: "Essential to a cooperative project like this one is to search for common ground, for a means of communication that includes all different points of view."
13. Ibid.
14. Fijen, "Decoding Europe?" 15.
17. Ibid., 31.
18. Dercon et al., "Preface," in Manifesta 2, 5. Fritz ("The Yarn Game," 8) evoked this notion of open-endiness again in 2000: "The duration of the exhibition is only a further interval in a permanent process which began before the preparations for Manifesta 4 and which will continue to exist thereafter."
"Prologue," in Manifesta 4, 4.

21. Ibid., 5.


29. Maria Lind, "The Biography of an Exhibition," in Manifesta 2, 199.

30. The Art Newspaper, 25 May 2002 (Manifesta 4 clipping file, Manifesta Archive, International Foundation Manifesta, Amsterdam) reported that the city of Warsaw had been a candidate to host Manifesta 4 but was beaten by Frankfurt, the German city offering 1.6 million euros.


33. Fijn ("Decoding Europe!") 15 wrote "Manifesta's concept originated in the growing synergy between, on the one hand, geographical and cultural contexts and, on the other, social and political environments."

34. Robert Fleck, Maria Lind, and Barbara Vanderlinden, "Introduction," in Manifesta 2, 6.

35. Fleck, "Art after Communism?" in ibid., 194.

36. Ibid., 195.


38. Ibid., 211.

39. Mosidon Trembley ("Stéphanie Mosidon Trembley interviewed by Eric Troncy," in Manifesta 4, 49) proclaimed: "From Istanbul to Porto to Reykjavik, young people are using the same tools, including English and the i-book, but in different ways. What is fascinating is to observe this alienation by global culture, but to see what is going on between cultures, the emergence of a third way, different kinds of modernities. And also to see how artists cope with the risks of consumption, how they turn these dead ends into a space for play and negotiation. In fact, I do have the feeling that there is more heterogeneity, more difference, than ever before."


43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., 49.

45. Fijn and Van Loewen ("Project Office Manifesta," 26) wrote: "Manifesta has been initiated as a pioneering project, building a relationship between east and west Europe, bringing together five curators from very different cultural and geographical backgrounds."


47. Mayo, 105.


50. For a critique of relational aesthetics, see Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," October 110 (Fall 2004): 51–79.

51. See, for instance, Mayo, 107.

VI THE MANIFESTA ARCHIVE
THE ARCHIVE EVERYWHERE

Barbara Vanderlinden

The rapid global spread of biennials has undoubtedly and dramatically altered contemporary art and exhibition practices. And yet, despite the crucial role of these manifestations to artistic developments today, the paucity of archives and serious study devoted to them threatens an entire and crucial practice with oblivion. Like the larger history of exhibition practices, biennial and other large-scale perennial exhibitions raise questions about remembrance and the material conditions of the archiving of contemporary exhibition practices. Most exhibitions, as Mary Anne Staniszewski argues, have been "officially and collectively forgotten." She sees this "disappearance"—of all record of the ways in which artworks were displayed, the relationships set up between pieces in a show, the spaces they occupied, the role of the architecture, and everything else that makes an exhibition what it is—as "symptom of larger historical amnesia." The only way to avoid this for biennials as much as for museum exhibitions is to bring together and study the material traces of these irreducible ephemeral events.

The documents of an exhibition should not be thought of as a dead mass of deactivating records or a closed history no longer of use. Even though they are the vestiges of past activities, exhibition archives can remain active resources for curators, artists, students, and researchers involved in exhibition projects to come. As Jacques Derrida has said, "the archive is "the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow." The aim of collecting, studying, and revisiting such exhibition documents is thus not only a question of representing the history of isolated, unrepeatable events, but it is a question of a response towards exhibition-making and biennial-making of tomorrow. Just as importantly, the archiving of an exhibition does not simply memorialize but as it implies an act of re-experience, it can be said to produce as much as it records the event in question. How we make exhibitions in the future is, then, in large part a matter of how we read different historical exhibitions of the past and use them to develop new languages for the exhibition-making to come.

One might say that this responsibility extends all the more to the realm of biennials and large-scale perennial exhibitions given their role as a crucial platform—both discursive and visual—for contemporary art practices today. Geographically diffused, and rapidly expanding in numbers, this exhibition context can be said to be nowhere everywhere. Even as no single person can visit them all, and no single location can yet bring together an extensive overview of even a majority of the biennials held around the world, we are constantly made aware of them and the systems of ideas supporting them. The most recent examples in my inbox indicate no less than ten biennials opened in the past few weeks alone. The ideas, concepts, and themes that they put forth are made public through e-mail announcements, on Internet sites, and via other communication means that reach a vast network of art professionals and art audiences around the world. These means allow the biennial's plurality of local voices to be connected to a global art network. In fact, one might speak of biennials as comprising the largest contemporary art laboratory, one that thrives on the dramatic communication shifts of worldwide information networks. Still, these exhibition announcements cannot, of course, capture an accurate image of such large-scale events or provide a full understanding of the positions they wish to articulate. The relationship of a biennial to its local context and to other biennials in which it may want to be in dialogue—in short, those things that make a biennial specific and relevant to its time and place—cannot easily be expressed in communication processes. Thus, if we want to make this worldwide exhibition phenomenon available to a growing number of professionals, art amateurs, and students in any profound way, especially those that do not have the possibility to visit them all, then we will have to envision new acts of montage, which is to say, new means of placing together the trail of history that these exhibitions leave behind.

With few exceptions, these archives are not housed in research institutions. The records that could constitute such archives are scattered around the world, with the largest and most important portions often belonging to curators and artists who have participated in the exhibition. My own curatorial research over the last decade has indicated that there is deep concern among curators about the fate of these archives. Indeed, questions have frequently been raised about the historical dimensions of the curatorial endeavor and about the constitution of a collection of the records of the exhibitions that make up this history. There is an intense need to know more about these internationally dispersed exhibition archives, but systematic research has not been done. Despite the fact that the contours of what has been called the "biennial phenomenon" is over a decade old, many archives are in danger of being lost forever in the basements of institutions, organizations, or museums that have no particular interest in them and are yet unable to imagine how to render this information public or useful. Biennials and other large-scale perennial exhibitions need all the more for their traces to be recorded so that a true evaluation of their complex roles can develop. Such archives could become prominent platforms within this new specter of global exhibition practices, making available information that would facilitate the development and knowledge of this practice. Likewise, they could actually increase the access to these platforms and thus provide the possibility for a broader audience to engage with the art and different perspectives that are being proposed today. In order to fully respond to this unique history that is being created at the global level, new forms for the archive-
tion of contemporary exhibition practices and new modes of rendering these accessible will have to be invented, which may also mean the creation of an archive which brings together the contents of multiple dispersed and dispersed archives. Obviously, a comprehensive history of major exhibitions cannot easily be squeezed into a single archive, in part because the formation of these archives happens everywhere and is never final as a process, but perhaps even more so because the task of devising an ontology for geographically and culturally detached archive is very daunting. Still, the insistence that the constitution of archives could serve as "the foundation for a new conceptual paradigm" for the fields to which they relate is applicable in the world no less than in the world of science.

Although an understanding of the importance of exhibition archives has historically been central to an exhibition like Documenta from the start, the prevailed recognition by historians of the importance of exhibitions in the 1990s coincided with a similar recognition on the part of curators.\(^3\) This lead to what has been called "the laboratory years" of curating—"a moment in which many curators made exhibitions with satisfaction references to or even explicitly about previous exhibitions. Besides being the precious tools of historical and curatorial reflection on exhibition practice, archives may also be demonstrations of exhibition processes themselves. One might think of Hans-Ulrich Obrist's Interactive project as an example of an exhibition of contemporary art information that came from everywhere. For the present purpose a short description is sufficient. The project started with the transport of thousands of items from Sean Kelly, where Obrist collected documents, put together from research for specific exhibitions he had been doing over the years. They were, as Bénédicte von Blommark notes in the introduction of the catalogue, "treated less as a source of research and more as an exemplary research object."\(^4\) The exhibition of "raw materials" became, as Obrist described it, "an example of how to deal with archives."\(^5\) The idea was that of an archive between geographical locations... between other archives... based on the perception that, in the 1990s, what was most important was not the quality of a single archive as the setting up of a kind of network of different, very fragmented archives. Artists and curators were invited to connect their digital archive to a network without center, a virtual archive without walls, located only temporarily inside the exhibition. Barnaby Drabble and Dorothy Richter's Curating Degree Zero is another such project that explored the critical and experimental approaches to curating by means of a "travelling archive." Referring Roland Barthes' text on writing, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, the title of the project reflects the aim not to define "curating" but to observe practice in this field at "a sort of zero degree, pregnant with all past and future specifications."\(^6\) Launched in 1998, the project was devised as a mobile open source archive, which started at the occasion of a symposium in Bremen. Thereafter it became a resource tool in the form of a travelling exhibition, which from 2003 through 2005 was installed in numerous institutions throughout Europe.

In 1997, with my co-curators Robert Fleck and Mara Lind, we intensively traveled over ten months to prepare the second edition of Manifesta. Visits to artists' studios, cultural institutions, museums, galleries, alternative artists spaces, and archives allowed us to take stock of contemporary artistic practices across Europe. The art production of an entire geographic region and its relationship to a particular moment in history was under examination and we were conscious of how the data we were gathering along

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The way could provide a reflection of our methods. We thus decided to make this research public. We presented all of material we had collected in a section of the exhibition that we called an "Info Lab." It included countless exhibition catalogues, artists' books, artists' dossiers, difficult to find art history books, institutional guides, etc. "Info Lab" was conceived as a continuation of the exhibition, an archive in which one could trace the research that we did as curators, but also view the content within we worked, while also providing the foundation for the research of visitors. We were motivated by the idea that an exhibition such as ours at that particular moment in time needed to express a clear sense of the cultural context from which it emerged and also acknowledge the laboratory that every exhibition is by definition. Info Lab was a first statement in that direction.

On the occasion of the fourth edition of Manifesta in 2002 in Frankfurt/Main, the curators Iara Bremenova, Nora Enghaga Meyer and Stéphanie Mouchard Humbly revisited the idea of the archive in a slightly different way. They invited the artist Mathew Mercier to conceive what they thought of a temporary "open construction site" to render public the heterogeneous documents they had gathered in the preparation of their edition of Manifesta. In the catalogue, the curators describe the importance of this project for a "public archive"\(^7\) its contents were composed of text, sound, and video recordings concerning every single artist they visited and consulted over the nine months of exhibition preparation, including those that were selected for the show and those that were not. The archive was the record of a process, which, as they put it, brought them to reflect on their approach to the exhibitions, to question "their criteria and methods," and to consider how "exclusion and inclusion" determine exhibition making and art history.\(^8\) With this archive in the public space of the exhibition, the trio of curators attempted to create the possibility for colleagues, artists, and the general public to partake in the process of exchanging and assimilating information about contemporary art and artists.

An Archive of Five Manifesta Editions

The pages that follow in this section of the book can be thought of as a series of condensed archives of the biennial exhibitions of Manifesta. As one of Manifesta's former curators, the research and mix-in-an-forms reprinted in this reconstruction of five editions intersects with questions I have been working through in diverse ways, practically through the making of exhibitions as well as through research and thinking about the nature and implications of artistic and exhibition practices historically. In seeking to interrogate the role that these practices have had in our social and political life, it seemed important to look again and closely at the different components of the exhibition and their diverse presentation contexts to better understand how they contribute to making biennials and large-scale exhibitions truly engaged and politically relevant platforms for our contemporaneity that they are. And although curatorial discourse, public reception, or local impact are all important means of gauging the significance of an exhibition, an inquiry of a biennial setting the aesthetic, spatial and social event exceeds whether one speaks of a biennial or museum show, an exhibition narrates its message first and foremost through the artworks it brings together in a particular way, place, and time. Thus, this case study meant to be, as a small step towards a larger project, an opportunity to think about the nature and significance of the events of the archive everywhere.
The Manifesta Archive

The Manifesta Archive is a resource for information about the Manifesta Foundation and its exhibitions. It includes exhibition catalogues, artist biographies, and other resources related to the works and artists involved in the Manifesta projects. The Archive is a comprehensive collection of materials that document the history and evolution of the Manifesta exhibitions.

NOTES
2. Ibid.
5. Inscribed in its titles, documenting was an essential aspect for Documents. Its first edition in 1995 started as a documentation project, "documenting" the art that the Nazis had suppressed or destroyed. As one of its contributions, Arnold Bode, Documenta’s founding director, initiated a comprehensive documentation of all aspects of Documents, which as a result makes it probably the most well-documented of the large-scale permanent exhibitions of all times. Its archive has since become permanently public in the Documenta Archive für die Kunst des 20. Und 21. Jahrhunderts, a research center, which contains all the existing records of every edition of Documents.
6. Interarchive is an exhibition curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Hans-Peter Feldmann and organized by the Kunsthalle Lissabon in 2002.
8. Ibid., 419.
9. Ibid., 419.
10. Obit from http://www.curationindex.com.org. Curating Degree Zero is a project launched by the Basel-based organization plg.ch. It started in 1998 with a three-day symposium and an ensuing publication...
All textual descriptions in The Manifesta Archive section that follow are by Barbara Vanderlinden and largely based on the following resources:

Manifesta 1, Foundation European Art Manifestation (Rotterdam: Foundation European Art Manifestation, 1996), the website (http://www.manifesta.org/manifesta1/index.html), a Dutch internet resource launched in 1996 and maintained by the Manifesta 1 Foundation European Art Manifestation, and currently hosted by the IFM; titles and descriptions of the exhibitions and artworks included are based on texts by: Luxembourg, Rosa Martinez, Victor Misiano, Katelin Nínaí, Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Andrew Reston, and Jaime Van Heeswijk.

Manifesta 2, European Biennial of Contemporary Art (Casino Luxembourg-Fondation d'Art contemporain, Luxembourg City, 1999), Manifesta 2: Short Guide (Casino Luxembourg-Fondation d'Art contemporain, Luxembourg City, 1998), the website (http://www.manifesta.org/manifesta2/), a Luxembourgish internet resource in 1997 by the Casino Luxembourg-Fondation d'Art contemporain, Luxembourg City and now hosted by the IFM; titles and descriptions of the exhibitions and artworks included are based on texts by: Robert Fleck, Maria Lladó, and Barbara Vanderlinden.

Manifesta 3, Borderline Syndrome: Energies of Defence (Ljubljana: Cankarjev dom, 2000), Manifesta 3, Borderline Syndrome Short Guide (Ljubljana: Cankarjev dom, 2000), the website (http://www.manifesta.org/manifesta3/index.html), a Slovenian internet resource launched by Cankarjev dom in 1999 and currently hosted by the IFM; titles and descriptions of the exhibitions and artworks included in "Manifesta 3 Archive" are based on texts by: Ljilja Bonacossa, Francesca Novani, Marija Havranj, Iztok Holko, Urša Kocjan, Karl Karman, Kathrin Richter, and Igor Zabel.

Manifesta 4, European Biennial of Contemporary Art (Frankfurt: Kunsthalle Mannheim, 2002), the Manifesta 4, European Biennial of Contemporary Art: Manifesta Catalogue Online (Frankfurt: Kunsthalle Mannheim, 2002); the website (http://www.manifesta.org/manifesta4/), an internet resource launched by the IFM; titles and descriptions of the exhibitions and artworks included are based on texts by: Yeel Bartana, Meike Bahn, Marc Blij, Pierre Bismuth, Blanda by Rna, Isra Boumbo, Jasper van den Brink, Roberto Cagnoli, Maria Enguita Maya, Dirk Fleckman, Aniek Fleischer, Andrea Geyer, Wim Hanegraaf, Jens Hoffmann, Ursula Hubbe, Jorg Paul Janka, Takahito Koganzawa, Enron Kosova, Stéphane Moulon Tremblay, Olivier Mussiv, NJ JGJ, Isabel Pastodewa, Rodrigo Saltelino, Thomas Schmitt, Christophe Royoux, Gertraud Sandqvist, Bruno Saragaglia, Denis Sinelcic, Miles Wrang, and Jun Yang.

Manifesta 5...With All Due Intent, (Donostia-San Sebastián: Centro Internacional de cultura contemporanea, 2004); the website (http://www.manifesta.org/manifesta5/), a Spanish internet resource initially launched by the International Centre of Contemporary Culture in Donostia-San Sebastian and now hosted by the IFM; titles and descriptions of the exhibitions and artworks included are based on texts by: Cecilia P. Almenri, Paul W. Brewer, Massimiliano Gioni, Sebenhen Khounias, Maria Kazma, and Victor Pallasius. All the above resources are collected and publicly available at the Manifesta At Home office of the IFM, Antwerp. All images included here are courtesy of their digital and analogue database.
1. Introduction, Manifesta 1 (passage part 1, 1995).
5. Unfolded view of the inside of the Newsletter.
**Exhibition plans for Manifesta 2.**

1. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, ground floor.
2. First floor.
3. Willy de Wijk, Centrum voor Hedendaagse Kunst, temporary and bard floors.
4. Kraling, ground floor.

**ARTISTS**

**MATTHIAS POLEDNA AND MARTIN BECK**

**In Landscape a recurring subject**


A poster documented the individual stages in Maria Eichhorn's *World-Country-City-Address-Address* ($1995-96) project. First, she wrote down the names of all the countries in the world on separate cards. She then chose one of these countries and transcribed the names of all its cities, villages, and settlements on separate cards. She then drew one of these scenes and copied down the names of all its streets and squares on separate cards. She then drew one of these streets or squares and catalogued all the house numbers running along it. Finally, she chose one of the houses and paid a visit.

**MATT COLLISHAW**

In his installation, Matt Collishaw presented a pseudo-experiment in behavioral sciences, using a pair of lovebirds, a breed of tropical parrot that enters into lifelong monogamous relationships and cannot live without its mate. Partly based on Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Marriage* (1434), the work included a convex mirror in which the birds were able to view their deformed reflections.
Douglas Gordon and Rirkrit Tiravanija: Ana Mendieta's exhibition in the Old Church in Rotterdam. 1996.

Marie-Christine Guilleminot and Fabrice Hyperbore: In this installation, Carl Michael von Hauswolff exhibited thirty yellow canaries in a cage. Three chirping birds, long used by European miners to protect themselves from gas leaks while underground, offered a hilariouslyon the context of the viewers, a new sacrifice "for a non-prepared monument wanting to be the Europe of tomorrow," as the artist proclaimed.

Tomas Mirkovic and Rosemarie Trockel: With their installation, the artists immersed themselves in experimental research focused on the communication and social behavior between monkeys and humans. In any form of communication possible between "host" and "guest," Can the model make clear that he or she is not welcome and that it is not in his or her advantage to "scream," as there is a good chance that he or she will die? Their findings were presented in an old Volkswagen van.
SIRAJ

The once ordinary places have been transformed into objects like three on exhibit in the Natural History Museum. "As a start, we are a stumped duck, no as a snowflake, me as an arrow from herbarium, etc." The work explored the polar duality and practice: drive so many humans to be someone or something else.

PIOTR JAROS

The larger-than-life black-and-white photographs in Piotr Jaros's series Embracing depicted people at once ordinary and extraordinary. While the relationships these people have with each other appeared tend to, their social identities remained mysterious. Their staged poses suggested a certain ceremonial purpose that nonetheless remained ambiguous.

ROGELIO LÓPEZ CUECUA

Rogelio López Cuenca's installation confronted the viewer with contemporary social problems, the phenomena of exclusion in our so-called "open" society being his central subject. Combining images from mass media with his own tools, he investigated the term "navigation" in all its senses—sailing, shipping, travel, traffic, and exile—as metaphors for travel, war, and imperialism.

OLEG KULIK AND MILA BREZNIKHINA

For Parkin's Dog, Oleg Kulik retraced his human journey, attempting to become a beast of desire rather than a person of collection. For an entire month, he lived as a dog—eating, sleeping, bathing, biting, and walking on all fours like the canine he aspired to be. With the collaboration of Mila Brednikhina, he underwent experiments like those done with test animals, including the well-known behavorial and physiological tests that were part of Dr. Parkin's "punish-and-reward" system.

YURI LEIDERMANN

Yuri Leiderman made epitaphs for the inhabitants of Munich and Cologne tortured between 1 December and 5 December 1995, totaling one hundred and ninety murals. His War Memorial Consisted of wooden boxes that held cards with the epitaphs written in several European languages.

ROMAN ONDÁK

Roman Ondák prosessed everyday objects, such as books, in formaldehyde and displayed them in glass cases. As these found in natural history museums, copying methods of classification from the hard sciences, he explored concepts of knowledge and cultural value systems. At the end of the twentieth century, Ondák showed attention to the location, alteration, and dematerialization at the base of the modern human condition.
JANOS SUGAR

HALT TENERG

SAM TAYLOR-WOOD

SUSAN WALDER

CATHERINE YASS

EULÁLIA VALDOSEIRA

HUI SHUNG PING

JANUS TSENG

MELITZ TRAVAGLI

With these photographs, Melita Travaglì presented two very different groups of women—one of New Yorkers in the prime of their lives and another of elderly women in a Norwegian farming town. Highlighting differences in age, ethnic origins, and lifestyle, the artist created a modern-day multi-cultural mirror.

Nailing to Wrong, 1995.

HAIUON YONG PING

Huayong Ping’s sculpture presented a model of Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam. As a center for arrivals and departures, the airport, in this context, is a metaphor for life and death, transformation and rebirth.

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You deserve achievements.

For men and women:

Join the Institute for Professional Training and Initiatives,
41, la Martine St. John

From 7 am to 7 am,
7.00 am to 7.00 pm

For men and women:

From 7 am to 7 am,
7.00 am to 7.00 pm

For men and women:

The Institute for Professional Training and Initiatives,
41, la Martine St. John

For men and women:

1. Signage for Manifesta 2, Luxembourg City.
2. Front cover of Manifesta 2, European Biennial of Contemporary Art.
3. Buch cover.
4. Pages 148 and 149.

Images from curatorial research trips.


Front and back cover of Manifesta 2: Short Guide (Casino Luxembourg-Forum d'art contemporain, Luxembourg City, 1998.)
Images from curatorial research trips.
1. Berlin. Left: Maria Lind.
4. Lodz. Left to right: Barbara Vanderlinden, Maria Lind, and unidentified.
7. Train station in Riga.
8. Warsaw.

Partial exhibition plan of Manifesta 2, Casino Luxembourg-Fonds d'art contemporain, first floor, Luxembourg City.

All photographs by Robert Fleck unless otherwise mentioned.

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ARTISTS

EVA-LUISA ATTLA

In her film installation, Eija-Liisa Ahtila presented a study based on Aki, a fictional character who experiences a paranoid delusion and decides to embark on a search for the ideal woman he imagines is named Ana. With a little help from an army of fantasy guides, the work poignantly captured the duality of Aki's quest, a reality reflected formally and spatially in this multi-screen film installation.

KUTLUZ ATAMAN

Kutluz Ataman's film portrayed a woman painter, Semih Berkin, living in Istanbul. Her aura, both attractive and repulsive, captivated the viewer and widened the exhibition space with an almost surreal air. Her personal revelations and even memory itself moved into the background.

ORLA BARRY

Orla Barry's work functioned like a three-dimensional diary, documenting her private sphere. In this installation, she used various geese, like portraits and small stories, traversed different fields, like arid, painting, literature, and mixed mediums, like photography, using, and drawing.

EMEESTE BENZIGER

This site-specific intervention (1998) occurred in the historic, ethnics rooms of the museum. The artist installed light boxes with photography depicting decorative details of these same rooms, each of which generated the patterns either enlarged or reduced. The images communicated with the surrounding space.

ERIKS BOŽIŅ

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MAURIZIO CATTELAN

For this installation, Maurizio Cattelan transported a fragment of Italy to Luxembourg, namely an olive tree and the earth embiggened in its roots. In so doing, the artist revealed his interest in the abstraction of natural and its transference, as well as the possibilities of sculpture thirty years after arte poesia.

CHRISTINE BORLAND


This textile installation included 27,500 man-made, turned cloth labels on which were inscribed "DAY BY DAY." Excised diaper also embodied the phrase "I think about the future" on one of these labels every day. The artist intended to repeat this compulsion gesture for one hundred years.

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ALICIA FRAINS


In her performance, Alicia Frains invited visitors to sit down with her, have tea, and chat. She offered to watch over their dreams at their homes or in a hotel room, to talk to them before they fell asleep. She took on the role of their "dreamkeeper."

DOMINIQUE SOWA-BRASSENOS

Curtains, a carpet, a television set—such opposite elements created a heated ambiance and defined a space designed for living and watching films. In Horne Cinema Lux, Dominique Gonzales-Foerster questioned the relationship between fictional and domestic spaces. The re-created domestic space became fictional, while the films on display were largely autobiographical.

MANIFESTA 2

HONORÉ D'O


In the entrance hall of the museum, Honoré d'O constructed a voluminous, site-specific sculpture, consisting of all the artefacts he has ever made. Visitors could actively participate, using the elements fixed on a central platform to make the work move, eventually transforming it into a "living sculpture." Trapped with horror and confined with extreme situations, the work also expanded the notion of sculpture.

DORA GARCIA


Dora Garcia's sound installation included various elements, among them a table, a chair, and a recorder-amplifier. The artist recorded all the sounds from a previous music performance and combined them with the sounds in the surrounding exhibition space. The resulting creation became a kind of background music, breeding elements from the artist's memory with surrounding elements.

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Concluding as I do that one box written in a tricky font. In the case of the text to the left that eventually was published in the catalogue of Manifesta 2 in 1995, the order is even trickier, as the main project was to produce an exhibition. A task cannot translate an exhibition into words nor bear adequate witness to the preparatory experience involved in realizing such an event, nor it, as it is the case, it hid my title something that I felt was essential about both, the curators and the exhibition but that I could not say otherwise. The principal idea behind this exhibition— as defined during research trips in my co-curator, Barbara Vanderlinden and Maria Lind—was to support and confirm the work of promising or important artists across the Continent and further their visibility. As such, the exhibition was one of the most decisive of my adult life. The research for the exhibitions with my co-curators and our curatorial engagement in favor of artists in whom we believe followed a precedent put forward by several of the great exhibitors of the preceding generation, including Harold Szeemann, Jean-Claude Samuel, and Kaspar König, the work of whom I was lucky enough to be able to follow as early as the late 1970s. Barbara and Maria, both of a younger generation than I, reinforced this commitment to artists who work—other because of immediate pasteur or a longer acquaintance—one could consider will last and make sense in the present and in the future. These kinds of choices guided Manifesta 2, which was composed of our “focal Hot” of artists, with many of whom we have continued to work, developing a subsequent longevity.

The distinction in “Art after Communism?” was the result of this intense and unflagging investigative research. On the one hand, we studied hundreds of studios throughout Europe and, in my case, thirty-five countries. My text was written at the end of this process and became one of the three conceptual introductions to the exhibition printed in the catalogue. The extended field research in preparation for Manifesta 2 made it very clear to us that the period during which the capitalist world only dealt with itself was definitely over. As a result, I chose the title “Art after Communism?” which was, first of all, a rather simple pen on Joseph Rosenthal’s “Art after Philosophy,” a text that seemed to come out of the closed-off world of cold war, academic academic thought. By entitling my text “Art after Communism?” I meant to imply that philosophy was no longer enough and that a threshold had been crossed. Above all, I wanted to talk about the powerful experiences that we had all undergone in what was, by then, the countries of the former Soviet bloc. The main idea was this: the whole art was changing with the end of communism. Not only was the very idea of art undergoing a profound evolution in former communist countries, but also this post-cultural revolution promised to further modify the idea of art as such. Even accidental artists were about to realize that they belonged to a post-communist era, with respect to their artistic practices. To a certain extent, I still believe that today’s artists—whether they live in the older or newer countries of the European Union—have to come to terms with this historical condition. We live in an era in which communism needs to be followed. We can escape this post-contemporary history of the present world.

Many people in former communist countries with whom I have spoken since “Art after Communism?” had published told me that my text offended them. I did not mean to offend anyone. I only meant to say that communism—one of the greatest utopias of the twentieth century as well as one of its greatest distortions—was such a phenomenon and that the confrontation between the capitalist world and the communist world was certainly the defining factor of the second half of the twentieth century. In former Socialist countries, so many a strong desire to try to forget or never once open their unconscious complicity. As early as 1989 and on both sides of the Iron curtain, it was as if communism had never existed. Forgetting is one of the most dangerous acts of history, thus the title “Art after Communism?” Yes, we will still hear.

Art after Communism?

by Robert Fleck

It is possible that the present-day art of the 1990s will one day be generalised as the “post-communist era.” Such an observation may at first sight seem exaggerated. The disappearance of communism from the cultural and political map has deeply influenced recent art throughout the world. Since the 1980s, the environment is no longer divided between conflicting alternative social systems. Today’s artists need no more take positions in the ideological battle, which marched through the European landscape from 1917. It is, however, no longer possible to choose between different perspectives. The art of the 1980s can be regarded perfectly well as an exhibition of countless ways and strategies, in this situation to reconstruct and to restore the added value of aesthetics. It would be absurd to wish to ask of recent art that it expressly reflect the radical change of geopolitical conditions, to which we were witness. That would be to recommend the nature, the motives, and the scope of freedom in art. In Belgium, there is currently a good art scene, since there has been a strong tradition since the 1970s, and the embargo, like the hostility of their own government, forced younger and older artists to exhibit together in precarious situations. The only older international critic still, who you know to be an artist himself, explicitly select as a central theme in their works. The art of the 1980s is interesting on the whole for political, social, and individual power mechanisms, and for conditions for the appearance of systems in value or very concrete situations. Despite this, in some respects aesthetic manner of looking at the problem, which is not altogether without danger, the important artists barely reach “historical experience” in the 1980s century, when historical pre-impressionist art could actually be invented to portray the historical processes of the day. The on other, for younger artists in this decade, is becoming natural almost everywhere, to move within the new environment, which one can describe with Dostoevski’s “the zero of integral capitalism”. The reconsideration of the critical content of art was altogether the constant matter for concours in this decade. Alongside it, then, the important works of this time can be described coherently. The new social situation, with the absence of any fundamental alternative, was often treated controversially. In the currently observed “second” generation of the 1980s, there arises a specific melancholic explosion, which had already appeared with Felix Gonzalez-Torres, the greatest score example of this era. The striving generation which first studied art in the second half of this decade, today shows another air, confronted by the media and consumer world. Thus, regional differences have in no way been blurred. In the works of the six artists in Manifesta 2, who originate from the former Yugoslavia, the only European region which suffered a war during the 1990s, their works are closely to be perceived under-ground—certainly not at the simple level of portraiture. Despite the lucidity of Robert Fleck’s text, we do not agree with his premises and didn’t at the time it was first published in 1995. But we welcomed it, as it clearly expressively the more or less unspoken thoughts found in both the East and the West. At least doctrinarily, both sides had, and still have, the aspiration to wipe out the differences separating them as quickly as possible in order to establish “normal” conditions. In short, they hoped that an event of monumental proportions—the more than fifty-year division of Europe—would affect as little as possible the positions of domination “here” and “there.” In this sense, Fleck’s text is politically correct. What’s more, it is set most vividly thinking on his part that will be confirmed or rejected in the future. Vivid thinking actively participated in diminishing differences in the name of unity, instead of treating those differences, gained at the cost of so many victims, as a quality. It’s a common suggestion in my theory of cinematic montages that our common ground is to be found less in the convergence of these images than in the unbridgeable space that sides them apart. The third meaning is not a dialectical synthesis that means running down but, as Susan Buck-Merrill suggests, a space of freedom, of creative cultural production that keeps meaning on the move. As a result, the way system meant to support artists from the East less homogenised them, and they have been encouraged to accept the “internationalism” as the only horizon in the framework by which they are able to be critical. “Criticism is no longer univerally expressed,” Fleck said, “but made explicit to specific points, histories, and processes.” In other words, he suggests that artists in the East should first globalise before being able to participate in anti-globalisation movements.

IRWIN, Los Angeles-based artist collective
Abstraction came into existence itself at the beginning of the 1960s, clearly out of the post-communist context. Immediately after the Eastern European revolutions of 1989 and the opening of the Soviet hinterland to the capitalist art trade, exhibitions took place in many museums of Western Europe and North America of older and more recent art from "the other half of Europe". Younger and older artists from these countries were invited in huge numbers to travel West and to exhibit. Those concerned were amazed or even incredulous of the sudden interest in their work. But three years later the wave had passed. Today, this short-term interest in Eastern Europe in the years 1989 to 1992 can be recognized as the first of three great waves of fashion in the 1990s, before the British and the Scandinavian waves.

The idea of Abstraction, interestingly enough, came about around 1905, that is to say at exactly that point in time when the interest for Eastern European art in the West was levelling out. The basic idea of Abstraction was that the radical geopolitical changes of the 1980s were too important and too permanent to be more than a short-term fashion phenomenon. The art Abstraction was created by painters of art avant-garde, who, in the 1920s within a relatively open situation between East and West, North and South, had struck up lasting connections, and now recognized the opportunity in the 1980s, finally to build a trans-continenental network, which as early as the years 1983 to 1989 seemed possible despite the borders of social systems. This explains the deliberately reduced infrastructure of Abstraction. The only parameters of this exhibition have been, from its first drawing in the summer of 1989 in Rotterdam, that Abstraction has to include artistic topicality: such time as the highest international level on the entire European continent and that the formal task has to take place at a different location every two years. By "traveling", it is to be "light" and free of the constraints of conventional major exhibitions, and the fact that it is a commercial exhibition involves that it should not, from a diplomatic standpoint, be subjugated to the specific representative items of individual countries. It is a nomadic format, which as such is to deal with the continent East-West, without the term "Europe" being more precisely defined. It concerns far more the area of the European Community, namely the traditional geographical definitions of Europe, "from Ireland to the Urals", or other possible definitions. In any event, Abstraction is a typical child of the "post-communist era". Previously, such a free exhibition, with artists from the entire continent, would hardly have been possible.

If one wishes to define the second flowering of Abstraction, then the disappearance of the fundamental aesthetic differences between the various parts of Europe in recent years stands out. Two or three years ago, a generation of artists entered international artistic circulation, which no longer knew the communist era in its studies. The closest result is the extensive non-differentiability of artistic works which come from Eastern or Western Europe, Northern or Southern Europe. There is no typical "Eastern Art" any more, whereas in the earlier communist states the development progressed with extreme rapidity. And "Western Art" appeared, on the reconstruction of a critical art concept, in so far as in which there is no longer any alternative social model to capitalism. Southern and Northern Europe similarly benefit from the fact that the 1980s in Europe, with the division of Berlin and Cologne is a re-united Germany, and other factors, such has a decentralized situation not experienced since the 1960s.

Today, wherever, travels all parts of the continent, determines no fundamental difference in the aesthetic paradigm of younger artists from the various regions. This development can be demonstrated by certain examples. The Polish Solidarity Movement can be regarded as a benchmark. In 1981 Joseph Beuys drove his family in his own VW Bus to Lodz, gave the Museum of Modern Art there a collection of all his works, and arranged them himself. It was actually a return to normality. The Museum in Lodz is the oldest Museum of Modern Art on the European continent. It was established by patronage of the second wave of modernist art in the inter-war years, when a constant travel and exhibition activity all over the continent for artists of the "Classic Modern" was natural. Then, in the second half of the 1970s, national-socialist Germany tore the continent permanently asunder from an artistic point of view. In 1981 Beuys' gift to Lodz, for the artists of the communist hemisphere, after the regime of Jaruzelski - actively tolerated as it was by Western states - became a symbol of resistance. Socially influential was the Eastern European avant-garde aesthetic of the 1980s, wherefrom, from the dissident scene of the preceding decade in most countries of the communist hemispheres, there arose some strong independent art, which clearly contrasted with the Western aesthetic.

Of this "typical Eastern aesthetic", which was observed from the second half of the 1980s in Western countries, there are no longer any traces in the former communist countries. Artistic terms under 40 have hardly anything to do with the formal use of ruin and poverty, which was held out by the Eastern post-conceptual artists in the 1980s as the official picture of advanced progressive society. A year ago I heard, from a young artist in Warsaw, the following striking but typical sentence: "I never experienced communism. In 1981, with Solidarity, I was seven years old, I only know communism by hearsay from the stories of my parents." Artists of the younger generation in those countries were leaving school at a time when the communist system was breaking down. They studied in a post-communist society. The same advertisements, the same television channels, and the same social values and dreams us to the West, were for them the only concrete experiences. So in Abstraction 2, even for the well-informed reader, it is not easy to determine the geographical origins of the individual artists from the phenotypic of their works. That is incidentally no news, but a return to the normality of this century. In the 1980s, one had to be a specialist, in order to geographically classify works by Motyla-Beag, Russian constructivists, Friedrich Kiesler, Pironis Léger, and members of "de Stijl". It is an outcome of the 1980s, that the origin of artists no longer play any major role. For most artists from Northern, Southern, and Eastern Europe this represents, subjectively and objectively, a genuine liberation.

A second current phenomenon of the 1980s is the formation of an "international style", which in the second half of the decade dominated the art world, just as abstract painting did in the late 1920s, and complemented performance art in the 1970s. This phenomenon had hardly anything to do with the first, and it would be inappropriate to mix the two. The current "international style" has rather to do with certain basic aesthetic concepts, which characterizes the 1980s. It is interesting, retrospectively to ascertain how severely Western art of the 1960s - at the height of the
Cold War, which then broke off rather abruptly and changed into its opposite - because capitalist, even formal, until the market itself of 1989/91. Since the middle of the 18th century, the modern age has been detached from middle-class commercial society as a cumulative feature of its artistic will. In the 1960s and 1970s, the denial of the trading value of art, of commercial art dealing, and the legitimating function of museums, belonged to the basic understanding of avant-garde. When, in the 1980s, through various circumstances, heavy money penetrated contemporary art, a complete generation of artists and dealers there saw this principle overturned. In contrast, the influential artists of the 1980s attempted to restore art again, as a setting for criticism. This succeeded on a broad extent, whereby the post-communist line-up on the whole forced a change in the concept of critical art. Michel Foucault's distinction between the 'universal intellectual', like Voltaire and Lévy-Bruhl, who defended universal values by legal argument, and the present-day 'specific intellectual', who, on the basis of special capabilities regarding problems which concern all of society, intervenes as an expert, is a good example of the change from the classic avant-garde to the critical expression of art in the 1980s. Surprisingly, younger artists have adjusted to this over the course of the 1980s through all regions of the continent. Criticism is no longer universally expressed, but made explicit to specific points, pictures, and processes.

The "children of the impositions of consumption", for whom there is no longer any alternative to capitalism, have over recent years in formal aspects taken an opposite standpoint to the social environment. This includes the accentuation of procedural as against object, picture, or product-related moments in the work of art. Clawsomeness to the American debate on political correctness, is exploded in part by the art that, far the American Left, thought bound by horizons without fundamental social alternative had already been the central case for several decades, whereas in Europe it had been inconceivable since the appearance of the communist idea in the late 18th century. Criticism as artistic content can in this context be built up by the uncovering of social processes, by any or fictitious biographies, by forms of self-examination and self-portrayal, by scientific methods, and by a criticism of the media picture. Without representing a theoretical exhibition, Manifesta 2 covers all these fields as an exhibition of artistic topicality.

When we speak of the phenomenon of an "international style" at the end of this decade, then this concerned a certain move to self-limitation, and in formal format within a comparatively narrow framework, which, within this critique, post-conceptual art towards the end of the 1980s, is not to be denied. A certain formal grammar of agreement to social and mediat phenomena has established itself, and indicates that part of this way of looking at problems has been exhausted, especially where it pieces itself in the path of temptation from a monomaniac media picture. A series of comparatively "wild" and politically "incorrect" works, changed in the most varied ways, in this situation account for the assumption that the paradigm of recent and current art can change extremely radically over the years to come.

It was the basic idea of the creators of Manifesta to bring about an exhibition which moved permanently in a hybrid position. Manifesta encounters upon the creators, who change each time, the task of creating an international exhibition with a total continental echo. In this sense, Manifesta is fundamentally distinguished from the East-West exhibitions of a diplomatic character, which some years ago, and partly triggered by the success of Manifesta 1, arose in the local and regional contexts of different countries. Manifesta has the destiny to be a great informative exhibition on more recent works at a high level, but as a nomadic biennial it is meant to avoid the economic and media-social constraints of major exhibitions. If a show succeeds against this challenge, then such an exhibition has the opportunity to represent a pithy balance sheet of artistic topicality in an almost "extra-institutional" context. In the discussion, this has been understood for decades over the sense and purpose of major exhibitions of contemporary art, Manifesta takes a position which can be closely involved with the concerns and themes of art in the 1980s.

Notes:

1. In Eastern and Southern Europe, that is not least of all the achievement of the Santa Cruz For Contemporary Art, the network of which - as ever to be celebrated - achieves special fundamental work for a free art concept in these decades, and provides concrete conditions for communication, travel and information on an international level.
The late Felix Gonzalez-Torres's Untitled (America) could be seen on Rue Philippoteaux, next to the Luxembourg Casino. Untitled, a self-portrait, was also installed in the first staircase of the Musée national d'histoire et d'art. Inhabiting simple found objects with poetic and metaphorical significations, Gonzalez-Torres often explored themes of AIDS, sexual and racial violence, and the role of art in contemporary society.

CARSTEN HÖLLER

Carsten Höller's sculpture Joining Forces (1998) was at once a cool rock, a portal, and a signpost. Like a neon sign, numerous light bulbs displayed the word "Manege." This huge multifunctional structure on wheels could be moved to any location in the exhibition.

PIERRE HUYGHE

In Dialogue avec un produit de conception, Pierre Huyghe invited a French woman sleeping for three hours. Eben though the reference to Andy Warhol's colored film Sleep (1963) was obvious, the artist was mainly concerned with revealing how film aesthetics are organized in our optical subconscious, thus submitting the film image to critical analysis.

KRISTOF KINTERA

While ordinary electronic appliances are designed to enhance the quality and practicality of everyday life, Kristof Kintera's animal-like electronic creations flas with "W" and "6," were both life (1998) fulfilled its peculiar function whatsoever. Exploiting between modern ergonomically designed objects and purely organic forms, his objects are hybrids.
Tanja Otaki staged a performance in the entrance of the museum, during which she covered a square surface as well as her body with white marble dust. For one hour, she stood on a white square, motionless, statue-like, while the elevator carried her up and down.

FRANZ POMASSL


Franz Pomassl, a painter who works with electro-acoustic machines and devices, transformed the acoustic, spatial, and physical experience of the scenes situated on the ground floor of the C.P.C.A. Trial Cour was an audio CD that comprised 75:52 minutes of feedback, system breakdowns, and uneasy rhythms and effects produced by the sound machine itself—wailing, pensive, and contradictory—delivered elements produced by wave lengths that the human ear cannot detect. Amplifiers, the sound machines, and loudspeakers were the only visible elements of his installation.

ANTONIO PRIM

In Corte de Maresias (The Court of Maresias), 1998. Printed by Thomas Rehberger.de.

With La Corte de Maresias, Antonio Prieto addressed certain conflicts that haunt the apparently healthy social body of Luxembourg City. He used an underground tunnel as the construction of his work, facilitating upon the feelings of attraction and repulsion triggered by violence. He disclosed hidden aspects, destabilized the well-established peace of mind, introduced doubt and suspicion, raised questions, and made it seem as if the tunnel was as an outlet for social phenomena.

TANJA OSTOJIC

Pen and ink, 2006. Printed by Thomas Rehberger.de.

Dan Perjovschi is a painter, conceptual artist, and contributor to the weekly 27 in Bucharest, the main organ of the intellectual and cultural communities in Romania. The title of which refers to 27 December 1989, the date of the revolution against the dictatorship of Ceausescu. Throughout Manifesta 2, the artist worked with two Luxembourg newspapers, the daily Blickzeit and the weekly Lëtzebuerger Zeit. The collection of drawings resulting from this collaboration was shown during the exhibition, presenting a diary of Manifesta 2.

TOBIAS REHBERGER

With View of Strasbourg (Perspectives and the Present), 1999. Printed by Thomas Rehberger.de.

Opposite the Luxembourg Casino, Tobias Rehberger transformed a prominent position into a flower garden. The right planting structure strongly related with the ephemeral character of the arrangements. Seen from above, the flat and carefully arranged flowerbeds suggested a painting. Rehberger’s installation offered visitors a place of rest and respite, the opportunity to relax on a bench in the midst of greenery.

BOJAN SARCEVIC


Bojan Sarcevic deliberately chose to work in a room in the museum: no longer used as an exhibition space, it introduced several unusual interventions: a false wall and ceiling, which modified the room’s parameters, as well as point on the walls, which slightly altered its texture. He then filled all the room’s tiny cracks with timber paper, sealing it off hermetically. This series of nearly invisible interventions, Sarcevic performed an authentic metamorphosis.

ERAN SCHAEFFER

For his work Scenario Data War and Peace in the Dictatorship (1990) the artist worked with the three curators to translate an English text he had written especially for the exhibition. He then recorded eight versions of his text, in German, English, French, Italian, Luxembourgish, Flemish, Russian, and Swedish. The installation referred to the multicultural identities of the artist, the participants in the international exhibition, and the inhabitants of Luxembourg.

TILO SCHULZ

October, 2008. Photograph by Roman Venceljarts.de.

Throughout Luxembourg City, Tilo Schulte staged a fragmented discourse, employing texts and signs on bus stops, bars, signposts, etc. With their particular graphic design, each established a distinct location with its location.
Ann-Sofi Sjöblad filmed a series of performances in a Luxembourg hotel, a venue in which one can look behind the scenes of public life and discover human organization within the private sphere of a room. The location thus became both scenery and script. The recorded scenes were presented as unparalleled reality, in an installation depicting the current contours of a security surveillance system.

ANDREAS SLOMINSKI

Gibraltar

Luxembourg

SEAN SNYDER

From the installation, 1999
Photograph by Rainer Moningobettel.de.

With her installation, architect and visual artist Anamaria Suduric explored the effects of the building on the surrounding neighborhood as well as its everyday life, emphasizing both its constantly changing identity and a climb and stepdown to a carpeting workshop and eventually an exit.

GISEL VILLENES

In her video installation Katharina Mikes and Bost Colletts Them (1998), Gite Viltenes called into question hidden social issues. She remembered that when she was fifteen a year old relative had told her that she would be married by the age of twenty-one, knew children and a new job, and that art would be nothing more than a hobby.

RICHARD WRIGHT

On the day of the official opening of Manifesta 2, Fidiot Ekbert staged a performance entitled The Full Stop in the archaic hall of the Luxembourg Casino. For it, a thin silk thread by Urbanale was set on fire. The event was, according to the artist's instructions, documented on video and in photographs.

APOLONIJA SUBERSTE

During the exhibition, 1999
Photograph by Rainer Moningobettel.de.

In his work for the exhibition, Andreas Sventionski attempted to enter one of the rooms in the Luxembourg Casino with a horizontally positioned ladder. As the doorway was too narrow, the only solution was to cut shapes resembling the ladder into the wall panel and fix it. Once the ladder was inside the room, the wall was repaired. The sound recording and video projection of this action triggered reflection regarding the production and reception of an artistic process.

SEAN SNYDER

Amidst Vanishing Passageways of Fidiot Ekbert, 1998
Photograph by Andreas Snysard.de.

Because of the historical importance of its forts, Luxembourg City is known as the Gibraltar of the north. However, Gibraltar, like Luxembourg, is renowned for its banks, touristic, and tax-free shopping. Sean Snyder's work established trios between both cities and countries, while submitting their urban systems to a critical structural analysis. In the video, the artist was seen distributing posters of photographic collages of newspaper photos in both Luxembourg City and Gibraltar.

THE MANIFESTA ARCHIVE

M3

FRIEDERIKErored an exhibition of contemporary art

JUBILEUMS SYNONYM FOR UNIFICATION

MUSEUM on the 20th of September 1998, Luxembourg

The first at the Mannheim edition to be equally renowned, Manifesta 3 was also the first edition to be held in a former Eastern European city. Located in the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana, a city both close to and oriented toward the Western European metropole and an outpost for its cosmopolitan outlook and reputation as the most "southern" of Eastern European metropolises, the exhibition aimed to respond to this geopolitical situation by exploring the practice of borders. The title of the exhibition, Borderline: Aros, was borrowed from the field of psychology—played on the notion of boundaries, both geographic and psychic. And the street itself, crisscrossed by parks, suggested the contours Francesc Boronat Riba, On the Bottom of the Netherlands, Marco Hagem and Christiane Sacher, and Raffaele Schiavone from Austria made the effort to shed culture from political, economic, and cultural homogenization, an additional theme understood in the exhibition and local discourse. As the curator stated, the resulting project tried to interrogate the social and political ambivalences of territory for global culture of sage and, in particular, artistic production in light of the transformations in Europe. The work of fifty-nine artists or collectives was shown in several outdoor sites and five institutional venues. A fifth, initiated by RTV Slovenia, brought the elements of the exhibition to viewers of Slovenian television.

CURATORS
Franziska Bonariz, Oo Bonariz, Maja Hlavaj, and Kathri Rhoten.

PARTECIPATING ARTISTS
Hans Ulrich Obrist: The importance of ties as dynamic centres of exchange for the future? In reacting to globalization, but living the process. Whatever our differences, bringing feelings to our identity and characters.

Massimo Cacciari: Isn't the European Community in danger of being driven purely by calculation, without being also expressed in its artistic manifestations.

This is the question today. To the "reductio ad unum", or the distinction between unity and diversity.

Can Europe call itself that only if they recognize their differences, the unity will be nothing more than a mere homogenization, violence and an end to the world? Kathrin Schubert sees the future of Europe in terms of a third space, a new landscape model of both unity and differences.

Hans Ulrich Obrist: Paul Virilio told me in a recent discussion that these see the treaty as the future of Europe in terms of a third space, a new landscape model of both unity and diversity.

Various contributors:

Kathrin Schubert, Susan Cianciolo, Jeff Koons, Susan H. Foster, Annegret Soltau.

The picture credits are on the following pages:
THE MANIFESTA ARCHIVE

1. Front cover of PlatformaSCCA (Manifesta in Our Backyard), no. 3 (January 2002).

Press conference for Manifesta 3, Ljubljana, 22 June 2000. Participants: Curators of Manifesta 3, Francesco Bonami, Mela Hlavajova, Kathrin Rhomberg, and Ole Bouman; Igor Zabel, coordinator of Manifesta 3; Henry Meyric Hughes, president of the International Board of Manifesta 3; Jozef Skolc, minister of culture of the Republic of Slovenia and president of the national committee of Manifesta 3; Maja Rotvnik, director-general of Cankarjev dom; and Teja Alic, project manager of Manifesta 3.

1. General view.
2. Left to right, unidentified, Igor Zabel, Henry Meyric Hughes, and Mela Hlavajova.
3. Mela Hlavajova (left) and unidentified.
Public protest action "Demolish Neoliberalism" by Russian artists Aleksandr Brener and Barbara Schurz at the opening press conference for Manifesta 3, Ljubljana, 22 June 2000.

1. Press Conference general view of speakers.
2. Left Henry Meyric Hughes and unidentified.
3. Aleksandr Brener approaching the conference table.
4 & 5. Brener spraying the phrase "Demolish Neoliberalism, Multiculturalist Art-sistem.”
10. Schurz spray painting.
The work of Abdi Abdessemed referred to three figures who changed the world under the Muslim prophet Mohammed, the German philosopher Karl Marx, and the Cambodian dictator Pol Pot, all of whom attempted to purify the structure of human existence. Combining these three figures into one, Abdessemed invented a new kind of trinity where spirituality, materialism, and violence coalesced into a unique belief system. Isolated in its space, this simple, framed name was transformed into a mysterious contemporary icon.

Paweł Althamer

The film The Million Picture (2000) by Paweł Althamer recorded a performance in a tattooing, crowded square near Ljubljana’s central market. Eleven young and stage actors, none of them well-known public figures, performed a play each day for approximately thirty minutes. The video was various but totally ordinary—a throng, an old man, a television personality, two very young girls, a policeman, a homeless person, a couple in love, a blond with a camera, a skateboarder, a street musician, and others. At the end of the play, all the actors immediately vacated the stage. With this work, Althamer interrogated the border between reality and fiction.

Maja Bajčič

Maja Bajčič’s video Woman at Work (1999) recorded an artistic action carried out during the renewal of the National Gallery of Slovenia and H zagorica in Sarajevo, part of a series of projects entitled Under Construction. Five female workers performed this piece. Over the course of five days, each woman wore her own pattern or a set that cumulated or was stretched over the scalfolding of the building. The women occupied the gallery and combined the recent history of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the past represented inside the gallery itself. The use of handcraft symbolized the revival of the home and the feminine presence in the public sphere.

URSULA BRIEMANN

Ursula Briemann’s video essay represented the border as a critical metaphor for marginalization and the artificial maintenance of the subjective lines of division. The video examined the gender discrimination experienced by the women of the Mexican city of Ciudad Juarez, as reflected in employment policies, punishments, the entertainment industry, and male violence in the public sphere.
AGNÉSE RULE

COLIN DARKE

Stills and Credits, 2000.

Darke’s work has a strong political orientation. Stills and Credits was a work in progress, examining the relationships between concrete historical events, political bodies, and contest art practices that adjoined to them. It involved the remixing of French painter Charles Levallet’s Manifesta (1849–49). In the drawing’s white border, Darke traced excerpts from Jean Troclet’s 1979 lecture “Class and Art,” which expressed the essence of Darke’s project. “While the class-instructed political writing harrows along on stills, artistic endeavors log behind, dipping on credits.”

MICHAE L EMERSEN AND INGAR DRAGSET

Discordia Latvica, 2009.

Agnese Rule’s video Discordia Latvica reflected upon the human condition in contemporary Latvia and in post-communist Eastern Europe in general. She did so by encompassing a familiar set of images and symbols to present the mythical origins of Latvia, including the tree of the world, the creation of man, a barrel, a flag, and a river. Rule mixed the “narrowness of ancient and modern-day myths, both of which are part of Latvian culture.”

PHIL COLLINS

Phil Collins presented two films. How To Make A Refugee (1999), filmed in Skopje, Macedonia, and at the refugee camps in Titovski and Chamipol during the conflict of May 1999, and Temps Essayé (1999), filmed in Belgrade during the conflict and an accompanying essay. The essay considers the camera and artist as an ambivalent, contemplative tool, revealing what viewers often find themselves implicated as collective witnesses of international politics and consumption. In a more general sense, the works also reveal the binary between an experience as intellectual political entertainments.

JOOST CORUN

Joost Corun is fascinated by transportation and travel experiences, so much so that he obtained his diving license. This formed the point of departure for the video Airplane (2000) he presented at Manifesta 3. It started with an uncontrollable urge to fly. In 1999, he decided to build an airplane. Airplane records his adventures during this process—how the design of the craft and its installation on the rooftop of De Fabriek in Eindhoven to testing and transporting it to the Sahara desert, where he first flew it.

KRIEGER DASHING

Eating my eight-minute film Whole (2000) depicted two men eating following the fictional process of an important football match as though they were coaches. The camera focused on them exclusively, as they sat in the coach’s box and gesticulated like two men involved in a conflict. Judgment against the empty Whole Stadium in Krakau were issued recordings of two Italian Series A football matches at the Frascati Stadium in Ulline. From this combination, Krieger created a complex structure of dual lines. The video’s gestures became metaphors for social activity, an ambivalent expression of conflict and impotence.

PAWEŁ SŁOMAŃSKI, Fig. 89, 2000.

In this series, the artistic duo challenged conventional perceptions of space and proposed possible changes to social, architectural, and institutional conditions. Powiastwa Struktury, Fig. 88, constituted a private gallery within the context of Manifesta 3. In this two-layered project, anti-activist activities took place. However, the curatorial team of Warmia did not select the exhibitions presented. Rather, a team of young, local gallerists was given the job, launching their professional careers. In the pre-existing exhibition hall of the Modern Gallery in Lublin, the gallery itself became a sculptural object.

MARCO GIEGER

Marcos Gieger’s project ToilAnd (2000) for Manifesta 3 materialized the area between Garakajt, the largest Slovene cultural center, and Nova Ljubljanska Banka with pink paint. The cultural center referred both to the public space and the site of the work, highlighting the dramatic contrast between the activities of both institutions and their consequent distribution of power organization of cultural production versus the surveillance of economic capital. This in-between space was charged with signification.
The Fifth Venue
Melita Zajc

The Fifth Venue (Peta priorstvo, in Slovenian), the Manifesta 3-related exhibition-television project of RTV Slovenia, was the result of my strong belief in the vital role of public-service broadcasting and the visual arts in providing quality audiovisual content for the majority of the population. The need for quality public-service broadcasting is proverbial, so the idea of offering a public TV program as an outlet for contemporary visual arts was both quite ordinary and also utopian, given the long-standing antagonism between media artists and broadcasters. Media arts and video art became possible with the advent of portable, affordable television equipment in the 1960s. Their rapid development was stirred by a crisis in the traditional visual arts and the growing dissatisfaction with existing broadcast television. In the case of television, the dissatisfaction grew into an antagonism that remains to the present day. It was a consciousness about this past as well as a desire to look toward the future that lay at the heart of the idea to show media art on Slovenian public television, to the benefit of both. With the advent of the new millennium, the borders between traditional activities became fluid and many old divisions obsolete. Take the division between global and local: Indeed, new digital technologies are being used globally, yet they are often used within audio-visual industries, including broadcasting, for locally produced content. Another example might be the synergy between film and art. While the film industry's system of distribution is progressively forcing the closure of spaces for the screening of art films, the use of digital technologies within the art has transformed galleries into screening venues for films, and films themselves are taking forms unlike the stereotypical feature-length movie. With digital shooting and editing, the distinction between film and video has become obsolete, and in the 1990s some of the best films were produced within the visual arts.

Manifesta 3 in Ljubljana, one of the first large scale European art exhibitions to take place on this side of the border between (she never really crossed) East and West, promised and anticipated both—a celebration of locally produced content and the development of the visual arts within the new digital media of moving images. Public television seemed just the right vehicle in which to achieve this, much more so than traditional galleries and museums. That's how I presented the project to my colleagues, when I joined RTV Slovenia as head of the Arts and Culture Department in May 2000. Everyone welcomed the idea. Drago Pecko, senior advisor to the program director, coined the title, while the production team fully supported the project, despite having only one month to work on it (which is very different from its general mode of operation). A small creative team, led by the young art historian Vanesa Cuhale, also engaged fully in the project. The artists and organizers of Manifesta 3 granted rights and provided copies of the works, while curators and guests participated in interviews. The works and the interviews comprised the main parts of the program. Our creative ambitions had to be constantly adjusted, in accordance with what was actually feasible. But there were two rules of which we never lost sight: first, we screened artists' films and videos in their entirety, and second, contrary to the common dilemma of picking quality against popularity, we strove to achieve both at the same time. The project consisted of three parts, each approximately one hundred minutes long and broadcast once a month during the exhibition. The public was delighted, but the art world was less enthusiastic. Historical antagonisms remained, and many perceived The Fifth Venue as just another commentary on the exhibition rather than part of it.

Following Manifesta 3, The Fifth Venue remained on the air as part of Terminal, a monthly show dedicated to screening the best artworks from all over the world, soon developing a global reputation. To quote the editors of the French magazine Transversales (affiliated with Le Monde diplomatique), "The programs such as Terminal are the pride of the public television service." At a certain point, even such nice words weren't enough to stop the tide that blew us all away. Looking back, the project of having artists create public TV programs was utopian. Looking ahead, it seems the only way to go.

NOTE
The 1998 public announcement that Manifesta 3 was going to be held in Ljubljana in 2000 almost immediately generated reactions and high expectations in our local context. At first, the majority of contemporary art protagonists in Slovenia rather positively received the idea of a Manifesta edition in Ljubljana; they perceived the event as a great opportunity and saw it as an acknowledgment of their work (both from the international community and from Slovenian officials). The decision of the Slovenian government to support Manifesta 3 was generally understood as an indicator of the interest of official cultural policy makers in contemporary artistic practices. Therefore, it was hoped that Manifesta 3 would resolve the quagmire of the National Cultural Agenda and its relatively minor support for contemporary art and thus finally provide for the artistic infrastructure the city lacked.

Within this context, the project Manifesta in Our Backyard was conceived. On the one hand, it aimed to avoid a passive, uncritical acceptance of Manifesta 3 (and what the exhibition represented: a contemporary art event established within a Western art system) and, on the other hand, to avoid a priori rejection of it. Manifesta offered itself as a particularly ideal model for analysis of contemporary art’s representational strategies, since the European biennial hoped to become an alternative version of the dominant forms of contemporary art presentation. Moreover, its aspiration, which the Manifesta 3 curatorial team stressed, was to connect with the local scene in vital ways. Manifesta 3 thus served as an opportunity for critical reflection and analysis of the institutionalization of art and a contemporary art system imbricated in market mechanisms and the often-imperialist ideology of globalization.

We began with a working thesis (meant to be confirmed or rejected through research findings) that used the metaphor of a parasite for Manifesta—an institution that would use all available resources and constitute its own model of operation in a host city. We were interested in whether the local art community would have the chance to take part meaningfully in the shaping of Manifesta 3, and vice versa. The project was also envisaged as one of observation and analysis of the concrete dynamics and effects on Ljubljana of a large international exhibition. Within this context, we collected data on the projects that were (or, symptomatically, were not) on view at the time of Manifesta 3, including the “alternative,” nonprofit gallery spaces that had contributed importantly to the development of contemporary art in the city of Ljubljana in the 1990s but were being overlooked by Manifesta 3. Through collected statements, we presented a comparison between the expectations and actual experiences of some of the major “alternative” players in the local art scene (published in the first issue of PlatformaSCCA, which was printed to coincide with the Manifesta 3 opening in June 2000).

With the project, we also wished to encourage self-reflection on the part of the protagonists in the local art scene, including ourselves (through observing Manifesta, we also observed ourselves; Manifesta played the role of the Other in relation to which we could see ourselves more clearly). This is why the project turned away from its original “research” foundation and positivistic-objective intentions in order to publish the results of our research only after the conclusion of the Manifesta 3. Such “objectivity,” i.e. “distance,” soon proved to be illusory and certainly problematic, since like any analysis of a social system, the observer is always part of the same system that he or she is observing and analyzing. Our goal was also to present and encourage individual models of operation within the art system—models that would emerge from the specific needs of the milieu in which we were working. In this context, our research seemed to make particular sense because in 2000 the Soros Center for Contemporary Arts (SCCA) in Ljubljana ceased to operate within the framework of the Open Society Institute Slovenia and the resultant new Center for Contemporary Arts (retaining the acronym SCCA-Ljubljana) was trying to forge a different way of working in the field of art and culture. We were eager to find out whether there was the potential in Slovenia to introduce different models of functioning and actively shape international systems of contemporary art, evolving from the very particular conditions of production and reception in a former socialist country. The project was also meant to stimulate and support local writers, especially younger ones, to analyze and interpret individual works of art, since it was felt that in large-scale art events, the works of art themselves elude in-depth analysis. As a result, a number of critical texts were commissioned and published in the second issue of PlatformaSCCA (December 2000). Throughout this whole process, various activities were part of the project, including regular meetings of a core group; visiting contemporary art exhibitions in Slovenia and the 1999 Venice Biennale (to analyze works of art and develop working methods based on “terrain experiences”); reading and discussing different texts, administering a questionnaire (in June 2000 we sent a questionnaire to one thousand different art protagonists in Slovenia); conducting interviews with local art professionals and Manifesta curators (published in PlatformaSCCA), facilitating semipublic discussions in which artists, curators, and theoreticians participated and which helped shape the further development of the project; creating a short-lived online discussion forum; and commissioning art projects from Moira Zoli and Ralf Hoett, as well as Torad Pogačar, for PlatformaSCCA.

The ambition of Manifesta in Our Backyard was to proceed from observation, archiving, mapping, and analyzing toward “concrete” (artistic) actions and through this to try to overcome the frequent perception of the project as a kind of public relations campaign for Manifesta 3. The project, however, narrowed, largely focusing on the publication of PlatformaSCCA, the editorial policy of which reflected the intentions and goals of Manifesta in Our Backyard. Since the journal was well received locally and abroad and since contemporary art theory and criticism in Slovenia previously had been insufficiently presented and supported, we continued our publishing endeavor even after Manifesta left Ljubljana. Thus for the third issue of PlatformaSCCA (January 2002), we focused on the relation between art, theory, and ideology. Looking back at the journal now, we see that the Manifesta that had landed “in our backyard” was both the specific object of our study and a timely pretext and catalyst to examine larger issues for which it was little more than a symbol.
In his work, Koo Jun-jong performs discreet, almost invisible interventions in already existing spaces, reconfiguring the world of mass-produced objects with an extra dimension of meaning. Koo Jun-jong's installation of Manifesta 3 precipitated a certain vulnerability in the spectator, through a slight shift of perception via a slight change in the space. It resonated with the keen and perceptive eye, an aura of the digital and highly effective environments.

DENISA LEHOCKÁ


In her work, Denisa Lehocká explores the 3-dimensionality of objects, rendering them familiar and suspended in time. Her installation of Manifesta 3 was a kind of catalog of ordinary objects that the artist arranged across the floor, suspended on walls and simply placed on the floor. She employed a seemingly arbitrary system of logical order that was extended only to her. She fashioned a fragile web of relations, mental relationships, and thorough and taut web of communication, all of which defined the visitor's perception.

MATTIAS MÖLLER

In his video, Uccaney (1999) Matthias Möller used an unconventional narrative strategy to tell the story of Brasilia, which Umberto Eco called "the city of hope" and the "last city of the twentieth century." Brasilia is an example of 1960s urban planning. Residents, however, have experienced the metropolis differently. Möller's film explores this gap between the architecture's expectations and the reality faced by the inhabitants. The juxtaposed footage of the construction with Önnsen's account in 1965. The former documented the emerging "perfect city," while the latter recorded the scars left behind.

PAUL NOBLE


Since 1995, Paul Noble has been drawing the fantastical urban landscape of an imaginary city called Notion Newtown. His elaborately detailed drawings, of which Lantern is one, have consistently evoked ironic commentaries on modern urbanism. His idea of "building" this metropolis has been "to style, to technique, no accidents, only mistakes.

ANTON OLSSON

The interactive installation (1997-09) featured a second-generation cybernetic project, belonging to a trend in cybernetic art primarily concerned with the organizational and control programs of society. His basic premises—autopoiesis, self-application, and self-organization—aired in 1997. The work could be upgraded on the Internet and offered various possibilities to users who took part in a life of a complex community of virtual agents (clients). User identities in cyberspace were determined according to their actual height and weight.

ALEXANDER MELKONYAN

Since 1995, Paul Noble has been drawing the fantastical urban landscape of an imaginary city called Notion Newtown. His elaborately detailed drawings, of which Lantern is one, have consistently evoked ironic commentaries on modern urbanism. His idea of "building" this metropolis has been "to style, to technique, no accidents, only mistakes.

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ROMAN ONISH

In Commem '99, Roman Onish established a specific relationship with individuals whose biographies were rather different from his own. After having traveled to numerous places in search of truths, ideas, and a visual understanding of each locality, he recorded stories of his different journeys, described the cities he visited, and the people he met. His compositions were then visualized as visual spaces. Common '99 addressed changes in the perception of reality as well as the translation of the visual into the verbal, and vice versa.

ANKOLOVOSLOVSKY

Manfred Pernice's architectural installation and sculptural arrangement for Manifesta 3 influenced the proportions of the room in which it stood and determined how the viewer experienced that space. Pernice covered the surfaces of his installation with fragments of text by the writer Ingeborg Bachmann, sexual collages, and photographs. A text describing the emotional conditions of a contemporary man generated unexpected associations in this architectural environment.

SUSAN PHILIPSZ

As an example of what Athanasios Skil in the background, 1999.

Perrone's photograph depicted an old lady seated in a chair of a deserted car, clutching two massive letters on her lap and staring directly into the camera. Her stance recalled the motif of the virgin and the unicorn. According to legend, the unicorn could only be captured by a virgin. The context, confrontational gaze of the elderly woman suggested feminine vindication, her steady grip on the antlers diffusing their potent power.

MANFRED PERNICE

Reconstruction of an old lady seated in the corner of a deserted car, clutching two massive letters on her lap and staring directly into the camera. Her stance recalled the motif of the virgin and the unicorn. According to legend, the unicorn could only be captured by a virgin. The context, confrontational gaze of the elderly woman suggested feminine vindication, her steady grip on the antlers diffusing their potent power.


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MANIFESTA 3

Anton Olsenhoff exhibited a series of amateur photographs found in small photo labs across the Soviet Union. Exhibited as a kind of pop-up show, three private snapshots took the visitor into the intimate daily life of ordinary Russians. From the means of accumulated images, the monoscopic structure of a former common culture emerged, not a system of shared values, but the product of a collective subconscious.
In her work House for Flavians (2000), Marjetica Potrč sets stories of modern cities with cripplingly sensational, calling visitors’ attention to them in her writings. “They are either frightening or beautiful.” Her installation House for Travellers focuses atten-
tion on the urban wild of the center of planned metropolises. Like flavians, these areas present
ever-noses challenges to their residents. Potrč’s place presented for field research.

ARTURAS RALIA

In addition to the long-term effects of Soviet-era isolation, education is a central theme in Arturas Ralia’s video, The Girl’s Immortal (1999). He showed footage of a teachers’ conferences held almost a decade ago at the Vilniaus Secondary School of Fine Arts, where the artist taught at that time. The video documented with Western sentiments, usually fail-
dles from public display.

RASMUS ANUD AND SIIBEN ANDREASEN

This artist collective’s mixed media installation 2nd Avenue and Unterram (2000) was a deconstructive, issued, and video. It addressed social paragraphe (like interaction, communication, and identity. The walls were covered with wallpaper, the pattern of which consisted of the 10 MM-seen script, a fictitious name
based on the practices and speculations of Jacob Tog, early-20th-century satirist, and the art collective.

REY SLOVENIA

Manhattan’s presented its artists and their works on Slovenian television in order to disseminate art to the home of every viewer. Three programs were broad-

ANRI SALA

Anri Sala presented a short film Sheercon (1999), the story of which echoed certain myths of the Italian war. This conflict profoundly affected the Albanian artist. Recorders feature two intertwined stories, one about a man who lives among scene two thousand pet fish and another about a young former UF soldier.

BOLENT ŞANAR

The Turkish artist Boi Şanar created a photograph collection Survivors of the Great Fire (2000) that comprised of two kinds of images broad views and recomposed scenes of Istanbul as well as fabricated visions, social images of himself, his partner, and his family. These works established a tension not only between the privates and public spheres, but also between the radically opposed Muslim and secular ideologies that regulate both spheres.

SANA SARVA

Unrestricted shots of bottled wine are the most potent symbol of a border. With Transborderline, the artist collective Stalker proposed a new kind of bor-
der, one that maintained its spiral shape but was also translatable into a fluid space, simultane-
ously navigable and teatable thanks to the removal of its walls and a progressive widening. A prototype for a possible future public space resulting from the “unraveling” of borders, this creation presented an ideal location for diverse exchanges. Featuring thousands of soccer balls on which were inscribed the names, stories, and desires of individu expressing in the borders of Europe, the installation repres-
ented an imaginary terrains transcending the barriers between East and West.

NÄSHON TABATABAI

Nasrin Tabatabai shot her video Old House (1999) at the request of Hor Choban, a Turkish shop owner in Rotterdam who wanted to show his adopted homeland to his family back in Turkey. In this film, Choban presented the city in such a way that it would appeal to both a Turkish audience and a general public. Tabatabai did not check on her own ideas. Rather, she tried to realize the shop owner’s intentions. Her compilation became a sym-
bo of cooperation, the embodiment of a working method in which boundaries were celebrated in favor of genuine relationships.

JOËLLE TUERUNKOCK

FRANCISCO TROPA

Drnk, 1996.

FRANCISCO TROPA’s work Drnk (1996) included a large hanging sheet on a clear piece of plastic, defying gravity. The material did not perceive the difference between top and bottom; the earth was attached to its belly. In this piece, Tropa turned the rules of the game on their head, like the Italian artist Piero Manzoni in his work Suive du monde (1961), a steel base mounted upside down.

Tropa, however, added something that evoked the history of his country. Portugal. The steel symbolizes Ireland, the island in which nature is something to be conquered but rather conquered nature, the nature. A sailor in an ocean tower. DEKSER, Sislei Khara

Sislei Khara’s performance piece, Stock Exchange (2000), attempted to respond to the social instabilities caused by the mass migrations of southern and eastern European populations. At Manifesta 3, he performed in the Ljubljana railway station. In small, a large, well-known, and notorious thriller he announced the details of each train in style and dress reminiscent of a Wall Street stockbroker.

JASMILA ZBANIC

Azar (Azar) (1997) was a video about a young, first-grade girl who seemed to be part of the people in an occupied territory of eastern Bosnia. The work followed the child, traumatized and speechless, to Sarajevo, where she tried to adopt among her peers, who were also traumatized by the war. Jasmina Zbanic asked these children what they were afraid of. Their answers proved that the war lives on in their present.

GREGOR ZVONC

Gregor Zvonc’s photographs, Untitled (2000), depicted the artist as the sole act in vacuously choreographed situations in interiors he created for the purpose. What seemed to be retrospectives of art films were actually states of reaction meant to evoke sculptural qualities. All of Zvonc’s photographs featured his old paintings, and in the background of every photograph the entrance gate of his parents’ house in Vienna was visible. The artist’s precise integration of biographical details, painting, sculpture, installation, and performance into a bland imaginary space revealed his uncanny aesthetic accuracy.

MANIFESTA 4

EUROPEAN BIENNALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART
25 MAY-25 AUGUST 2002, FRANKFURT

Frankfurt hosted the fourth and, to date, the largest edition of the biennial, with over ninety artists or artist collectives. The exhibition approached as non-arranging fovea or topic. Instead, its curators (Anna Busch-Droste from Heidrun, Rina Engsta Mogi from Spain, and Silvija Bacinovic Tscherny from France) made the mobility, process, and interaction of their extensive international research the focus of the show. They responded to the different ways artists were retelling the thematic relationships between time and space, grasping with forces of sexuality, travel, work, money, and history. As part of the exhibition, the curators publicly displayed the dreams of all the artists they had interviewed for the show, including those that were not selected. They also included a radio station and Internet performance. A series of call-out-organizations, an ethnological institute, and an independent art publisher were all invited to organize individual projects of the exhibition: The exhibitors’ work and various topographies allowed for the display of artworks across Frankfurt, in various public and institutional spaces as well as along the city’s riverbanks and in its supper stations. Additionally, a collaboration with Staatliche Hochschule für bildende Künste, Städelschule, the art academy in Frankfurt, enabled hundreds of art students to be involved in art being created in the academy from which they could easily visit the exhibition.

CURATORS

Ivo Busch-Droste, Rina Engsta Mogi, and Silvija Bacinovic Tscherny.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

ARTISTS

DANIEL GARCÍA ANJUAR

In his work, Ibon Aranberri alters the geographic, historical, and perceptual meaning of references in the intensely mediated collective imaginary. Untitled, a large-scale reproduction of Pablo Picasso’s Guernica (1937) in a bus-like shell located on the banks of the Main river, emerged from the sociopolitical and cultural conditions of its local context.

IBON ARANBERRI

APSOLUTO

For I Don’t Like Long Goodbyes, Hall Altindere filmed various people after they landed at an airport. Holiday travelers, business people, couples, and families were seen holding cellular telephones to their ear. All of them bowed their heads, ignoring their immediate surroundings and concentrating on their conversations. Altindere styled the film’s sequences one after the other, without comment, and presented them on a monitor at Terminal 1 of the Frankfurt Airport. The work was an attention to the alienation that results from our so-called neo-global connectedness.

HAI! ALTINDERE


The Asphalt Site was an Internet project that interacted commented on Eastern European artists’ relocation to the Western art market. The piece simulated an auction in which visitors played the role of potential buyers. The sale, however, was constantly postponed, mimicking both the stalled integration of Eastern European countries into the European Union and the chronically unstable market for artists from this region.

I DON’T LIKE LONG GOODBYES

Jörg Büchner.

DANIEL GARCÍA ANJUAR


KOPPOS exploited and combined three different kinds of data and communication networks: telephone, satellite, and internet. The two anonymous members of KOPPOS (10101110101101).org were a GPS browser that continuously sent its geographic coordinates to their website, via mobile telephones. Software then mapped their precise location. KOPPOS is part of a larger project entitled GURGnost, which makes vast quantities of personal data in contemporary society available to the public.

MANIFESTA 4

OLIVIER BAROIN

Massimo Bartolini

painted executive physical environments, often using light and sound, in order to exist opposing impressions—the cozy and the wild, the intimate and the disquiet—out as metaphors for dreams, memories, sensations, and nostalgia. The Farinhas occupied a space inside the Frankenstein Hof, the original purpose of which was unknown and not easily detectable. The artist transformed the venue, offering a suggestive counterpoint to certain artistic practices that try to explain and employ direct references.

MARIANO FERNÁNDEZ


Yael Bartana was born in Tel Aviv on Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel Independence Day). As an of ten her work, she translated the mundane rhythms of everyday life into an neatly poetic videos. As this artist stated: “This organized neurotics, connoisseurs, and militarists exist as a single logical and socially coherent identity. They are powerful and, therefore, dangerous phenomena that perpetuate patterns of loyalty and ignorance." The video quickly exposed these dynamics of the state, their related belief systems, and the individuals involved in them.

PIERRE BISNUTH


Based on the Walt Disney animated film The Jungle Book (1967), Pierre Bisnuth’s work of the same title combined various dubbing versions of the film, assigning a different language to each character. The result was an once strange and strange familiarity. In the midst of our globalized world, Shere Khan’s Tower of Babel proved to be an equalizer without borders.

SYLVIE ROMBERG

For years, Luigi y Rosa have been making art work exploring the wrestles left by different settlers through the Centuries. Their photographic project documented the existence of Celtic, Phoenician, Greek, and Roman settlements in the region.


LucaZar Boyadjiev

In the video Fowler (2002) by Roberto Cuccihi presents a seemingly endless and repetitively changing scene and sound over the sea in the company of a war melody. The work offered a simple metaphor for the pain attempt to overcome falsehood. In a related gesture, Cuccihi adopted his father's persona, sporting the sailor's hat, clothes, weight, style, and appearance. Like the movement of the Sun in Fowler Things, his efforts triumphed when they were not preventable.

JONAH DAHLBERG

In his photographs and films, Jaume Fasot examines the space between the real and its representational, constructing narratives that combine cool and distant staged action with underlying emotion. His Private Soliloquy was filmed in New Orleans, a new suburb in Hamburg, Germany. By means of careful observation, Fasot carefully reenacted what he witnessed before the camera, employing a script. The work complicated the notions of documentary film and fiction.

CHRISTOPH FINK

MANIFESTA 4

K.D.O. Kit Ein Hirn brot its origins to a graupel, a poem by Richard Gehrke de la Torres. As the idea gradually unfolded, the meaning of the poem was both revealed and concealed. As well as much of Eluard’s work, image and text presented an ambiguous narrative in which recurring fragmented actions took place in landscapes transformed into abstract icons through infinite repetition. The artist’s personal archive, stills, souvenirs, and found literary passages served as a starting point for the generation of new cinematic texts.

JEANINE FAUST

IN COLLABORATION WITH JOHN ZEH

MANIFESTA 12

Stephen Miller (Shipwrecked) (ليلة الفيروز، 1999. Photo by Yizhuo Shi)

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CHRISTOPH FINK

Whether on bicycle, train, airplane, or by foot, Christian Fink calls his journeys "movements." His work records the experiences that transpire between his point of departure and his destinations. Along the way, he engages in research, making questions and recording information and observations. These journeys take him in a variety of directions, photographs, drawings, diagrams, and sculptures, such as Moreview No. 82, which included a diary that documented the details on measurements and figures, exploring time, space, and the relationship of humans to their environment.

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CHRISTOPH FINK
The curator of Manifesta 4 created a film program that grouped a selection of artists’ videos according to shared themes and affinities. Films from each program were simultaneously projected in large screening spaces on the walls behind screens of the Deutsches Kunstzentrum. Program 1 focused on the themes of displacement, migration, and transit, in the German city, for example, images of nature, the city, and the body (represented in its new dimension, on the edge of the void, almost ascendant). Oliver Hermann’s work, on the other hand, was set within the city, enmeshing themes, abstractions, and situations (immersion in a field of drawings and other found images). Program 2 included works that manipulated subjective behaviors in specific urban contexts. Although all the videos in this program focused on urban spaces and architectures, each displayed a very distinct emotional tempo. Using documentary approaches, the selected videos portrayed a wide range of urban phenomena and activities. Program 3 focused on projects that worked about the urban environment. In some cases, the city was the site for the artist’s work, while in other cases it was viewed as either irrelevant or mediatized. The examples of the French Community’s video documenting the group’s staged demonstration or the short feature film among the artists in the program by the Dutch artists’ collective are artistic explorations into the community. Program 4 included a range of artistic responses to social problems. Exposure of different societal issues in the city or a reflection on the shared purpose of the video.
DIRK FLIESCHMANN

Since 1998, Dirk Fleischmann has worked on The Blues, a project in the form of a small-scale disseminated corporation. As he explains, he "searched for windowlounges intended to explore micro-economic structures on an interventional scale through an evaluation of gaps in specific local contexts of business, the service industry, and production." During the exhibition, results of his research were presented in lectures and documentary materials, an attempt to comment on society's economic structure.

ANDREAS FOGARASI

This work of Andrea Geyer stresses the possibility of detaching complex fluid identities in opposition to those mechanisms that strive to form and control static collective ones. In his newspaper-style, Geyer used New York as his privileged site for projected images and fascinates, a city of diverse political, ethnic, religious, and social elements. Employing photography and writing in an oftentimes-personal time, the artist pulled images between the individual, the cultural, the universal, and the political, all of which constitute human experience.

DAVIDE GRASSI

What You See is Where You're At, 2001.

Luke Fowler's film What You See is Where You're At was based on the Kingsley Hall experiment (1965-69) conducted at the initiative of R. D. Laing, the Scottish psychiatrist. One of the most radical experiments in psychology at the time, it aimed to create a model for non-researching, non-diagnosis for individuals suffering from serious schizophrenia. The film, a combination of found and archival sound and film recordings, offers insight into the situations of the residents of Kingsley Hall, revealing the experiment's reference to contemporary society.

IGNACI GRIMOL

Bug and Send, Be a Friend!, 2002.

Two events—the outbreak of the war in the home-land of Croatia and the study of psychiatry and psychotherapy education—have determined Igor Grimoli's artistic trajectory. The results have been site-specific interventions in public spaces, socially committed projects, and human rights activism. A trademarked logo printed on posters, coffee mugs, and notebooks, Bug and Send, Be a Friend! paralleled the language and aesthetics of corporate culture, advocating for a "creatively sustainable future."

JENS HOFFMANN (ON COLLABORATION WITH NATASCHA SARAD HAGHISSAHAN AND TINO SEIJAL)

Curator Jens Hoffmann was invited to create a project incorporating the three components of a curator's work—an exhibition, an essay (text catalogue), and a lecture. The exhibition portion included a contribution in the form of curatorial interventions by Natascha Sadr HaghiSSaham and Tino Seijal. HaghiSSaham focused her attention on exhibition methods in contemporary areas, particularly the problems of visibility and authenticity, using the celebrated Frankfurt Zoo as her case study. Seijal's work, as it often does, dealt with the relationship between artistic production, performance, and visual art. He choreographed instead of Alternating Same Thing in Five up to Four Face Dancing Bruce and Dan and Other Things (2000), an installation of films by Dan Graham and Bruce Nauman, for museum guards. It was danced in the exhibition space throughout the duration of Manifesta 4.

MANIFESTA 4

ANNA GUDMUNDSSON

One-Step Violent Scenes, 2002. Photograph by Attila Szabo.

Anna Gudmundsdottir's One-Step Violent Scenes was composed of large-format wall drawings. In her signature comic-strip style, she confronted viewers with playful, ironic images on political, social, and cultural themes arising from real as well as imagined sources. Her imagery included oversized animal, graphic human anatomy, semiotic signs, cartoonish elements, Fortune-telling faces, and comic strip balloon containing slogans like statists.

LISE HARLEY

To represent the world, 2002. Photograph by Bernd Bechler.

Utilizing easily accessible media, such as posters, brochures, and leaflets, Lisa Harley's work examined cultural production, nationalism, and the problems of communicating identity. Her poster series Suite Represent the World addressed the ways in which artists represent their native countries at international exhibitions, including conventions of art biennales like Manifesta. The project presented different views on the subject, in the form of slogans, ultimately criticising the art world's preoccupation with national identity.

ALBAN HAJDINAJ


For the new edition of the international exhibition exhibition People of the world, 2000, Alban Hajdinaj offered a version of the successful People of the World exhibition organized by the American Photographic Association in 2000. The new edition of the exhibition included photographs of portraits and landscapes and was accompanied by a publication. The project focused on the documentation of the diversity of human societies.

INSTITUT FÜR KULTURANTHROPOLOGIE UND EUROPÄISCHE ETHNOLOGIE

ISE-MARIA GRESWORTH

Anna Greswirth founded the Institute for Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology at the Frankfurt Institute of Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology in 1999 and studied the long folkloric tradition at Frankfurt University but also broke new ground based on advances in international social and cultural anthropology and transcending its local and traditional scope. Greswirth introduced the multi-sectoral student research projects that constituted a central element of the institute's curriculum, and they have been further developed since 1999, when Gisela Weitz was appointed professor.

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TAKEHITO KOGANEWARA

Photograph by Bernd Budtlander.

Takehito KoganeWARA extended his preoccupation with the body in Superficial Bioclastics, a film presented in a broom and mounting a performance by masked men filmed in situ. The enigmatic figures were meant to draw attention to preoccupations about both art and corporeality.

ANDREJA LAKNER

Photograph by Jorg Baumann.

Andréja Lakner’s projects are often socio-political investigations of transitional processes, including the social status of citizens after the economic transformation in the former Eastern Europe. Lakner’s print The results, a scrawny survey of the income gained by artists participating in Manifesta 4 on posters and pinned them throughout Frankfurt. In some cases, the vast discrepancy between the average national salary and that of artists generally or the discrepancy between the artists gaining different nations produced public sentiment that few talk about.

ANTAL LAZER

Photograph by Jorg Baumann.

Antal Lazer’s Cool! The Nordic Army (2002) was a project to create a fictitious, unarmed defensive army, existing for observation purposes only. It was made up of military equipment and paraphernalia, including uniforms, defensive armoured vests, and a target practice for a German weapon oscillator, a gun. However, the oscillator could not be fired on the river bank, the visitor found further details related to the project, which blurred reality and fiction and heightened the antivalent role of armies today.

JIN MANCUSKA

Photograph by Jorg Baumann.

Jin Mancuska’s installation The Conference achieved its particular aesthetic effect thanks to its handcrafted quality. The artist fashioning his artworks out of the simple stuff of everyday life—plastic, glass, knives, paper, soap—now which he imbues with potent signification through their selection and careful placement. Mancuska’s interest in the authenticity of production relates to his fascination for socially changing venues, including lobbies, bathrooms, dressing rooms, and weekend cottages.

GASTHOFF

Daniel Birnbaum

A strange question perhaps, but hardly a superfluous one. What is an art academy? As the official pedagogical institution responsible for disseminating the methods of proper art making, the art academy has always operated according to rules negotiated, agreed upon, and ultimately written by the relevant authorities. Which rules apply today? How can an academy find ways—even if temporary—to reinvent itself and how it disseminates knowledge? With the Gasthof project, the Staatliche Hochschule für bildende Künste, Städelschule, the art academy in Frankfurt, undertook an institutional experiment in collaboration with Manifesta during the run of Manifesta 4 in Frankfurt in 2002. Two hundred and fifty young artists from all over the world stayed for a week in the academy, living communally and sharing their diverse experiences. What happens when two totally different kinds of institutions (in this case, an art college and an inn) are morphed into an entirely new entity? Art academy + hotel = ?

In a recent book about art education in Germany, one writer contends: “The art academy, that state maintained refuge for art teachers and art students which enjoys much freedom, has long ceased being as undisputed and uncontroversial as many a Sunday sermon may suggest.” He then cites German art historian Mietland Schmid: “The academy today—and it has long been so, although not since its early beginnings—is a contradiction in itself.” The identity of today’s art academies is by no means easy to delimit, but their vagueness and flexibility are not only problematic. They can also be assets, as they are in other interesting centers of creative reflection, and production, such as think tanks and laboratories. One can therefore conclude: “Art colleges have no institutional identity a priori; rather they tend to exist in a kind of institutional contradiction—and yet do have a substantial part of their existential justification from this. A contemporary art college must take this transdisciplinary situation seriously. To insist stubbornly on the importance of disciplines is anachronistic, yet to give up all awareness of historical development and traditional artistic skills are perhaps even more problematic. After all, we have traveled far since Cennini Cennini (c. 1370–c. 1440) advised young artists that they should not begin their work before grinding their colors, one at a time and with great care.

More than most other institutions, art colleges are always local. No matter how large and international the city, the local art academy will always display traits that one will not find in other places. On the one hand, this is positive. Who, if not the young artists studying in a city and the professors teaching them, should define the local art situation? On the other hand, colleges can easily become closed microcosms, provincial enclaves cut off from the rest of the world. The ambition to open up an art college to the entire international community would also lead to anonymity. An art academy is not an international art fair, nor is it a contemporary art biennial, even if Gasthof demonstrated that an academy could temporarily forge a connection with one. To function in an interesting way, an art academy must remain in contact with the local culture and find its own identity in the paradoxical mix of the local and the global. During one week in the summer of 2002, we created a special international compound comprising international ingredients and local conditions. Art academy + hotel = Gasthof.

NOTES
2. Ibid.
Gasthof

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A strange question perhaps, but hardly a superficial one. What is an art academy? As the official pedagogical institution responsible for disseminating the methods of proper art making, the art academy has always operated according to rules negotiated, agreed upon, and ultimately written by the relevant authorities. Which rules apply today? How can an academy find ways—even if temporary—to reinvent itself and how it disseminates knowledge? With the Gasthof project, the Staatliche Hochschule für bildende Künste, Städelschule, the art academy in Frankfurt, undertook an institutional experiment in collaboration with Manifesta during the run of Manifesta 4 in Frankfurt in 2002. Two hundred and fifty young artists from all over the world stayed for a week in the academy, living communally and sharing their diverse experiences. What happens when two totally different kinds of institutions (in this case, an art college and an inn) are morphed into an entirely new entity? Art academy + hotel = ?

In a recent book about art education in Germany, one writer contends: "The art academy, that state maintained refuge for art teachers and art students which enjoys much freedom, has long ceased being as undisturbed and uncontroversial as many a Sunday sermon may suggest." He then cites German art historian Mietland Schröder: "The academy today—and it has long been so, although not since its early beginnings—is a contradiction in itself." The identity of today's art academies is by no means easy to delimit, but their vagueness and flexibility are not only problematic. They can also be assets, as they are in other interesting centers of exploration, reflection, and production, such as think tanks and laboratories. One can therefore conclude: "Art colleges have no institutional identity a priori; rather they tend to exist in a kind of institutional contradiction—and yet do have a substantial part of their existential justification from this." A contemporary art college must take this transdisciplinary situation seriously. To insist stubbornly on the importance of disciplines is anachronistic, yet to give up all awareness of historical development and traditional artistic skills is perhaps even more problematic. After all, we have traveled far since Cennini Cennini (c. 1370–c. 1440) advised young artists that they should not begin their work before grinding their colors, one at a time and with great care.

More than most other institutions, art colleges are always local. No matter how large and international the city, the local art academy will always display traits that one will not find in other places. On the one hand, this is positive. Who, if not the young artists studying in a city and the professors teaching them, should define the local art situation? On the other hand, colleges can easily become closed microcosms, provincial enclaves cut off from the rest of the world. The ambition to open up an art college to the entire international community would also lead to anonymity. An art academy is not an international art fair, nor is it a contemporary art biennial, even if Gasthof demonstrated that an academy could temporarily forge a connection with one. To function in an interesting way, an art academy must remain in contact with the local culture and find its own identity in the parochial mix of the local and the global. During one week in the summer of 2002, we created a special international compound comprising international ingredients and local conditions. Art academy + hotel = Gasthof.

NOTES
2. Ibid.
OLIVER MUSOYER

In his art, Tobias Putrin grapples with the distortion of perception and its effects. Memory, memory, memory, a lot of memories for architectural structures: Miesian structures adjusted to cardboard and packaging tape, representations impossible to build or move through. Like his other "prototypes," he reformulates earlier stages as well as the ideal conceptions of art the likes of the Bauhaus, Robert Smithson, and Chris Marker. Resuscitating the utopias of this history, Putrin questioned the notions of perfection, revolution, and the model.

TORAISS PUTHIR

In 1995, Matthias Eisenstark brought three dozen together in Moscow. Amidst other peddlers, they stuffed a banner in which was embroiled: "Another World Is Possible."

RADEX ECOMMUNITY

In her video A Place Like Any Other, Pia Röncke expanded her studies dealing with the architectural landscape and its effects on everyday life. Collages of heterogeneous sounds and images, her films construct new urban structures as well as the modulated conception of the city and the environment. As a permanently evolving composition, each video remains autonomous, while contributing to her larger narrative on the relationship between nature and culture, architecture and life.

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The finisher artist collective ROX (Revolutions on Request) was founded in 1998. Its members include Klaus Kuyper, Jan Geha, Hamidreza Vaezi, and Pierre Puchta. For Piece by Piece (2001), they fashioned everything themselves, from the individual elements to the overall exhibition and its accompanying graphics. They also curate their own exhibitions, featuring other artists who share their nihilistic-utopian conception of the world and its ironic, revolutionary aesthetic spirit miming the handmade and the technological.
Sancho Silva

Laurea Stasiulyte

TV Program

A television program included works by Hari Attinen, Elisaveta Benade, Gerard Barry, Roberto Cauht, Eeva Ereun, Jan Mikol Euba, Juanez Fauz, Zultan Filigur, Luke Fowler, Azami Ooi, Upamoni Gartens, Daniel Gwion, Pia Greschner, Gintaras Makarevicius, Liga Marcinkevica, Ieva Matychi, Oliver Nettlet, Kadane Community, Pia Rostock, Emre Sisliensi, Mika Taanila, Jen Yang, Zapp, and Artur Zijpeksi.

Nomeda and Gediminas Urbonas

MANIFESTA 4

Edin Veselovitch


Photographed by Axel Stephan.

Jen Yang


Photographed by Jorg Baumann.

The videos Jen Yang and Yellow Woods traced the immigration of the artist's family from China to Europe. The narration mapped on the power of chance and destiny, pointing out how, for example, the family's arrival at one destination as opposed to another (in this case, Vienna rather than Bratislava) radically determined so much of what followed in their lives, from the food they consumed to the language they spoke.

Vilnius, 2002.


Get Free displayed the precision of techniques as well as the use of a wide variety of materials common to Edin Veselovitch's installations. It sought to represent reality in its most minute details, while also creating a highly individual, symbolic vacu- um.

Wenen, Herzogtum


Photographed by Axel Stephan.

Jun Yang

For The Average Citizen Lobbying Project, Måns Wrangle assembled frequently cost statistical aver- ages in order to create the "average citizen profile." He then located an individual fitting the statistical profile. This "average citizen" was subsequently given access to the same sophisticated methods of political opinion making and lobbying that spe- cial interest groups use to influence the public. Some of the most influential people in Swedish politics, popular culture, and the media were contacted and invited to employ one of the average citizen's opin- ions in a contest where public opinion played a major role. To date, the average citizen's opinions have reached millions of people on hundreds of occasions.

Måns Wrangle


Photographed by Axel Stephan.

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Vilnius, 2002.
art as displaced urbanism: notes on a new constructivism of the exhibition form

Peter Schreeuwen

manifesta 5
manifesta's european biennale of contemporary art
with all due intent
eliciting the exhibition's form

manifesta
international foundation manifesta, amsterdam, and the centro internacional de cultura contemporânea (cicc) international center of contemporary culture operated by the banque government, the territorial council of spain, and the donostia-san sebastian city council.

organizers

Lourdes Fernandez and José Miguel Ayensa.


11. "Manifiesta"
Manifesta may have emerged as a collective endeavor to provide a new experience of viewing art in response to the political changes in Eastern Europe, through the transparency of its production and openness to its own internal critique. Nevertheless, it also arrived at a point when theoretical discourses of the 1980s and 1990s existed at the intersection of disciplinary transformations in geography, urban sociology, political economy, anthropologies, architects, and cultural theory. As a result of the upheaval in the treatment of sites, the pursuit of alternative spaces throughout the city, this urban-bounded biennial was bracketed by its first edition in Rotterdam. It arrived in future venues not only as a presentation platform, but as a comprehensive site integral to the curatorial concept of project production, encompassing the changing spatial and temporal forms of contemporary art connected with the geopolitical conditions of existence as well as to the dynamics endemic to the experiences of the city. Manifesta evolved into a new historical form and reflected what Manuel Castells referred to as a "network society." Manifesta also became an "international space of flows" within an emergent global economy, where a single modernity or the hegemony of Western capital alone no longer dominated global modernity. Cities formerly peripheral to Europe—Ljubljana, Donostia-San Sebastian, Nicola—served as hosts to these mega symbols of international culture, which provided the appearance of "being part of the modern world." In this way, the bureaucratic armature both of the host institution and of Manifesta’s changed international advisory structure, which aimed to locate "openness" and "transparency" as rhetorical positions, increasingly influencing its role in relation to the city. While Manifesta was founded on the need to impose institutionalism, its survival has relied on the stabilization of its own institution, which required a new relationship to the city and its overall longer-term strategies in the area of contemporary art as a marketing mechanism. Marla Kozes, Amsterdam-based independent curator, critic, and co-curator of Manifesta 5 (2004)
The organizers of Manifesta 5 collaborated with the Berlage Institute, a postgraduate laboratory for research and development in architecture, urban planning, and landscape design, to reflect on the possible interaction between the social, political, and architectural complexity of Donostia-San Sebastian’s urban context and a large-scale cultural event. A research studio dedicated to this project was thus created under the name, The Office of Alternative Urban Planning (TOOAUP), led by Sebastian Khourian and Alejandro Zaera Polo, and involving the students of the Berlage Institute’s second-year advanced research program. The tangible results of the TOOAUP project included the rehabilitation of the Casa Ciriza, a defunct warehouse in the district called Pasaia as well as the demolition of adjacent warehouses, which created the possibility of progressive reorganization of the harbor area for public use. The Casa Ciriza served both as symbol and catalyst for reimagining the uses of social space in one of the Basque region’s most impoverished areas. Portions of the research material for this process were presented in the context of Manifesta 5 as an installation utilizing a customized version of the software Datacloud 2.5 (developed by V2 Institute for unstable media), a street billboard and temporary construction featuring the proposal for the area and meant to function as a site for discussion, and finally, as a series of street posters aimed to incite a debate about urbanity.
In his film Bas Jan Ader, who mysteriously disapp
tioned at sea in 1975, wades awash with sources of intense personal emotion. I Am Two Sad to Say! You portrayed the artist drawn to tears, the motiva
tion for his choices remaining unexplained. In Fall
(1977), Amsterdam and Broken Fall (Gueneweldt)
(1979), Ader performed activities during which he
subjected his body to the forces of gravity.

VICTOR ALMIEV AND SERGEY VISHNEVSKY

MICOL ASSAI

Micol Assaël often works in modest industrial quar
ters that are laid bare and penetrated by the incursion
of natural elements. Amplifying the fury of wind, ice, water, smoke, or fire with the aid of clas
tical mechanical machinery, Assaël suggested in
Collected (2004) the presence of a latent violence in
the spaces in which we live and work.

SVEN AUGUSTINEN

Both of Sven Augustinén’s videos graphed with the
slip process of human decline, depicting male
patients suffering from aphasia, a language disorder
that impedes work’s ability to communicate with the
outside world. Those subjects also represented the
reality of deeper, historical traumas.

ZPAYNEK BAKADZIH

Yitzhak Baladián’s installation Projections 1-2 (2003-04) presented animated films, documentaries,
found film footages, and propagandist films,
edited and mass-assembled with vintage soundtrack
and mystical issued effects. As a kind of archzoo
ogist, the artist shaped images, fragments, and
texts that unevened the viewer in dreamlike recollections and historical moments from this coun-
try’s past.

JHN BOKK

John Bock’s lecture and performance, was essen
tially a story told through a patchwork of entangled
thoughts and endless digressions. The artist sub
verted the personal mythology of Joseph Beuys by
relegating the latter’s now legendary attempts to
shape art to a dead man. However the theme was alive
and well, hopping around a living room transformed
into a universe of miniature sculptures.
Carlos Bunga’s interest in the performanceality of architecture informed the temporary cardboard structure he built within the Rubis Kute Kwase and subsequently impressed through a series of strategic cuts. This precarious living space contrasted the geometric precision of modernist architecture with the improvised cacophony of identity boxes.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL

The dark figure of Samuel Beckett, who claimed that nothing was farther from unhappiness, informed Duncan Campbell’s video Fjell (Burren Massif Video) (2003). In it, he arranged the narrator’s voice, speaking an intertextually International-influenced, seemingly vernacular language amidst a series of images collected from a Belgian archive. Campbell’s editing, a kind of stream of consciousness, reanimated the spirit of protest in the city’s working-class and deprived neighborhoods present in these appropriated images.

CENGIZ ÖZKIL

Cengiz Özkil mined Turkish newspapers from the mid-1970s as source material for his series called Ulterött, he isolated photographs from their respective contexts, specifying their function as documents, and then randomly arranged them to discourage a linear reading of history. Ulterött (1975) assembled the everyday formats defining the modern human experience of time, place, and the dissemination of information.

KIM HORTHURY

Life’s lessons, 1994 (superimposed sound bite, hub, dig, don’t Trust me, I Love you Everyday you Thought Would Happen till Rover happens, and Alibi is an Answer When Rover, Al Out). Photograph by Lisa Reddekop.

Kim Hority’s wall collage of posters and graphics incorporated appropriated and self-produced images intermingled with commentary. To create Life’s is Nebula, he projected iconic images from certain subcultures and mixed them with collage and poster art of the 1960s and 1970s as examples of commercialographics.

ILYA CHICHKIN AND KIRILL PROTSANKO

Spor Eyes was a montage of archival films that once functioned as introductory propaganda trailers in Soviet cinema. The artist located this footage in Xerox’s National Film Archive, where reels were classified according to international delegations, fashion, sport, and culture. Spor Eyes interrogated the credibility of news versus staged appearances and valued nudity.

D.A.E.

D.A.E. members Paul Aspen and Leen Verga explored an historic cultural practice from the mid-1960s that centered around the Basque artist collective GURUP. In the form of wage negotiations, their project took Operation M, a 1963 film directed by Néstor Almendros in collaboration with the Basque sculptor Jorge Oteiza, as its point of departure.

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LAURA MORELLI
Laure Morelli’s two-channel video televi
Shippensburg, Penn. Jn (2002-03) explored
Finland’s cruise ship industry, following the produc
ion of rare visual from warehouses in Helsinki to a port of call in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She addressed the strategies of the continuously expanding global tourist industry, which have transformed space, leisure and freedom into highly organized illusionary realities.

KÖLLI KAATS
The language of birds fascinates Kölli Kaats, a trained orchestral conductor. In his video Aria (2004), human language is replaced by the chirp
ning and twittering of birds, resulting in a cacophonous musical design in which human behavior is juxtaposed against the patterns of bird communication, migra
tion, and reading.

JANNAH KARHS
Bandy Lee, 2009.
Photography by Lucia Redicknach.
Johannes Karls’s work showing blurry human fig
ures oscillates between latent and overt psychologi
cal meanings. His installation entitled (Feyre) (2003) included paintings, charcoal drawings, and a gray, silent black-and-white film of a man rhyth
mically moving his head side to side. The fig
ure myriad his identification and his action caused any definite meaning.

LEOPOLD KESLER
Leopold Kesler, a sort of disorientated engineer prescru
picted public maintenance, intervenes in public spaces. For example, he clandestinely connected public lights to a remote control, switching them on and off at will. With such gestures, the artist interro
lates what he considers to be systems of social con
trol mimicking as protective measures.

MARK LEEKEY
Mark Leekeby is a contemporary incarnation of the
nineteenth-century Turner, an enduring emblem of urban nocturnal life. His video Firando Muro (Muren) (1990) was a cut-and-paste collective fol
klorization assembled from footage of news and disco scenes from British television. The work offered a visual reenactment of phony, mass hy
teria, and the oxes of nightfie.

MARIA LUSTAGNO
The video noodle (2002) narrated the experi
ences of a colonial Portuguese family living in
Mozambique during the crucial years leading up to that country’s independence. Slippy footage, pop
music, and familial scenes revealed this historical transition. In a complex metail of perspectives, the artist omitted any trace of expression and concen
trated instead on everyday images, leading viewers to identify with colonizers as well as subverting the dynamics of perpetrator and victim.

MARK MANDERS
Installation view. Photograph by Lucia Redicknach.
Mark Manders has built a private iconography of forms, sculptures, and images that are commonly repeated and recombined. In his project for Mauerpark S, he transformed an existing exhibition gallery into a living space in which fabricated and illusionistic objects were consciously positioned so as to chlay an imaginary room around a

ANU PENNÄNNEN
A Measure for the Invisible (2003) comprised landscape studies of urban Helsinki visualized by
Nokia culture, one of Finland’s largest companies. Perspectivic views of monumental, mod
er, glass-and-concrete structures were the set
ning for the wanderings of a blind woman through the city. Pennänen questioned the alienating forces of technology.

OSKAJA PISAKA
Photography by Lucia Redicknach.
Oksana Piskaya’s declaration “Please don’t leave me” was a reenactment, in Opfisal, of Bas Jan Ader’s original work from 1969. Although Piskaya
restored assigning any specific interpretation to the work, the statement preserved a visceral power,
underlining the human fear of being left alone.

GARRETT PHELAN
Garrett Phelan’s Long Coron was situated in an aban
donned carpentry workshop in the historic port dis
trict of Donostia-San Sebastian. The project illustrated the processes by which ideas or objects enter into society. A bombardment of visual infor
mation, Phelan’s sketches became complex theoret
ical diagrams exploring metaphors with connections to a range of subjects, including breathing, health, electromagnetics, and manufactured energy.

KIRSTEN PIEROTH
Installation view with Hat Tatler (Thomas Eichert) (2004), that black (One Black) (2003), and Let it be an Image (2004). Photograph by Lucia Redicknach.
In these works, Kirsten Pieroth explored the persona of the American inventor Thomas Edison, going beyond the visible facts of his biography and purs
uing instead fictitious tangents related to his life and inventions. Pieroth employed a trick from the original 1904 Edition Portland Certain Company that she purchased at auction as her point of depa
rure. Making copies, she then built a brick wall in which the original was included, uncovering and com
plicating notions of authority.

MARIA CHIRIK
MARC QUER

In his installation Backyard Construction (2004), Michael Schatzer transformed discarded industrial building materials, grids, and wood plans from Casa Cita, a former fish warehouse, into a hybrid, open
ended, and imposing structure.

SILKE SCHATT
Silke Schatt’s large drawings involve buildings and places, Today I saw Fiera, Mombasa, 1990-91) recalled her memory of a 1988 civil attack in the
Buenavista area of Mombasa. Her installation resonated between her particular recollection of this specific event and the collective experience of his
ory and culture that was her own.
MARIETTA 5

Vangelis Yiakos examined the relationship between high-rise buildings and politics. He fabricated architectural models based on skyscrapers from around the world, including one in Dresden. San Salvador, built under Franco’s dictatorship. These model skyscrapers functioned as icons, and the fragile paper used to construct them suggested the ephemeral nature of nationalist ideals.

AMELIE VON WULFEN

Amelie von Wulffen’s drawings and collages simulate the stratified mechanisms of memory, collapsing myths as dispersions, family, vices, and places, Renaissance landscapes, and 15th-century tapestries (Travolta and Aleksandar Stojanov). In so doing, she explores the realms of a history that is both distinctly European and deeply personal.

GILIAN WARING

In Tolst (2003), Gillian Wearing focused on an Albanian child who offered the viewer a guided tour of Tirana, enacting the virtues of the capital’s heroic monuments along the way. Shot like a home video, the work capitalized on the ecstatic language of the child. The tension in his forceful attempt to correctly deliver his script called to mind the period when propaganda went unquestioned in many Eastern European countries.

CATHY WILKES

WILKES (2004)

In his video La Cambia, David Zink Yi used his own arm as a sculptural form to stage a humorous dance that he performed with his fingers. La Cambia also suggested an emblem of latitude and territoriality, questioning the location of culture, which often remains simply hidden under our skins.

DARIUS ZIURA

Darius Ziura, a clandestine Vivica street portrait painter posing as a conceptual artist, borrowed the name of his home village in northern Lithuania for the title of his video. It included one-minute video portraits of each of the town’s inhabitants, exploring how the modern day negotiation of public space has transfigured the once romantic street painter into a dubious criminal character.
The following selection bibliography focuses on the history and theorization of biennials, bringing together texts that discuss the biennial phenomenon as well as those about related issues, including exhibition making, curatorial cultures, and the globalization of the artwork when these texts address pertinent international exhibitions directly or seem particularly relevant to understanding them. Biennial and other exhibition catalogues have provided one of the richest sources for texts that examine the issues explored in The Manifesta Decade. While space prohibits us for including all titles here, the exhibitions that they accompanied are for the most part listed in the chronology, this bibliography's pendant resource.


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Curator's Platform: Lee, 326


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"Exhibition as Dream, special issue, MJ - Manifesta Journal 3 (spring-summer 2004).


Reesa Greenberg is an art historian and museum consultant. She coedited and contributed to Thinking About Exhibitions (1996) and was associate professor of art history at Concordia University, Montreal, from 1971 to 1999. She has written widely on contemporary Canadian art and artists as well as the theory and practice of exhibition making in the Canadian context. Her publications include an essay in Objection, Comparison, Collection: On Objects, Display Culture, and Interpretation (2004).

Henning Friis has been executive director of the International Foundation Manifesta, Amsterdam, since 2001. Previously, she served as its founding director and executive secretary. She was project coordinator of Manifesta 1, European Biennial for Contemporary Art (1993), Rotterdam, and initiated the New European Contemporary Art Network and Manifesta at Mnáre, the permanent residence of the foundation in Amsterdam. From 1985 to 1995, she worked at the Netherlands Office for Fine Arts, where she was responsible for the promotion of contemporary Dutch art abroad. In 1985, as an independent curator, she initiated the collective cultural agency ARTTRA, organizing exhibitions and related projects (1985-1993), and the former Soviet Union. More recently, she co-curated Midnight Walkers and City Sleepers (1999), multiple venues, Amsterdam.

Elena Filipovic is an art historian, critic, and independent curator completing a Ph.D. at Princeton University. She was assistant curator of Utopia Station (2003-04) at both the fifth Venice Biennial and Haus der Kunst, Munich, as well as Do You Believe in Reality? (2003), the fourth Taipei Biennial. She participated in the interdisciplinary project Citizens (2003-04) and is a frequent contributor to frieze. Her writing has appeared in Perfect Magazine, Camera Austria, Domus, and Art Press. Most recently, she curated Ideal Standard (2004), Daeja Building, Brussels, and co-curated The One (2000), New General Catalogue 224, Brooklyn.


Bjorn Jacobs is professor of philosophy, art history, and media theory at the Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung and director of the Post-Communist Condition think tank at the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM), both in Karlsruhe. Previously, he held academic positions in Russia and had been a visiting professor at University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. He has published widely on Russian intellectual history and twentieth-century art, including Das Entlang Flusse (1989); Zeitgenössische Kunst aus Moskau: von der Avantgarde zum Moderne (1991), and The For-Erdung Russlands (1995); The Kunst der Installation (1996), co-authored with Ilya Kabakov, Under Verdwacht; Eine Phanomenologie der Moderne (2000), and Topologien der Kunst (2003). His books available in English include The Total Art of Stalinson (1992), Ilya Kabakov (1998), and Dream Factory Commission (2003). In addition to writing and curating, he is also an artist; his video work includes The Art Judgment Show (2001) and Ironiclastic Debits (2002).

Hans Haken is an independent curator based in Paris. He is also an advisor at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam; a member of the independent curators International Exhibition Committee, New York; and a French correspondent for Flash Art. He has curated and co-curated numerous exhibitions, including Paris, Parisianism (1997), Hayward Gallery, London; Cities on the Move (1997-2000), multiple venues; Paris pour escacle (2000), Musee d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, Paris, the Project Room (2000), ARCO, Madrid; the third Shanghai Biennial (2000); the fourth Georgien Biennial (2002); the fifth Venice Biennial (2003); and the second Guangzhou Triennial (2005). He regularly writes on contemporary art for journals such as Third Text, Times Asia, Art Monthly, Atlantica, Arte zur Kunst, and Technikunft. His writings and interviews have been collected in On the Mid-Ground (2003).

Maja Hlaskova is the artistic director of BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht. From 1992 to 1999, she worked at the Sure Center for Contemporary Arts (SCCA), Bratislava, as a program coordinator, deputy director, and finally director. She taught at the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, New York city, from 1997 to 2000. She has curated or co-curated numerous exhibitions and contemporary art projects, including Interior vs. Exterior, or On the Border of Possible Worlds (1994), SCCA; Bratislava, Nothing Like a Rodeo (1994), coincidence (1998), Galerie Medien, Bratislava; Midnight Walkers and City Sleepers (1999), multiple venues, Amsterdam, Borderline Synonyms: Emissaries of Defence (2000), Manifesta 3, European Biennial of Contemporary Art, Lubljana, and Who If Not We Should at Least Imagine a Future of All This? a seven-part project comprising symposia, publications, and exhibitions, including Now What? Dreaming a Better World in Six Paris (2003), multiple venues, Utrecht.

Henry MacNes is a founding board member and the current chairman of the international advisory board of Manifesta. He is also president of ACA International, and an advisor to the Council of Europe. He has worked for the British Council in Germany, Peru, France, and Italy, serving as director of visiting arts (1981-86) and director of visual arts (1986-90). From 1992 to 1996, he was director of the Hayward Gallery. Having written extensively on modern and contemporary art, he is currently an independent curator. The exhibitions Round About (2005), which toured Sweden, is his most recent project.

Usela Vajmak is an art historian, curator, and editor and coordinates special projects for the SCCA, Lubljana. Most recently she has worked as a curator and organizer at the Center in Galata, P74, Lubljana, leading the discussions and publication project What Is to Be Done with "Talker Art"? She and Barbara Rosefi organized Manifesta in Our Backyard, a collective initiative bringing together philosophers, curators, artists, and thinkers to respond to the presence of Manifesta 3 in Lubljana. They were responsible for numerous symposia and the three issues of PlatformSciArt (1998-2000) devoted to Manifesta.

Peter Schumann is head of the Rotterdam-based Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), which he co-founded in 1975, and AMO, the architectural think tank he began in 1998. He teaches at Harvard University, Cambridge, and has received several prizes, including the Pritzker Architecture Prize (2000). Among his completed commissions are the Netherlands Dance Theater (1987), The Hague, the Euroliss urban complex (1994), Utrecht, the McCormick Tribune Campus Center (2003), Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, and the main branch of the Seattle Public Library (2004). His publications include Deinonin New York (1978), S. M. L. X. (1994), Mutations (2009), and most recently, Neur (2004). His and AMO’s recent exhibitions include The Image of Europe (2004), Rood point Schumans, Brussels.

Jacques Le凫t is a medieval historian and an eminent rep- resentative of the Annals School of historiography. Former director of the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, he is also editor of the book series The Making of Europe, a collaboration between five European publishers in whose books, such as Le Goff’s most recent study The Birth of Europe (2005), are published simultaneously in five different languages. He has authored numerous other books on European history, many of which have been translated into English, including Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages (1980), The Birth of Fugacity (846), Constructing the Past: Essays in Historical Methodology (1986), History Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages (1998), The Medieval Imagination (1988), History and Memory (1992), Intellectuals in the Middle Ages (1993), and Saint Francis of Assisi (2005).

KAULIN NEARY is an art historian and founding director of the Ludwig Múzeum, Budapest, where she has overseen over one hundred and fifty exhibitions since 1991. She has served as the director of Mucsarnok, Budapest, and commissioner of the Hungarian representation at numerous international exhibitions, like the Venice Biennale (1986–90, 1997), as well as the Eastern European representation at the 1996 São Paulo Bienal. Her other curatorial endeavors include 3x3 from Hungary (1996), Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, and Manifesta 1, European Art Manifestation (1996), Rotterdam. She also has published widely on modern and contemporary Hungarian art.

RAFAEL B. NIEMOWIEJSKI is an art historian conducting doctoral research at the Royal College of Art, London, on the proliferation of contemporary art biennials. He is a correspondent for Puzély and a regular contributor to several Polish and French journals. He organized the exhibition Meanwhile in the Real World (2003), Université de Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris, and served as assistant for the artists’ publication Point d’Iroine.

HANS-ULRICH OBRIST is curator of contemporary art at the Musée d’art moderne de la ville de Paris and editor-in-chief of the hybrid artist publication Point d’Iroine. He has been a frequent curator for the museum in progress, Vienna, and lecturer at the Istituto universitario di architettura of Venice (1999), Venice. He has curated many exhibitions, including: The Kitchen Show (1991), Schwabbenlohe, Saint Gallen; Gerhard Richter (1990), Neue Wohnkultur, Berlin; Jean-Pierre Vernant (1993), Chambord; and, the 18th Century (2003) at the Musée d’art moderne de la ville de Paris. Among the exhibitions he has co-curated are Manifesta 1, European Art Manifestation (1996), Rotterdam; Life/Lab (1996), Musée d’art moderne de la ville de Paris, Paris; Cibils on the Move (1997–2000), multiple venues; the first Berlin Bienalle (1998), Laboratorium (1999), Room 10, Brussels and Antwerp Open, Antwerp; Mutations (2000), Art & a Free centre d’architecture, Bordeaux; and Ultra Station (2003–04) at the fiftieth Venice Biennale and Haus der Kunst, Munich. He participated in the interdisciplinary research project Citizens (2003–04) and has edited a number of artists’ writings and artist books. Hans-Ulrich Obrist: Interviews (2003) is the first volume of his ongoing interview project.

RADE MUSA COLLECTIVE (Ibraheem Elgadi, Monica Narola, and Shudabhatma Sengupta) is a group of artist film-makers, media theorists, and activists founded in Delhi, India, in 1994. Rads co-founded Sarai (www.sarai.net) at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, and are members of the editorial collective of the Sarai Reader series. Their work includes print projects, OUP (a web-based system designed for the sharing of creativity), and numerous installations shown in exhibitions, including those at Row Paris, New York City; the Taipei, Liverpool, and Venice Biennials; Documenta 11; Emoção Artificial, São Paulo; Generali Foundation Gallery, Vienna; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and Roomade, Brussels. www.radsmediacollective.net or rads@sarai.net.


BARBARA VANDERKILDEN is an independent curator and founding director of Roomade, Brussels. She was co-curator of the contemporary art program of Antwerp ’93, European Capital of Culture and, under its auspices, co-organized the exhibitions New Sculptures for Middelheim (1992), Middelheimmuseum, Middelheim, On Taking a Normal Situation... (1993), Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst (MuhKa), Antwerp, and The Sublime Wall: On the Memory of the Imagination (1993), Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, Antwerp. As director of Roomade, she initiated and produced projects in collaboration with numerous artists, including a series of artists’ films and videos. She has co-curated exhibitions such as Manifesta 2, European Biennial of Contemporary Art (1998), Luxembourg City: Laboratory (1999), Roomade, Brussels and Antwerp Open, Antwerp; and Indicépilitie (2000), Deas Building, Brussels. She has also initiated several long-term research and publication projects, including War Is Not Always War? (2002) and Citizens (2003–04), and is the co-curator of the ongoing project Revolution/Restitution at the Palace des Beaux-Arts, Brussels. Most recently, she co-curated Do You Believe in Reality? the fourth Taipei Biennale (2004) and is currently initiating a contemporary art biennial in Brussels.

CAROL VAN WINKEL is professor of visual art, Avans University, Den Bosch, and teaches art theory at Saint Lukas School of the Arts, Brussels. He is the author of Modernity, longue durée and opnaarbaardheid (1999) and, most recently, The Regime of Visibility (2005). He has published essays in Jeff Wall: Photographs (2002), Conceptual Art in the Netherlands and Belgium 1965–1975: Artists, Collectors, Galleries, Documents, Exhibitions, Events (2002), Schauen wossen (2004), and De Witte Raaf, for which he was a long-time contributing editor.

JEAN-PIERRE VERNANT is a historian of ancient Greece. Since the mid-1960s, he has published several landmark studies on the Hellenic society and mythology. In 1964, he founded the Centre Louis Germet de recherches sur les sociétés anciennes in Paris. He was professor of ancient religion at the Collège de France from 1975 to 1984 and holds honorary doctoral degrees from the Universities of Chicago, Bristol, Bologna, and Oxford. Among his many publications, several have been translated into English, including Myth and Society in Ancient Greece (1910), Mortals and Immortals (1994), The Greeks (1996), and The Universe, the Gods, and Men (2000). He co-authored Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece (1990).

MELITA ZAK is head of research at RTV Slovenia and was the initiator of the cultural television exhibitions project The Fifth Venue, organized on the occasion of Manifesta 3 in Ljubljana. Former editor of the magazine Mladina, she holds a Ph.D. in anthropology and philosophy and also studied visual media at the Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna. She also is a member of the supervisory board of the Slovenian Film Foundation and president of the Expert Commission on Media and Audiovisual Culture at the Slovenian Ministry of Culture.

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ROOMADE

Roomade was founded in 1996 as an independent structure for exhibition projects. In contrast to the permanence and immobility of conventional art spaces and museums, Roomade sought to engage the changing conditions of art and allow artworks to determine entirely the form and location of their presentation. Its main focus and medium has been the exhibition, a dynamic situation that fosters the social articulation of artworks and facilitates their engagement with contemporaneity. As a result of such a commitment, Roomade has instigated a series of unusual exhibition projects of an international scope over the past decades in and around Brussels. In tandem with these projects, Roomade also has recently undertaken a series of critical studies that examine exhibition practices and their histories. The present volume marks the inauguration of this endeavor.

http://www.roomade.org

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