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ART, INSTITUTIONS, AND INTERNATIONALISM, 1945–73

CHELSEA HAINES AND GEMMA SHARPE

This guest-edited issue of *ARTMargins* evaluates the relationship between art, artists, and international institutions in the postwar period. Concentrating on the emergence of new forms of internationalism in response to decolonization and the diplomatic impasses of the Cold War in the decades following World War II, the issue confronts the problem of the nation-state within the emerging scholarly field known as “global modernism.” We propose that the term *global modernism*, while a productive shorthand for scholarship that expands modernism’s geographies, may also be anachronistic and misleading. The word *global* itself began to gain currency only after the 1960s, and particularly the 1970s, vis-à-vis the rise of transnational capitalism and global economic, environmental, and technological governance. Relying on a narrative of the “global before globalization,” uncritical use of this term erases the importance of forms of exchange that aren’t congruous with globalization as an economic process. Furthermore, global modernism risks becoming a would-be panacea to art history’s disciplinary discomfort with the continued impact of nationalism on both art and the growing art world in the latter half of the 20th century. In art and politics, what is meant by *global* versus *international* or is entailed by *internationalism* versus *globalization* has been subject to constant flux. These changing stakes open rich complications that risk being lost in a term such as global modernism.

Rather than look backward from the perspective of the global contemporary to define the global modern, we hope to recalibrate the stakes of the field by proposing internationalism as the primary lens to interpret the worldwide development and transmission of modern art made after 1945. This issue has its origins in the Art, Institutions, and Internationalism conference organized at the Graduate Center, CUNY, and the Museum of Modern Art in March 2017, and it represents a collaborative effort to find out what happens when global modernism is replaced with the intersection of art and institutions in the political context of postwar internationalism.

The stakes have shifted vastly, from its origins in 18th-century law to various modern arguments for internationalism as a free-trade, socialist, and diplomatic ideal. British philosopher Jeremy Bentham first coined the word *international* in the last chapter of *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1790), remarking in an 1823 reprint that it had since “taken root in the language.” In this and other writings, he argued that international (as opposed to internal) jurisprudence provided models for law *between* nations and national rulers, which could prevent wars, encourage free trade, reduce the need for national militaries, end colonialism, and ultimately establish a common “tribunal of peace.”¹ Long before Bentham’s coinage, however, nascent forms of “international law” had reinforced Europe’s colonial interventions around the world. In the 16th century, Spanish theologian and jurist Francisco de Vitoria envisaged a system of international justice governed by the concept of *jus gentium* or “law of nations.”² Vitoria argued for a shift of judicial authority from the divine mission of the Pope toward secular sovereigns and natural law applying to all peoples, including the indigenous peoples of South America. Far from guaranteeing protection from colonialism, Vitoria’s claim provided a justification for Spain’s appropriation of foreign lands

1 Bentham uses the example of a financial claim made earlier in the century by a group of London merchants against King Philip of Spain. Adjudicated in the English court of King James I, the case represented an example of *internal* jurisprudence. Had the dispute been between King James and King Philip directly, Bentham stated, it would have been a case of *international* jurisprudence. Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (New York: Hafner, 1948), 326–27. See also M. W. Janis, “Jeremy Bentham and the Fashioning of ‘International Law,’” *American Journal of International Law* 78, no. 2 (1984): 405–18; and Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea, 1815 to the Present* (New York: Penguin, 2013), 19–21.

2 In Latin, *gens* refers to a nation as a distinct group defined by extended familial bonds.

and violent treatment of the inhabitants based on their following (or not) the laws of *jus gentium*.³

Along with international law, colonialism created new international systems of consumption, exchange, and insurance that undergirded the slave trade and the transfer of goods between colonies and colonizers, as well as extending European models of the nation-state around the world during the 18th and 19th centuries.⁴ Institutions of internationalism also became a means to prevent European wars, most notably in the Concert of Europe, founded in 1815 in the wake of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Internationalist institutions increasingly “codified” (another Bentham coinage) communication and public life across nations (for example, the International Telegraph Union was founded in 1865, and the International Statistical Institute in 1885), and by the mid-19th century had also come to represent a free-trade ideal that opposed economic protectionism.⁵

In response to this shift, Karl Marx proposed an alternative definition of internationalism during the 1860s as a model of socialist organization that would unite the working classes around the world and overturn free market capitalism.⁶ As nation-states transformed rapidly to accede to the economic and political demands of the rising bourgeoisie, Marx and Friedrich Engels declared in *The Communist Manifesto* that under the conditions of capitalism “the working men have no country.”⁷ In 1864, the International Workingmen’s Association was founded in London, followed by the Second International in 1889.⁸ Despite their misgivings about the nation-state as a bourgeois institution, on the question of national independence for subjugated

3 Antony Anghie, “Francisco de Vitoria and the Colonial Origins of International Law,” in *Laws of the Postcolonial*, ed. Eve Darian-Smith and Peter Fitzpatrick (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 89–107. See also Walter D. Mignolo, “The Many Faces of Cosmo-Polis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism,” *Public Culture* 12, no. 3 (September 1, 2000): 722; and Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

4 See, for example, Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 40; and Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1918).

5 For example, the Universal Postal Union in 1874 and the International Statistical Institute in 1885, which standardized units of measurement. See Mazower, *Governing the World*, 101–2.

6 Mazower, *Governing the World*, 55–64.

7 Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: International Publishers, 1948), 28.

8 See Mazower, *Governing the World*, 19–23, 38–48, 55–60.

and colonized peoples, the International embraced the expansion of the nation-state as a unit of political organization, as is evident in the ratification at the London International Conference in 1896 of a resolution for “the full right of all nations to self-determination.”⁹

In 1919, this model of national self-determination was put into practice, albeit imperfectly, by the Third International (Comintern). Meanwhile, internationalism as a form of bureaucratized peacekeeping returned to the fore when the League of Nations was founded in 1920. Reviving the Concert of Europe model of international diplomacy, the League included Japan, China, Siam (Thailand), and Persia (Iran). The strong presence of South American nations among the League’s founding members—fifteen in all—testified to the importance of decades of Pan-American multilateralism in the continent and a hope that internationalist institutions could forestall colonial interventions from the U.S.¹⁰ Despite this hope, the League remained firmly entrenched in Europe and generally supportive of colonialism. The League of Nations’ enduring legacy of colonialism inspired the formation of the League against Imperialism in 1927, a Communist-affiliated platform for anti-colonial internationalism.¹¹ By then the League of Nations was reaching a breaking point, however. In 1933, Japan quit the organization following a motion of censure for its invasion of Manchuria, and it was followed later that year by Germany under the newly elected National Socialist government.

In the post–World War II period, internationalism as a model of bureaucratized diplomacy reached its high point. By the end of the war and the founding of the United Nations in 1945, sixty-nine sovereign states were in existence. By 1975 there were 150, raising the UN’s membership from forty-seven in its founding year to 142 member states

9 Marxist support for the right of nations to self-determination was further developed in Vladimir Lenin’s essay of that name in 1914. While Lenin described the formation of the modern nation-state as a condition of capitalism, he also argued that when socialists (such as his interlocutor Rosa Luxemburg) failed to support national independence movements, it revealed “their echoing of the prejudices acquired from the bourgeoisie of the ‘dominant nation.’” Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, “The Right of Nations to Self-Determination,” trans. Bernard Isaacs and Joe Fineberg, in *Collected Works*, vol. 20 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972). Reproduced at the Marxists’ Internet Archive, n.p., <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/self-det/>.

10 Mazower, *Governing the World*, 9, 122–23; Alan McPherson and Yannick Wehrli, *Beyond Geopolitics: New Histories of Latin America at the League of Nations* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2015).

11 Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People’s History of the Third World*, reprint edition (New York: New Press, 2008), 16–30; Mazower, *Governing the World*, 162–64.

thirty years later.¹² Newly independent nations saw UN membership as a mark of legitimacy, and the new members likewise helped validate the UN's mission. Postwar internationalism thus played a vital role in determining statehood and depended, in turn, on an increasingly normative model of the nation-state itself.¹³ In this context, institutions operating on behalf of nation-states and international diplomacy—arts councils, embassies, biennial pavilions, and organizations such as the British Council and the Rockefeller Foundation—became increasingly powerful. At the first conference of UNESCO's International Association of Plastic Arts, held in Venice in 1952, for example, cultural and artistic “delegates” from around the world debated, among other issues, increasing levels of state patronage for the arts and the role of international institutions such as UNESCO in managing that patronage. As American playwright and rapporteur Thornton Wilder wrote in a glowing report on the event: “Is it not a gratifying aspect of this conference that we feel that if an authority is international in character, its judgment in matters of art tends to inspire a greater confidence?”¹⁴

As Western Europe sought to maintain its cultural hegemony through international institutions such as UNESCO, headquartered in Paris, and as the United States and the Soviet Union deployed art as a “weapon of the Cold War” through both official and unofficial channels, new and newly independent nation-states also harnessed institutions of international cultural diplomacy and solidarity in the postwar period.¹⁵ In 1955, the year of the Bandung Conference, which led to the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement, and of the first Documenta, in postwar Germany, the first Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts and the first Biennale de la Méditerranée were founded in the context

12 Connie McNeely, *Constructing the Nation-State: International Organization and Prescriptive Action* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), 42.

13 McNeely, *Constructing the Nation-State*, 37–72.

14 Thornton Wilder, “Final Reports: General Report,” in *The Artist in Modern Society: Essays and Statements Collected by UNESCO* (UNESCO, 1952), 123–24. The conference was originally planned to be held in New York, but Cold War tensions and the communist allegiances of some invited delegates took it instead to Venice. Following a second conference, held in October 1954, also in Venice, editor Alfred Frankfurter of the American magazine *Art News* complained in an editorial that despite his internationalist sympathies, the proceedings were in constant danger of being overwhelmed by an “Italo-French” bloc. See Christopher E. M. Pearson, *Designing UNESCO: Art, Architecture and International Politics at Mid-Century*, 1st ed. (Farnham, UK: Routledge, 2010), 56, 66n.

15 Eva Cockroft, “Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War,” *Artforum* 12, no. 10 (June 1974): 39–41; Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, reprint edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

of Cold War and regionalist international ambitions—following, of course, the Bienal Internacional de São Paulo, which had been founded in 1951.¹⁶

1989 has become a standard temporal marker for when the world—and the art world—supposedly became “global.” That year the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and the fall of the Berlin Wall signaled the apparent triumph of the first world over the second, and of neoliberalism over socialism and economic protectionism. The synchronization of multiple, international art worlds into an all-encompassing global contemporary has been commonly pegged to three major exhibitions, also held in 1989: *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain*, held at the Hayward Gallery in London; *Magiciens de la Terre*, at the Pompidou Centre and the Grande Halle de la Villette in Paris; and the Third Havana Biennial.¹⁷ Yet viewed through the lens of internationalism, rather than globalization with its attendant logic of neoliberalism, gentrification, and cultural tourism, the Third Havana Biennial, in particular, is better understood as a swansong of postwar international solidarity and third-worldism than as a “global” biennial. As Anthony Gardner and Charles Green argue, the project was “less . . . an origin so much as the *culmination* of an extraordinary if often overlooked history of biennial exhibitions.”¹⁸ Indeed, throughout the 1990s the words international and internationalism held on as the primary descriptors of the art world’s increasing diversity, as in, for example, the Mary Jane Jacobs–led Expanding Internationalism conference at the 1990 Venice Biennale.¹⁹ Well into the 1990s, scholars such as Olu

16 Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, “Biennials of the South on the Edges of the Global,” *Third Text* 27, no. 4 (July 1, 2013): 442–55.

17 See, for example, *The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds after 1989*, an exhibition at the ZKM Museum of Contemporary Art, Karlsruhe, 2011–12, which cites the Pompidou exhibition in particular.

18 Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, “South as Method? Biennials Past and Present,” in *Making Biennials in Contemporary Times: Essays from the World*, Biennial Forum no. 2 (São Paulo: Biennial Foundation, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, and Instituto de Cultura Contemporânea, 2014), 28–36. See also Charles Esche’s introduction to Afterall’s volume on the Havana Biennial, which incorrectly names the project as only the fourth “international two-yearly contemporary art event on the planet,” and focuses on the “global” nature of the biennial. Rachel Weiss et al., *Making Art Global (Part 1): The Third Havana Biennial 1989*, Exhibition Histories Vol. 2 (London: Afterall Books, 2012). See also Lucy Steeds et al., *Making Art Global (Part 2): “Magiciens de la Terre” 1989* (London: Afterall Books, 2013).

19 Partly sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, Expanding Internationalism: A Conference on International Exhibitions brought together attendees from 29 countries and included keynotes by Homi Bhabha and Guy Brett.

Oguibe and the London-based institution InIVA deployed the term New Internationalism rather than globalization to describe an increasingly interconnected art world.²⁰

In the years since, globalization has overtaken internationalism as the dominant model of economic, cultural, and political connectivity, enabling the rapid expansion of the global contemporary art world and, in turn, the development of “global modernism” as a scholarly field. Curatorial projects grappling with these shifts have been especially guilty of mapping a retroactive logic of contemporary global connectivity back onto the modernist period, however, which has occluded both the impact of internationalism on modern art and the nation-state as a site of friction.²¹ This issue of *ARTMargins* seeks to provide a corrective, by focusing on the problem of the nation-state and internationalism as the guiding geopolitical framework of the postwar period. The contributions to this issue thus focus on art, internationalism, and institutions between 1945 and 1973—from the end of World War II and the founding of the UN in 1945, to the year of the Chilean coup d’état, the OPEC crisis, and the Fourth Non-Aligned Conference, when militarism and nuclearization began to visibly erode the organization’s founding principles of mutual nonaggression and third world socialism.

The two articles included in this special issue move beyond familiar art historiographical splits of this period—namely, abstraction versus realism and modernism versus “tradition”—by deploying internationalism as a framework of art historical analysis. In “Envisioning the Third World: Modern Art and Diplomacy in Maoist China,” Yang

20 Olu Oguibe, “New Internationalism,” *Nka Journal of Contemporary African Art* 1994, no. 1 (May 1, 1994): 25. Originally known as the Institute of New International Visual Arts, the organization later dropped the *New*, and over subsequent years it provided a hub for debates on the increasingly “global” art world and for the curatorial team behind Okwui Enwezor’s landmark Documenta 11 in 2002. See Lotte Philipsen, *Globalizing Contemporary Art: The Art World’s New Internationalism* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2010), 10.

21 In a recent special issue of *ARTMargins* (7.2), Luke Skrebowski raised the issue of this anachronism on exhibitions on global neo-avant-gardes, such as *Other Primary Structures* at the Jewish Museum in New York in 2014, *The World Goes Pop* at Tate Modern in 2015–16, and *International Pop* at the Walker Art Center in 2015. While the latter exhibitions contested their own use of the word *Pop* to signify a set of related but distinctive neo-avant-garde practices, they nevertheless assumed a logic of “translatability,” relying on a contemporary logic of global commensurability back-projected onto the modern period. Luke Skrebowski, “Untranslating the Neo-Avant-Gardes,” *ARTMargins* 7, no. 2 (June 2018): 13–14.

Wang evaluates the intersection of Chinese modern art and Maoist international diplomacy in the work of artists Shi Lu and Zhao Wangyun during the mid-1950s. Tracing the movement of both artists through India and Egypt in the context of the Sino-Soviet split and Chinese efforts to court nonaligned and third world nations in Africa and Asia through culture, Wang underscores how both artists developed a uniquely Chinese modernism that mobilized the “traditional” practice of ink painting as a response to their travels. Bypassing Western definitions of modernism as forward looking and formally experimental, and also bypassing Western metropolitan centers to engage with artists and cultures in the third world, these artists and their peers in the Chang’an School of Ink Painting solidified their commitment to indigenous heritage through their international experiences. As Wang notes, rather than label his art resolutely nationalistic, artist Shi Lu justified his practice in terms of its international coherence by stating that “art is unique in that the more ethnically specific it is, the more international it can become.” In a context in which the sole patron of the arts in China was the state, Shi Lu and Zhao Wangyun offer an example of a “concomitant” modernism tied both to the nation-state and to international engagements.

Nikolas Drosos’s article “Modernism and World Art, 1950–72” explores how Malraux-inspired discourse of universalism played out in the pairing of modernism and “world art” in large-scale international exhibitions, specifically the first Documenta in 1955 and two exhibitions organized as part of the Brussels World Exposition in 1958: 50 Ans d’Art Moderne and its unrealized partner exhibition, L’Homme et l’Art. Drosos argues that these projects reflect two contradictory art historical discourses: on the one hand, the triumph of universalist narratives in the mode of Malraux, and, on the other, the contextualization of modern art as a distinctly Western European phenomenon. Drosos contrasts this with the continued influence of realism, both in Western European exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale and on the other side of the Iron Curtain, where the Soviet Academy of the Arts attempted to form their own definition of universalism through the eight-volume *Universal History of Art*. By giving specificity to universalism by tracing its logic through particular exhibitions and expanding on the importance of realism to debates on modernism to the west of the Iron Curtain, Drosos unsettles the easy use of the term “global” to describe regions of modernism that

hitherto had been unevenly addressed, if not entirely ignored, by Western art historians and curators. Drosos articulates how the similarly catchall term “world art” relied doubly on a fiction of universalist inclusion and on troubling colonial legacies, revealing the ultimate incommensurability of modernism and world art as postwar discourses and complicating the synchronization of art histories of this period.

As this issue’s Document, one of three texts by Brazilian photographer José Oiticica Filho, originally published in consecutive issues of the magazine *Boletim Foto Cine* in 1951, has been translated for the first time by Luisa Valle. Titled “Setting the Record Straighter,” Oiticica Filho’s texts challenge, with an aim at placation, the cries of nepotism in Brazilian photography exhibitions. His essays demonstrate a simultaneous ambivalence toward institutions as hegemonic sites and an understanding of their importance, particularly to an emerging community of photographers keen to use exhibitions to elevate the status of their medium. Drawing on his background in mathematics and entomology—and anticipating the anthropological approaches to art’s institutionalization by scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu in the 1960s—Oiticica Filho’s texts deploy the modern science of statistics to tackle institutionalized rivalries within the Brazilian photography community. As Alise Tifentale writes in her introduction to the Document, also at stake in Oiticica Filho’s project is a desire to mend rivalries and create a national solidarity among Brazilian photographers, particularly under the umbrella of the Brazilian Federation of Photographic Art, founded in 1951—in which Oiticica Filho played a role, bringing his statistical methods of analysis to its affiliated organization, the International Federation of Photographic Art, founded the previous year.

The issue of aesthetic value and the marginalization of particular forms that Oiticica Filho confronts in terms of photography is also at issue in Rattanamol Singh Johal’s review article of the recent exhibition *Postwar: Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965*, held at the Haus der Kunst, Munich, between October 2016 and March 2017. Johal’s review contrasts the liberal capaciousness of the exhibition with art history’s neglect (particularly in journals such as *October* and the *October*-edited textbook *Art since 1900*) or outright dismissal of non-Western art as too derivative, literal, or “political,” shown by the critical disgust that greeted Rasheed Araeen’s 1989 survey of non-White artists

in Britain, *The Other Story*.²² These affronts coming from the “centers” of canonical modernism have typically, Johal points out, been justified by the category of “quality.” Mobilizing aesthetic judgment for the cause of affinity rather than difference, Postwar placed formalist themes such as “Realism” and “Concrete Visions” in unconstrained dialogue with more socially oriented lenses on modernism around the world, including sections on “Nations Seeking Form” and the “Aftermath” of the atomic era, for example. As Johal argues, the decision to complicate the *October* story of modernism rather than omit it from the curatorial narrative of Postwar represented one of the main strengths of the show, reflecting its project to reject fictions of methodological and cultural incommensurability in art history.

As part of the Art, Institutions, and Internationalism conference, Postwar co-curator Katy Siegel gave a keynote lecture on the exhibition, followed by a conversation with Romy Golan, which can be accessed at ARTMargins Online.²³ Also included in this issue is an edited transcript of the plenary roundtable on “Legacies of Internationalism” that closed the first day of the conference. Moderated by art historian Claire Bishop, this wide-ranging discussion of how the study of internationalism plays out in the participants’ current research, as well as of the methodological issues that arise when writing modern art histories through institutions, included architecture historian Lucia Allais and art historians Chika Okeke-Agulu, Olga U. Herrera, and David Joselit, along with artist Naeem Mohaiemen. During the roundtable, Mohaiemen discussed his research into international solidarity movements such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the conditions under which those movements fail or implode under internal power struggles. These topics also provided the basis for Mohaiemen’s video work *Two Meetings and a Funeral* (2017), which set the stage for the Artist Project that Mohaiemen, in collaboration with writer and researcher Uroš Pajović, conceived for this issue. *Southward and Otherwise* considers the collapse of the Non-Aligned Movement in the early 1970s, through the interplay of text by Pajović on the role of the former Yugoslavia in establishing Non-Alignment and accompanying images and captions selected by Mohaiemen.

22 The exhibition was held at the Hayward Gallery in London. See, for example, Brian Sewell, “Pride or Prejudice?,” *The Sunday Times*, November 26, 1989, quoted in Rasheed Araeen, “The Other Immigrant: The Experiences and Achievements of Afro Asian Artists in the Metropolis,” *Third Text* 5, no. 15 (Summer 1991): 17–28.

23 www.artmargins.com.

While the contributions to this issue acknowledge institutions as sites of hegemony—particularly those operating on behalf of the nation-state—they also mobilize these sites as anchors through which otherwise nebulous ideas and broad changes in art history can be evaluated. In their recent history of large-scale exhibitions around the world in the 20th century, Gardner and Green note that the study of exhibitions can provide a “counterweight” to artist-centered art history.²⁴ Scholars such as Susan E. Cahan, Nancy Jachec, and Joan Kee have used exhibition and institutional histories to expand art history and to frame antiracist and anticolonial movements worldwide.²⁵ As Andrea Giunta and George F. Flaherty have recently argued, the expansion of art historical work on Latin American modernism over recent decades has leaned heavily on archival and institutional research: “In the last twenty years, the history of Latin American art ceased to be a discipline of connoisseurship and reconstituted itself as a social science. The impact of cultural studies, interdisciplinary research, and the expansion of the field in the wake of the reestablishment of democracy in Latin America since the 1980s made this radical paradigm change possible.”²⁶

Exhibitions and institutional histories can compress complex networks of artistic and cultural exchange into discrete sites of art historical analysis and track precisely how artists have navigated and appropriated various institutionalized forms of power. At stake throughout these histories is a reconsideration of the fraught relationship between modernity, modernism, and nationalism. T. J. Clark argues that modernity points to a “social order which has turned from the worship of ancestors and past authorities to the pursuit of a projected future—of goods, pleasures, freedoms, forms of control over nature, or infinities of information.”²⁷ Modernism, on the other hand,

24 Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, *Biennials, Triennials, and Documenta: The Exhibitions That Created Contemporary Art* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 9.

25 Susan E. Cahan, *Mounting Frustration: The Art Museum in the Age of Black Power* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016); Nancy Jachec, *Politics and Painting at the Venice Biennale: Italy and the Idea of Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Joan Kee, *Contemporary Korean Art: Tansaekhwa and the Urgency of Method* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013). Also notable is Sria Chatterjee, Boris Friedewald, and Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *The Bauhaus in Calcutta*, ed. Kathrin Rhomberg and Regina Bittner (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2013).

26 Andrea Giunta and George F. Flaherty, “Latin American Art History: An Historiographic Turn,” *Art in Translation* 9, no. sup1 (2017): 125–26.

27 T. J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 7.

has been characterized as both an inherent product of and critique of modernity—whether in Clement Greenberg’s famous formalist definition of modernism as a process of self-critique of the conditions of possibility of a given artistic medium, or Clark’s less restrictive formulation of modernism as the historical emergence of “a distinctive patterning of mental and technical possibilities” arising from the conditions of modernity.²⁸ In both instances, nationalism—and its sometimes reactionary attendant notions of tradition, religious and ethnic identification, and homeland—is seen as anathema to both modernism and modernity writ large. Yet, for much of the world beyond Western Europe and North America, nationalism and nationhood offered the only viable route to freedom from Western colonial and neocolonial power. For artists working in these new nations, modernity and modernism, as well as nationalism and internationalism, operated hand in hand, and the art produced in these nations represented this tension accordingly. This special issue considers how individual artists, organizations, and even nations negotiated postwar geopolitical realignments through the exchange of art and ideas dependent on international institutional collaboration and highlights overlooked points of friction in the study of “global modernism” by challenging the assumptions of *globality* embedded in that term.

As this issue was heading to print, in March 2019, we learned of the passing of Okwui Enwezor (1963–2019). A transformative voice in the art world over the last quarter century, Enwezor was the rare curator who consistently succeeded at shifting the trajectory of art history through his ambitious and wide-ranging exhibitions that expanded the discipline’s horizons and forged a more inclusive and truly global understanding of modern and contemporary art. Postwar, his last major exhibition, was a guiding example as we developed the Art, Institutions, and Internationalism conference and this publication, which we dedicate to his memory.

28 Ibid., 7.

“LEGACIES OF INTERNATIONALISM”

CONFERENCE REPORT AND ROUNDTABLE

CHELSEA HAINES AND GEMMA SHARPE

With the expansion of free trade and financial deregulation since the 1970s—globalization—the word *global* has increasingly replaced *international* to describe phenomena taking place on a planetary scale: *global warming*, *global war on terror*, *global modernism*. The word *international*, on the other hand, has a longer history tied in particular to the concept of the nation-state. The conference *Art, Institutions, and Internationalism*, organized in March 2017 at the Graduate Center (CUNY) and the Museum of Modern Art, highlighted how the logic of institutional coalition building between nations in the postwar period—internationalism—rather than smooth cosmopolitan exchange, dominated the transmission, display, and production of art during the midcentury, especially outside Europe and North America.

The conference’s plenary roundtable, “Legacies of Internationalism,” has been reproduced in part following this report. Moderated by art historian Claire Bishop, the discussion interrogated the impact of internationalism on writing art histories of the postwar period. The roundtable participants—including architectural historian Lucia Allais, art historians Chika Okeke-Agulu, Olga U. Herrera, and David Joselit, and artist Naem Mohaiemen—defined internationalism through the specific networks and apparatuses by which art was disseminated around the world, whether this be through exhibitions, publications,

or the travels of individual artists and collectors. The first day of the conference mirrored this tendency in three panels formed following an open call: “Internationalism in Photography and Print,” “Individual Networks and New Spheres of Influence,” and “World Exhibitions.” In terms of its periodization, the conference connected the inter- and post-war periods, beginning in 1933, the year of Hitler’s rise to power, and arguably the worst year of the global Great Depression. It also took into account the simultaneous rise of anticolonial movements, including the rise of the Civil Disobedience Movement in India and the rise of Négritude and Pan-Africanism during the 1930s.

However, the importance of 1945 as a major turning point in the history of internationalism became increasingly clear as the project progressed. In the postwar period, internationalism reached its apogee in institutions such as the United Nations, UNESCO, the Non-Aligned Movement, and diplomatic institutions such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the British Council, which played a key role in hundreds of artists’ careers during the period. While the focus of the conference was decidedly not on art production in the United States, several papers dealt with the role of individual artists, collectors, and institutions in developing international networks that rubbed against the grain of American cultural imperialism during the postwar period. For example, on a panel entitled “Individual Networks,” Amy Rahn explored how Joan Mitchell’s work and life in Paris resisted triumphalist narratives of American painting, while Sarah-Neel Smith examined the travels of collector Abby Weed Grey in Turkey and Iran and her uneasy relationship with sponsoring organizations such as the United States Information Service. In “Internationalism in Photography and Print,” Naomi Kuromiya discussed how the Japanese calligraphy collective Bokujin-kai provided a novel argument for the world relevance (*sekai-sei*) of their work through Western abstract painting, particularly the monochromatic work of the American Abstract Expressionist Franz Kline.

Exhibitions proved to be the central objects of analysis. Both Yang Wang and Nikolas Drosos, whose papers are included in this special issue, used exhibition histories to complicate the binarism of US versus Soviet internationalism in the post–World War II period. Nisa Ari’s paper was the only one to delve into emerging ideas of nationalism and internationalism before World War II, analyzing how Arab Palestinian activists produced art fairs in Palestine during the 1930s to assert their

own “national character” under the conditions of British colonialism and Jewish state-building. Alise Tifentale, who in this special issue introduces an article by Brazilian photographer José Oiticica Filho, analyzed how the first biennials of the *Fédération Internationale de l’Art Photographique* in the immediate postwar era employed discourses of universalism to present photography as a universal visual language. Dina Ramadan spoke about how the Alexandria Biennale in Egypt utilized both the nationalist rhetoric of Nasserism and cosmopolitan tropes about the Mediterranean to assert Egypt’s position as a cultural leader in the region, while Delia Solomons delivered a paper on the first American biennials with a truly worldwide scope: the Guggenheim and Carnegie Internationals in the 1960s. Abigail Lapin Dardashti presented on the participation of Afro-Brazilian abstract painter Rubem Valentim at the first World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar in 1966. She underscored how his participation in the exhibition became a catalyst for his own painting practice and for the Brazilian dictatorship’s promotion of its government as progressive and multicultural. The World Festival of Negro Arts—the black diasporic cultural platform established in 1966 by Senegalese president Léopold Senghor—gave the conference’s timeline its closing date. Demonstrating the importance of culture to regionalism, multilateral institution building, and national independence narratives, this festival reflected the sweeping historical and cultural changes brought by the postwar, decolonial Cold War period as well as representing the height of overlapping concepts of internationalism, from Senghor’s espousal of *Négritude* to UNESCO’s role as a sponsorship partner operating under the auspices of “world heritage.”

“How to write art histories of this period?” was the key question of the conference roundtable, of which we present an edited transcript below. Participants were invited to consider the following question on art historical methodology:

The growing field of “global modernism” has been dominated by two extremes. One approach argues for the importance of an art object by demonstrating its broad socio-political context. A second approach privileges the singular object (or singular artist) as aesthetically important apart from its context and works to assimilate this art into an existing art historical canon. How does your work navigate these approaches?

In his response, Okeke-Agulu asserted that this question is not exclusive to writing modern art histories outside Euro-America. Rather, the tension between art and context rehashes well-established art historical debates about formalism and social art history, albeit with new objects of study. The real question, he argued, is whether any given artwork intersects with structures of power that are international or global. To fold the former into the latter, as histories of “global modernism” often do, risks losing the complexity of how those artworks moved through various regimes of production and distribution historically.

The roundtable concluded with a request to participants to identify the point when the “international” and the “modern” gave way to the “global contemporary” in their own scholarship. The respondents suggested a variety of dates and rationales: the 1970s and the advent of postmodern architecture, according to Allais; around 1980 with the end of colonization in Africa, according to Okeke-Agulu; or the 1960s and the rise of a new, internationally mobile group of artists in Latin America, according to Herrera. Ultimately, the shift outlined by the participants moved from a logic of internationalism to one of economic globalization as the dominant model of political organization around the world, along with concomitant changes such as the increasing, though unequal, physical mobility for artists and artworks, as well as a renewed interest in regionalism and local identity as branding mechanisms in the global marketplace.

ROUNDTABLE

Lucia Allais, Olga U. Herrera, David Joselit, Chika Okeke-Agulu, and Naeem Mohaiemen, moderated by Claire Bishop

Claire Bishop (CB): Let’s start with a very simple question. How do legacies of internationalism play out in each of your current research projects?

Lucia Allais (LA): As an architectural historian, I address the *spatial* legacy of internationalism, and the spaces we imagine when we hear the word *internationalism* today: world fairs, art fairs, and biennials; but also boats and planes, the studios of exiled artists, and perhaps a few international headquarters. And to these spaces, I add dispersed monuments. Unlike cosmopolitanism, which takes the city as its

model, or globalism, which conjures up the earth, internationalism does not cohere in a single spatial substrate. The spatial metaphor usually offered for internationalism is the network, so I study the making of networks of monuments as a temporal, institutional project, a project that gave liberal internationalism a global footing. Though it inherited governing principles and structures from previous centuries, this internationalism hoped to stabilize the world order not only in space but also in time, through highly structured institutions and events. The League of Nations, for example, was meant to regularize the rhythm of international relations through an ongoing schedule of conferences held in idyllic locations that forced nations into regular dialogue. This regularity was inextricably linked with publicity. In contrast with the old diplomacy, which was secret and bilateral, this new diplomacy would be publicized by taking place in front of the press. I argue this pairing of regularity and publicity gave rise to what we now call world heritage: a spatially diverse and dispersed network of monuments that helps to anchor a new species of cultural diplomacy.¹

Olga U. Herrera (OUH): Although in the early years of the 20th century, ideas of internationalism—and what these meant for cooperation and international cultural relations—were mostly driven by the private activities of philanthropic foundations such as the Guggenheim Foundation and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Pan American Union, I look at the shift between this old model and a new hybrid private-public one guided by a planetary consciousness, brought about by the destructive forces of world wars and the threat of atomic power. This shift is not so much about internationalism as it is about a new regionalization, which divides the world in several geographic areas of action. Most recently, I have been considering the legacies of internationalism in the establishment of hemispheric art networks in the Americas at midcentury—in particular, exploring the intersections of culture, power, constructions of modernity, and national security through the ways the United States government in 1940–43 engaged the National Council of Defense and the Art Section of a war-preparedness temporary federal agency headed by

1 Lucia Allais, *Designs of Destruction: The Making of Monuments in the 20th Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

Nelson Rockefeller, to present a new modern vision of the cultural life of the United States to South America.² This became the blueprint for Cold War cultural programs around the world.

Chika Okeke-Agulu (COA): There are two ways that I look at internationalism. One is to see it as a colonial enterprise or as the outcome of a colonial enterprise. The other is as a product or a form of agency within *anticolonial* practices. I'm particularly invested in the latter, specifically in the ways anticolonial internationalism produced a number of phenomena that we call Pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism, and Négritude, and how these connect with cultural formations such as the magazines *Présence Africaine*, founded in 1947 in Paris, and *Black Orpheus*. Ulli Beier, a German resident in Nigeria who was teaching at the University College in Ibadan, began to publish *Black Orpheus* in 1957, and then in 1961 cofounded the Mbari Artists and Writers Club as a space and platform for exhibitions, literary production, and artistic exchange from decolonizing or decolonized nations, including India, Brazil, the Caribbean, Africa, and even quite a few African American artists and writers. *Black Orpheus* and the Mbari Artists and Writers Club produced the kind of international networks that are part of decolonization as a form of political and artistic emancipation.

Naeem Mohaiemen (NM): I'm in the middle of filming a project about the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and its power struggles with another organization that is not usually seen within the same frame, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC). My initial focus was the 1973 Non-Aligned Movement meeting in Algiers. It's one of the more radical NAM meetings, because it played out against the backdrop of the coming OPEC oil strike and also a Palestine resolution that becomes a rehearsal for recognition forays at the United Nations. Simultaneously, it is also a meeting where you can start to see the Non-Aligned Movement come apart as well. There is an extraordinary moment in the video footage where you see a very young, slim, recently come-to-power Muammar Gaddafi giving a speech. Watching that footage, I remember that by the end of that same decade Libya would

2 Olga U. Herrera, *American Interventions and Modern Art in South America* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2017).

be at war with two of the countries present at that meeting. That is one of the spokes I research: what was the internationalist promise, and how did it fail?

David Joselit (DJ): I've tried to think about globalization as opposed to internationalism as a trans-regional mechanism that cuts across national boundaries. For me, one major difference is that the nation-state, which is fundamental to an international perspective, is not an adequate unit of analysis for a genuinely global reading. We see the effects of globalization, for instance, *within nations*, as in cities of the West where neighborhoods largely abandoned in terms of basic services sit beside neighborhoods that are incredibly affluent. This is a difficult problem that I've tried to address by tracing a dynamic that I call "heritage and debt."³ *Debt* is shorthand for a neoliberal form of governance where civil and political decisions are made based on financial criteria. But *debt* is also a synonym of *heritage*, because the latter is what we have inherited from ancestors or more generally from the culture to which we belong—what we owe to them. Under neoliberal conditions, heritage accrues greater value as a mobile signifier of the local that can circulate globally. Heritage for me is therefore not limited to indigenous or "non-Western" expressions, but also refers, for instance, to how the legacy of the avant-garde now functions as part of the heritage of Europe and the United States. Making heritage contemporary solves a certain kind of global problem, by demonstrating how value can be grounded in a local situation and yet remain legible as it travels. I think heritage has the potential to literally and symbolically cancel (or repay) neoliberal debt.

LA: Picking up on David's redefinition of heritage: there has been heritage since there have been societies, but the idea of heritage as a historical motor is modern. The institutionalization of heritage on a global scale has taken place in soft institutions, such as UNESCO, where nationalism is much more diffuse than in its parent organization, the UN. For instance, Egypt in the 1950s—the quintessential nonaligned country—was very willing to play both sides of the Cold War in its own nation-building and nationalist discourse. With the East, it was nation-

3 David Joselit, *Heritage and Debt: Art in Globalization* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press and October Books, forthcoming 2020).

alist; but on the Western side, Nasser engaged in the universalizing cultural politics of UNESCO, because that institution seemed to neutralize national claims on heritage by operating along a different timeline. Often, UNESCO heritage projects appear to give nation-states the opportunity to operate in some kind of temporal suspension of overt nationalist discourse.

OUH: In the period of the 1940s, it is very evident that internationalism served a covert national agenda, along with an additional push from the private sector, to quietly steer hegemonic control of heritage and the idea of the nation through art projects. For example, the second exhibition that the United States government sent abroad (after MoMA's *Three Centuries of American Art* exhibition in Paris in 1938), was *Contemporary North American Painting*, which traveled throughout South America in 1941 under the guise of a committee of museums that included MoMA, the Whitney, Brooklyn Museum, the Met, and the American Museum of Natural History. The individuals who made initial arrangements, such as Grace McCann Morley, and those who later accompanied the show, such as Caroline Durieux, Stanton Catlin, and René d'Harnoncourt, were contracted by the US government or by Rockefeller-MoMA funds, like Lincoln Kirstein's intelligence-gathering art trip, to advance a national security agenda. They were sent to explain what the artwork was about, and to underscore the message that the United States had an *American* art independent from Europe. There is also agency in these regions; it's not simply that the United States sent its art and culture abroad to be consumed and received very passively. Argentinian critics, for example, questioned the concepts of modern American art represented in the exhibition and felt it was an agglomeration of unsophisticated "back to the homeland" national trends. There is a countering to the American (inter)national agenda.

COA: Also during this time, the CIA covertly funded some of the major elite artists and writers in Africa through the Fairfield Foundation and UNESCO in Paris. There were additional moments when internationalism served a Western postimperial agenda—for example, in exportations of Abstract Expressionism to South Africa during apartheid. Clement Greenberg—and with him a number of American abstract

painters—went to South Africa in the 1970s when the apartheid government was struggling to garner international support. This can explain the pushback against, or skepticism about, these international organizations that serve as fronts for promoting and projecting Western socio-economic and political interests. We still see this today, when African countries pull out of the International Criminal Court because they see it as a sledgehammer designed to punish African and other so-called third world leaders, whereas their counterparts from the G-7 and their allies who have committed gross human rights violations are never charged.

CB: David, does this relate to your research, or are you really dealing with the problem of globalization rather than internationalism?

DJ: I have argued that during the period addressed by this conference, there were three distinct forms of modernism that were either ignored, unknown, or repressed in the West. One is very beautifully developed in Chika's book, which describes the double bind of postcolonial modernism.⁴ Under settler colonialism, the colonized are explicitly discouraged from practicing indigenous arts, while also being blocked from studying Western forms of modernism. Second, there's Socialist Realism in the so-called "second world," such as China and the Soviet Union, which is a kind of modernism not based on innovations in form, but on the mass distribution of imagery (often reproduced from paintings) that creates a new media public sphere. Third, there are unofficial forms of modernism, where a strong modern tradition is repressed politically and goes underground, as in Eastern Europe and Latin America during the era of dictatorships. What happens in the late 1980s and 1990s is that these three modern genealogies, as well as the Euro-American canon, are synchronized to produce so-called global contemporary art. What you get in global, biennial exhibitions today are compendia of these contemporary synchronizations, with little if any sense of the histories that each work belongs to. I think that is one of the problems in focusing any account of globalization on biennials, because they tend to be radically ahistorical.

4 Chika Okeke-Agulu, *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

COA: There's also another way of looking at what these biennials are about, which is how they advance national or regional interests and forge international networks and alliances. The Havana Biennial came out of the politics of the Cold War and the emergence of Cuba in the so-called third world. The Dakar Biennale was a carryover from Senegalese President Leopold Senghor's Africanist-Négritude ideology, and even the Gwangju Biennale was established in recognition of the 1980 civilian massacres by the Korean military dictatorship. There are local histories behind these biennials, even as the biennials themselves announce their ambition to be international. One sees it now in the explosion of Chinese biennials, which must be seen alongside the emergence of China in international politics. But again, this is not so different from the original biennial, Venice, which was established in 1895 for Italian artists in celebration of their king's birthday.

David, you're right that there's a dilemma for the curatorial agenda that is different from the political imperatives that give rise to and often still authorize biennials. The curators have to deal with the question of how differently their exhibitions are received by local and international audiences. The Second Johannesburg Biennale in 1997 was considered a success internationally but got a cool response from South Africans, who felt it had not quite addressed the needs of a country still emerging from the nightmare of apartheid.

CB: Let's shift to the question of methodology. The organizers of this conference sent you a prompt, which identifies two tendencies in writing art histories of global modernism: one that emphasizes the place of the art object or exhibition within its broad sociopolitical context, and another that deals with the object or artist as aesthetically singular or autonomous and works to assimilate that art into an existing art historical canon. Do you agree with this characterization, and which do you ally yourself with?

LA: My answer to the question of broad context versus singular objects is that "context" is itself a specific singular spatial product, which had its own internationalist reification. Since the development of certain postmodern design practices, architects began to think of context as the space that surrounds an object or building, or within which it is possible to comprehend that object or building. And conversely, practices of museumification at the scale of the city, or the site, turned

“context” into a space that radiates outward from objects and buildings. For example, I’ve studied the “contextualization” of one of the most canonical objects of Western art and architectural history: the Great Pyramid of Giza. The fact that this pyramid is in a desert is integral to its being canonical: this desert may seem empty, but it has been intellectually inhabited by every philosopher in the history of Western aesthetics. In 1954, a boat was excavated by archaeologists in the space beside the pyramid, as part of digging for objects that would help “contextualize” pyramids as great monumental things. So the boat was found, and despite all the evidence that it had been ritually buried and was intended to remain buried, the Egyptian state and a variety of international organizations decided to hoist it and suspend it in a glass box, creating what you could call a contextual space for it. In this space, designed by the architect Franco Minissi, you are supposed to have visual contact with the boat (the contextually or socially significant artifact) but also to always see the pyramids nearby, with their ongoing universal value. Context, here, is designed with particular material and formal properties. So, to answer your question: my own methodology is to study how context is constructed through discursive, technical, and political structures, sometimes very literally. Perhaps this is the advantage of being an architectural historian.

COA: I don’t think these two tendencies are specific to the experience of the global. I think that this is what scholars of art history have grappled with forever! Whether to deal with the artwork as an autonomous aesthetic object or whether to see it as part of a wider cultural phenomenon; social art history versus formalism. What is at issue here is the difference between the international and the global. The international, as I said earlier, can constitute either a colonial or anticolonial enterprise, which can harden into methods. This is opposed to the global, which can account for the multiplicities of the experience of the modern. Part of my problem with earlier attempts at “global art history” or “global contemporary art” or “global modernism” is precisely the exportation of the international to the global, or of models that work according to difference rather than multiplicity. In other words, a “Let us see how others have tried to do it like us and then we can claim that that’s proof of the global dimensions of our experience” approach. What I think needs to happen even before we begin to think of “global modernism” is that we have to map it, that is to meaningfully understand

through careful documentation and research the manifestations of modernism within different parts of the world. There was a time when someone could make a quick trip from one corner of the planet to the other and come back and say, “Yes, I figured it out.” But this cannot be one person’s work.

One of the projects I’ve been involved in for many years now is the Multiple Modernisms project, which is a coming together of scholars from different parts of the world who for nearly a decade met every two years in different places to share research on modernism with scholars working in those places.⁵ That is a methodological decision. The problem with the way we have been thinking about the global is that we invite scholars from elsewhere to come to New York, London, or Paris to talk about their experiences, and you question them, “but why . . . but this. . . .” But when you go to someone else’s house you don’t claim authority; and when someone comes to your house you will always be the authority. We work with this awareness of the need to be in the place to present the history of the place. Until we have a good picture of those histories, talking about “global modernism” as a singular or unified experience will be, you know . . . a joke!

DJ: I have been trying to determine how subjective or “internal” forces meet external social ones aesthetically, as one way of thinking about expressions of globalism in formal terms. For example, the *profile*, which one could associate with identity politics and self-representation on social media, but also with ethnic profiling, is a form that’s both generated from within and disciplined from without, and I think an artist like Kara Walker has given new meaning to that format. And then there are *archives*, which are also widespread in contemporary art practice, as the raw material for generating images or objects from information (including profiles). An archive is a resource for determining an historical account, but if you make such compendia of data the work itself, then the nature of how “truth” is produced is placed at the

5 The Multiple Modernisms project was founded in 2007 by a core group of art historians, museum curators, and anthropologists based in the US, UK, Australia, South Africa, Canada, and New Zealand, but eventually it involved associate members from various countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The first of three planned volumes resulting from the multisite symposia organized by the group, *Mapping Modernisms: Art, Indigeneity, Colonialism*, was published by Duke University Press in fall 2018. For additional information, see <http://multiplemodernisms.maa.cam.ac.uk/>.

very center of the artwork. Throughout my career, I've been interested in ready-mades, and it's quite striking how within global contemporary art the ready-made practice has become a kind of international style. This is because the appropriation of ready-mades allows both artists and audiences to make conflicting and overlapping claims over what that object means, and even to whom (or what culture) it belongs. One really interesting "global" example of appropriation is Aboriginal dot painting, made in Australia since the 1970s, which was derived from indigenous Aboriginal imagery, but transposed to the medium of painting through the mediation of a Western teacher. Here the same type of object can have several different claims made on it, and on its behalf. There are the claims of the museum on this kind of painting, and there are claims on behalf of the Australian state to whitewash their own genocidal history with the Aboriginals, and most importantly, the claims of Aboriginals themselves for their painting as a form of traditional knowledge with contemporary legitimacy. This is how the very same work can become the object of several, often contradictory claims.

LA: It seems to me that the idea of heritage is itself a legacy of the West. In one chapter of my book, I describe the museums that empires left behind in Africa after decolonization, and the way UNESCO trained new state administrators not to destroy them as tainted, but rather to maintain them: "just keep the museums, keep the collections . . . keep everything, keep the organization of the collections. . . ." In this maintenance, a whole set of colonial and epistemic structures were inherited by new states: the provenance of objects by tribal affiliation, for example. It is in part in reaction to this history (where imperial heritage was all too easily converted into world heritage) that this new claim-based politics of heritage has taken off.

CB: Naem, can you compare this to the South Asian context, specifically Bangladesh—do certain historical ruptures play a more determining role on art's morphology than internal developments within art history?

NM: There are two moments that seem to separate Bangladesh from the larger subcontinent that represents a shared art history. The first is 1947, when half of Bengal becomes part of post-British independent

India and the other half becomes East Pakistan. The second is 1971, when East Pakistan has to reinvent itself as Bangladesh, which means the Pakistani part of this history has to drop out. I think one of the struggles of writing this history comes when considering the periods when artists from Bangladesh were in conversation with Indian artists before or after 1947, or with Pakistani artists (although technically they themselves were also Pakistani) before 1971. A lot of that history is now being superseded by the study of when certain artists went to Europe; and part of the reason for that is because there are more materials available in that context. The work of S. M. Sultan (1923–94), for example, straddles the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, but his short period in Europe has become overly important in the historiography because you can find documentation of it. A lot of writing about art in Bangladesh was not in English, but now there's definitely a move to codify everything in English, which means that a lot of histories are disappearing because they haven't been translated. There are two ways of looking at this development: one is that everything has to be translated, otherwise all these histories will get lost. The other way is that maybe the absence of translation allows something to remain undisturbed by an external gaze that would rapidly change that history. The amount of capital and power that Western art historians come with is a site of live struggle right now.

CB: My last question concerns how the moment of international modernism has become what we today refer to as the global contemporary. Chika, the book you coauthored with Okwui Enwezor periodizes contemporary art in Africa from 1980 onward.⁶ How do we bridge the gap between postcolonial modernism and contemporary art? And is this contemporary art necessarily a “global contemporary”?

COA: I'm not sure I'm qualified to do any work individually on global contemporary art, as it requires joint effort. I'm presently working on a book project titled *African Art in the Age of the Big Man*, which looks at a number of artists in the context of the emergence of dictatorships. It's not only military dictatorships, which is why I'm calling this authoritarian figure the “big man.” It's also the boss, the civil servant,

6 Okwui Enwezor and Chika Okeke-Agulu, *Contemporary African Art since 1980* (Bologna: Damiani, 2009).

or the imperious professor in the classroom. In other words, it's about the relationship between art and power in the 1970s and 1980s, once the euphoria of independence wore off; it looks at the period between *Postcolonial Modernism* and *Contemporary African Art since 1980*.

CB: But why 1980 for the beginning of contemporary art in Africa?

COA: That was the year Zimbabwe became one of the last countries on the continent to earn its independence. It's also the year that a number of other political events took place that shaped the life of the continent in the late 20th century, beginning with the structural adjustment of neoliberal economies across the continent and the effect that had on cultural production, and the phenomenon of "brain drain" that brought people like me to teach at Princeton rather than in my home country, Nigeria. 1980 was also the beginning of the decade that witnessed the emergence of African artists in the international scene.

CB: Lucia, in architecture the periodization of the contemporary is not fretted over in the same way as in art history, because we all (think we) have a clear idea of contemporary architecture—as opposed to modern or postmodern.

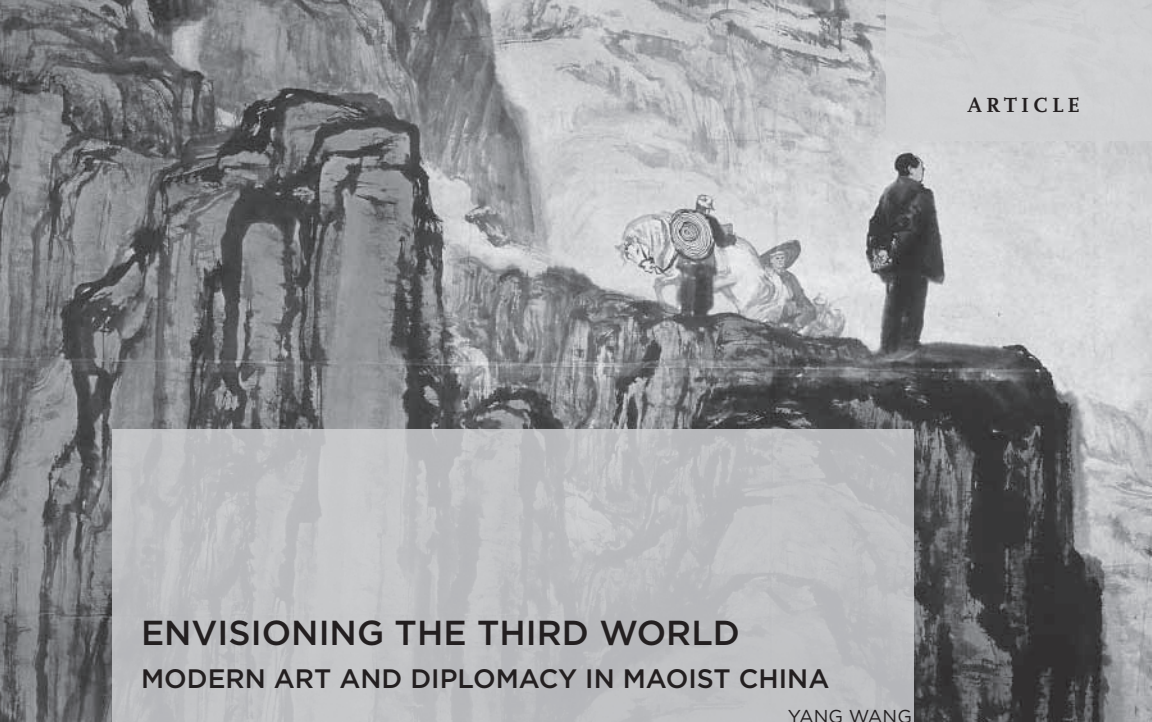
LA: That is true—and much of it is museums' architecture! Interestingly, most modern museums were not built in the midcentury, and most midcentury museums were not modernist. By the time the museum became a kind of global building type in the 1980s, the architectural avant-garde had moved on to postmodernism, but they still clung on to a high-modernist internationalism in their philosophy of art. For non-museum architecture, however, certain strands began to develop in the 1970s, where vernacular architectures were made contemporary again. This also coincided with a shift from international politics to nongovernmental politics in cultural management. New kinds of actors from private foundations and regional prizes became important—think of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, which started in 1978. These actors began to play a role in a moment where architecture got valued for being "regional." It is also at this time that a more fully mediatized culture industry gets deployed onto architecture. In order for an architectural object to enter into a global heritage economy, it must be amplified by other forms of media. I recently wrote a

short text on the Timbuktu mosques which were first targeted for attack by Ansar Dine and later carefully rebuilt by heritage advocates in collaboration with local inhabitants—in large part because they had already been designated as a “heritage of humanity” and recorded as such in the global media.⁷

CB: Olga, when does contemporary art begin in Latin America, and how does it relate to the period of the dictatorships?

OUH: It depends on the definitions of modernity and modern. The idea of the contemporary is a moving target in terms of when and where categories and periods are used and at what moment in history. For example, in the 1930s and 1940s the term *contemporary* was the same as *modern*: it was used interchangeably. But the shift from *modern* to *contemporary* can be generally pinpointed in Latin American art to the end of the 1960s, with the rise of dictatorships and a new generation of artists who were recognized internationally, moved easily between the major art centers in Europe and the United States, and worked in the newest modes of expression such as video and happenings—modes that were incompatible with the certain kind of mid-century modernism promoted by art critic José Gómez-Sicre. The mid-1960s saw a shift in the construction of Latin American art in the United States, with the end of the anticommunist agenda of the Alliance for Progress as well as a new political interest in the region through funding for smaller biennials such as those in Córdoba, Argentina, and Cuenca, Ecuador. Then there is the notion of the global contemporary as the present, beginning back in the 1990s as the neo-liberal project for Latin America, with the rise of the art fairs and an expanded art market.

7 Lucia Allais, “Amplified Humanity and the Architectural Criminal,” *Future Anterior* 14, no. 1 (Summer 2017): 50–69.



ENVISIONING THE THIRD WORLD

MODERN ART AND DIPLOMACY IN MAOIST CHINA

YANG WANG

In August 1956, artist Zhao Wangyun (1907–77) and his colleague Shi Lu (1919–82) traveled to Cairo as Chinese representatives to the Asian-African International Art Exhibition. As the first artists of Communist China to visit Egypt in an official capacity, the trip was a significant event in the history of modern Chinese art and diplomacy.¹ The leisurely pace of the three-month trip allowed the artists to produce a rich body of sketches and paintings that were exhibited in Cairo before being brought back to China, where they were exhibited again and published in a high-quality, large-format catalog. Written on behalf of the Sino-Egypt Friendship Association, the Chinese-and-English bilingual introduction to the catalog describes the artists' representations of Egypt and emphasizes the deliberate choice of ink painting as the artists' preferred medium:

Zhao Wangyun and Shi Lu are the chairman and vice chairman of the Chinese Artists Association Xi'an Branch. They have painted *guohua* for about twenty years. Even though they can't fully portray this magnificent country through these paintings, viewers can gain a sense of its hardworking people and simple lifestyle. The

1 Liu Tianqi, "Cong chang'an dao aiji: Ji Zhao Wangyun, Shi Lu de yiguo xiasheng zhi you," in *Xibei meishu [tekan] Silu qidian huiwang chang'an: Jinian chang'an huapai jinjing zhan 57 zhounian wenxian huibian* (Xi'an: Xibei meishu, 2018), 231.

artists use the essence of traditional Chinese painting techniques to create these moving images, which naturally transport people's emotions to Egypt. The sincere friendship that permeates the paintings attests to the camaraderie between the two countries.²

The introduction is followed by a dozen works by both artists that feature subjects varying from rural life to ancient sites. The introduction reflects Chinese conceptions of Egyptian culture as rich with historical allure but stagnant in terms of development, and it valorizes rural villagers for their industriousness and naïve purity. The text also suggests the clear agency and relative dominance of the Chinese artists over their subjects. The explicit goals here are not to inform or educate the viewers, but to strengthen diplomatic ties (“friendship”) and to exert a form of visual and conceptual subjugation over the subjects. Also noteworthy is the nod to the uniquely Chinese ink medium, *guohua*, that had been deliberately selected for portraying foreign subjects. The nationalistic tone of the text underscores the Cold War context of the artists' trip, taking place as it did in the mid-1950s, a period when Maoist China made its bid to partner with nonaligned “third world” nations and enlisted artists like Shi Lu and Zhao Wangyun to forge such alliances. Trips such as theirs functioned not only as diplomatic missions; they also assisted the Chinese art establishment in shaping a theory that promoted native Chinese art and indigenous culture as a form of resistance to the imperialist hegemony of Western culture.

The perception that China retreated from global currents at the end of World War II, a development lamented by the West as the loss of China to communism, bore implications for how Chinese art has been subsequently overlooked within the history of global postwar art. Art during the Maoist era (1949–76) remained largely unexplored because of lingering Cold War assumptions that placed this body of work within the simple binaries of East/West or communist/capitalist. At the same time, Maoist-era ink painting fits neither the well-established lineage of traditional Chinese ink painting nor the paradigm of “global” postwar art as defined by European and American modernism. Indeed, the reality that the government was the sole patron of the arts in Maoist China violates a core axiom of Western modernism—artistic autonomy—

2 *Zhao Wangyun Shi Lu aiji xiesheng hua xuanji (Selected Sketches of Egypt by Zhao Wangyun and Shi Lu)* (Xi'an: Chang'an meishu chubanshe, 1957), 1.

even though this notion has been challenged by recent scholarship.³ Nevertheless, the perceived incompatibility of Chinese and Western paradigms has led to the characterization of Chinese art as having “bypassed” modernism as defined by the West, a compelling idea that still interferes with a reassessment of the Maoist period beyond the Western framework.⁴ In tune with John Clark’s longstanding call to examine Asian art as a means to “arrive at more open codes for the interpretation of modernism itself,” this article analyzes the intersection of art and diplomacy within the context of Communist China’s under-recognized transnational negotiations, so that China’s role in the Cold War can be recognized as a condition for developing a culturally specific form of modernism.⁵

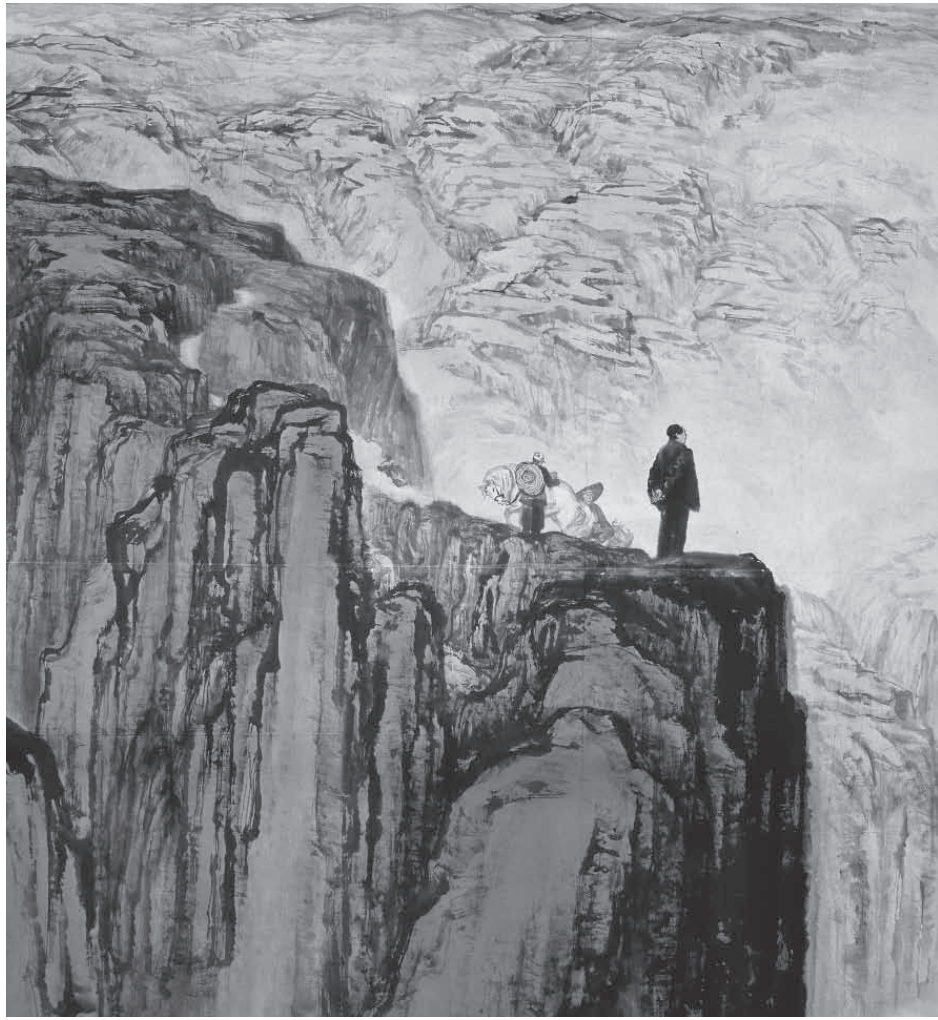
Turning to the specific case of the two Xi’an artists, Shi Lu and Zhao Wangyun, their foreign travel only solidified their commitment to the traditional Chinese medium and to the development of a type of ink painting suited to the changing political needs of China. Best known for his lyrical depiction of Chairman Mao, *Fighting in Northern Shaanxi* (1959), and for leading the so-called Chang’an School of ink painting (Chang’an huapai), Shi Lu’s eventual success within the ranks of the Maoist art world can be attributed to theories he developed during his early-career trips overseas. The youngest son of a prominent family, Shi Lu received a classical Chinese education and studied both Chinese and Western art as part of his formal training. Like many young idealists of his day, Shi Lu renounced his affluent background to join the Communist revolution at the rural Chinese Communist Party (CCP) base of Yan’an, where he turned toward the popular art

3 Taylor D. Littleton, Maltby Sykes, and Leon F. Litwack, *Advancing American Art: Painting, Politics, and Cultural Confrontation at Mid-Century* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005); Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: New Press, 2013).

4 Ellen Johnston Laing describes the incompatibility of 20th-century Chinese art with a definition of modernism established by Clement Greenberg that, as Laing argues, must be considered in any discussion about modernism and postmodernism. Ellen Johnston Laing, “Is There Post-Modern Art in the People’s Republic of China?,” in *Modernity in Asian Art*, ed. John Clark (Canberra, Australia: Wild Peony Press, 1993). Gao Minglu argues that post-Maoist Chinese modernity was essentially postmodern in a “sequence-reversed” situation. Gao Minglu, *Total Modernity and the Avant-Garde in Twentieth-Century Chinese Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 3.

5 John Clark, “Open and Closed Discourses of Modernity in Asian Art,” in *Modernity in Asian Art*, 6.

Shi Lu. *Fighting in Northern Shaanxi*, 1959. Ink and color on paper, 93 11/16 x 85 1/16 inches (238 x 216 cm).
National Museum of China, Beijing. Image courtesy of Cheng Zheng.



genre of woodcuts and devoted himself to theater production.⁶ After the CCP waged an unlikely but successful revolution and established the People's Republic of China in 1949, the original Yan'an cadres fanned across China. Shi Lu was assigned to Xi'an, where he successfully led efforts to establish the city as the major cultural center of the northwest region, both by way of his political acumen and through his promotion of ink painting's revival.

GUOHUA AND THE CHANG'AN SCHOOL

The term used for ink painting in Communist China, *guohua*, is the abbreviated form of *Zhongguohua*, "Chinese painting," and denotes any modern work in the ink medium, regardless of its resemblance to traditional Chinese ink painting in terms of technique or subject matter.⁷ While the term emerged in the late 19th century, the practice of ink painting (*shuimohua*) shaped the canon of Chinese art from the Six Dynasties (220–589) through the 17th century as the dominant practice of the gentry class known as the literati.⁸ Ink painting continued to be practiced in Republican China (1912–49), but its elite affiliation troubled leftist cultural reformers, who favored populist media such as the woodcut. The Communist government similarly grappled with its stance on ink painting: should it support this venerable cultural tradition, or roundly eradicate all remnants of China's feudal past?⁹

The early ambivalence of the Communists toward *guohua* eventually gave way to the medium's transformation as a political tool and marker of modernity. A number of factors culminated in the mid-to-

6 At this early point in his career, Shi Lu was a visual artist as well as an actor, screenwriter, and set designer. Although the artist is relatively unknown outside of China, several recent publications have given him greater international exposure: Juliane Noth, *Landschaft und Revolution: Die Malerei von Shi Lu* (Berlin: Reimer, 2009); Robert D. Mowry, *The Beauty of Art: Paintings and Calligraphy by Shi Lu. From the Private Collection of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth* (New York: Christie's, 2011); *Shi Lu: A Revolution in Paint* (Wellington, New Zealand: Te Papa Museum, 2014), exhibition catalog; Shelley Drake Hawks, *The Art of Resistance: Painting by Candlelight in Mao's China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018).

7 Mayching Kao, "The Beginning of the Western-Style Painting Movement in Relationship to Reforms in Education in Early Twentieth-Century China," *New Asia Academic Bulletin* 4 (1983): 373.

8 Ibid.

9 For a thorough discussion of the uneven reception of *guohua* during the Maoist period, see Julia F. Andrews, "Painting in New China: *Guohua* and the Anti-Rightist Campaign," *Journal of Asian Studies* 49, no. 3 (August 1990): 555–85.

late 1950s to create a hospitable environment for the return of *guohua*. During this period, a national conversation began concerning the role of traditional Chinese art forms in modern China, simultaneously propelled by the Second Five-Year Plan (1958–62) and the Hundred Flowers Movement (1956), a short-lived political campaign designed by the party to attract intellectuals.¹⁰ Party ideologues like Zhou Yang (1908–89), who had previously dismissed ink painting, expressed greater acceptance of previously condemned art forms: “If we want to let a hundred flowers bloom, the first (essential) is to preserve and uncover the national heritage.”¹¹

Around the same time, with the onset of the Sino-Soviet split (1956–66), Chinese-Soviet relations began to fray. In line with China’s search for domestic models of economic growth, China’s art policy also turned away from Soviet models and toward its own forms. Those art forms that had previously been dismissed by the party, such as *guohua*, were revived and given the resources to develop. Even more explicitly than in his earlier speeches, Zhou Yang in 1960 lauded ink artists for “endowing traditional painting with a new lease on life.”¹²

Shi and Zhao attuned themselves to these political changes as the leaders of the Chinese Artists Association Xi’an Branch (CAA Xi’an), a professional association under the direct jurisdiction of the central propaganda department, whose primary functions were research and creative production. The six ink painters of CAA Xi’an began producing accurate representations of the harsh, arid Loess Plateau in northwestern China—departing from an elite, self-referential, and principally southern literati tradition of lushly forested, misty landscapes—and thus inaugurated a selective engagement with Western realism.¹³ The *guohua* painters transformed their medium from a studio-based practice with philosophical underpinnings to a hybrid genre injected with Western techniques such as perspective and modeling. They also replaced monochromatic landscapes with colorful portrayals of peasants, rugged landscapes, and communist history. For their collective accomplishment, they

10 Julia F. Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People’s Republic of China, 1949–1979* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 176–200.

11 Cited in Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution, Vol. 1* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 52.

12 Zhou Yang, *The Path of Socialist Literature and Art in China* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1960), 23–24.

13 The four other painters of the Chang’an School were He Haixia (1908–98), Fang Jizhong (1923–87), Kang Shiyao (1921–85), and Li Zisheng (1919–87).

earned the unofficial moniker “The Chang’an School of Ink Painting” after holding a major exhibit in Beijing in 1961.¹⁴

The ascension of the Xi’an painters was both unexpected and predestined in terms of where it occurred. Its name, Chang’an, refers to the former name of Xi’an, the ancient capital of China during its most illustrious periods. Despite Xi’an’s peripheral status in the 20th century, the city’s history, and hence its “quintessential Chineseness,” made it suitable for the development of an art center. Although political events and state-implemented economic decisions re-established Xi’an’s relevance in the 20th century, the revival of its cultural significance rested in the hands of the arts. Accordingly, the emergence of a school of ink painting in the ancient capital was such a compelling symbol of national revival that despite the lack of a strong ink painting tradition in Xi’an, the Chang’an School was celebrated as an example of national rejuvenation.

Despite its unique geo-historical circumstances, the Chang’an School belonged to a broader revival of indigenous Chinese art forms: it was contemporaneous with the Nanjing-based New Jinling School of ink painting and with woodblock print movements in peripheral provinces.¹⁵ All rooted in the exploration of traditional media, these regional art collectives formed in response to a call for the diversification of art forms in keeping with the Hundred Flowers Movement and the nationalist tenor of the Sino-Soviet split.

The nativist tendencies in Chinese art reveal the fluid and complex trajectory of Chinese modernism, where the search for a new national art form meant a reconsideration of premodern Chinese history and culture. It may seem counterintuitive to seek a reevaluation of Maoist-era art by placing it squarely within the boundaries of official national culture when parallel examinations of postwar Euro-American art show the delegitimizing effect that nationalism had on avant-garde art.¹⁶ Chinese art history, however, offers a different understanding of

14 The connection between the Chang’an School and the so-called Northern School, as well as other regional schools in Chinese painting history, is beyond the scope of this article and will be discussed in the author’s longer book project.

15 For a discussion of collective works by the Nanjing ink painters, see Christine I. Ho, “The People Eat for Free and the Art of Collective Production in Maoist China,” *Art Bulletin* 98, no. 3 (2016): 348–72. Sonja J. Kelly examines the Sichuan printmakers in “Printmaking in Post-War Sichuan: Regional Art Development in the People’s Republic of China, 1949–1966” (PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 2010).

16 See note 3.

“political” or “official” art. In this vein, Gao Minglu argues for a notion of Chinese modernity as distinct from Western modernity, as a “spirit of an epoch” reflective of Chinese cultural values at any given time and place, which in the context of 20th-century China is “determined by the condition of the nation.”¹⁷ In other words, Chinese modernity has been articulated through the quest for national identity.

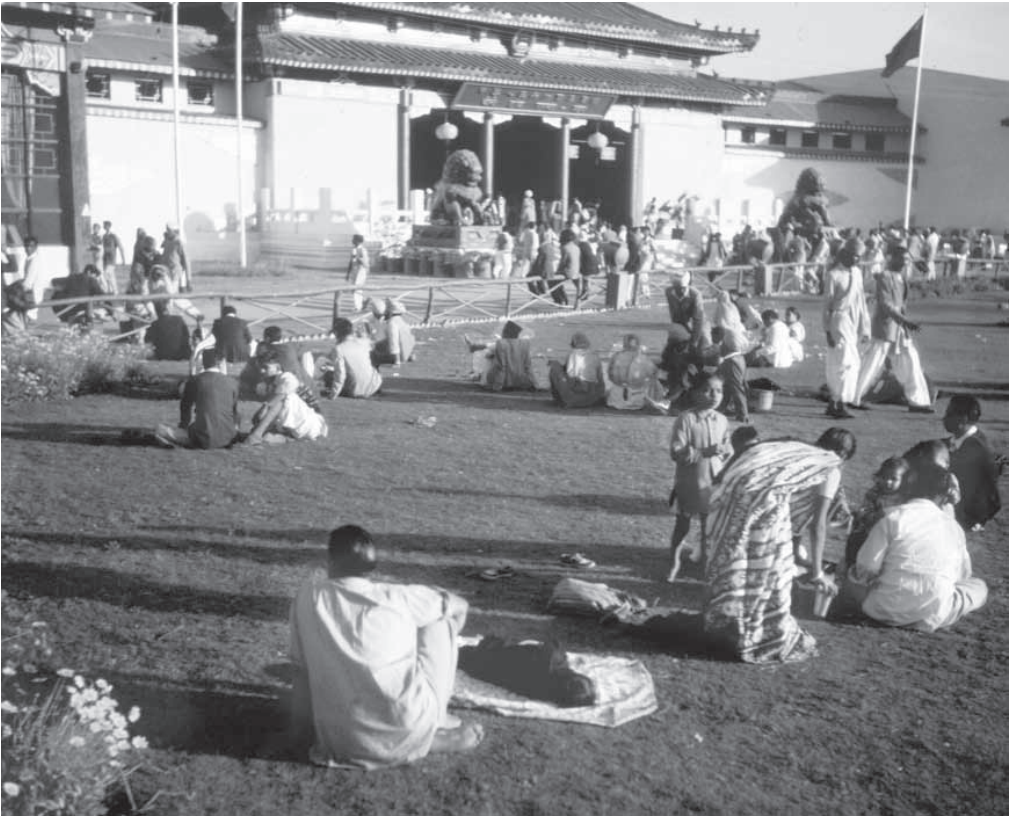
Even though Chinese artists encountered various forms of European modernist art in the 1920s–30s, they never fully embraced the pure formalist tendencies of nonobjective art.¹⁸ Instead, it was more common for Chinese artists to use figuration (rather than abstraction) as the basis of experimentation; they viewed the former as more suitable for visualizing the social conditions of modern China. In general, leftist reformers of the Republican period favored styles with clear narrative potential in lieu of “art for art’s sake.” Moreover, with ink painting’s inherently abstract qualities, rooted in calligraphy, realism instead of abstraction was seen as a more radical departure from Chinese tradition.¹⁹ Therefore, progressive Chinese artists generally looked to academic or postimpressionist styles from the West.²⁰ The Communist art agenda extended this preference but narrowed its possibilities to Soviet-based academic realism. The choice, then, of Maoist-era artists to tether art to broader political ideals and the socialist state was made in the name of social change and modernity, and should not be viewed as a rejection of these goals.

17 Gao, *Total Modernity*, 1. Clark makes a similar point about Asian art broadly. Clark, “Open and Closed Discourses,” 8–9.

18 Laing, “Is There Post-Modern Art,” 210–12. A case can be made for the Chinese woodcut movement of the 1930s as China’s first indigenous avant-garde movement, but it was also figural in form and consulted existing models from Germany, the Soviet Union, and Japan. See Xiaobing Tang, *Origins of the Chinese Avant-Garde: The Modern Woodcut Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

19 Gao Minglu makes this point in “The Historical Logic of Chinese Nationalist Realism from the 1940s to the 1960s,” in *Postwar: Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965*, ed. Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes (Munich: Haus der Kunst, 2017), exhibition catalog, 437–41.

20 For example, Zhao Wangyun dabbled in European expressionist styles in the 1930s before developing a style more in keeping with traditional ink brushwork in the People’s Republic of China. Discussions of specific artists, particularly oil painters, can be found in Kuiyi Shen, “The Lure of the West: Modern Chinese Oil Painting,” in *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth Century China*, ed. Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen (New York: Guggenheim Museum and Abrams, 1998), exhibition catalog, 172–80; and Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919–1945* (Munich: Hatje Cantz, 2004).



ART AS DIPLOMACY

The role of the official artist provides the context for Shi Lu's and Zhao Wangyun's travels abroad as ambassadors of Communist China at expositions, fairs, and conferences. For a country still in the process of rebuilding its postwar economy, China placed considerable focus on artistic and cultural exchange.²¹ Even though the budget for cultural diplomacy paled in comparison to defense or infrastructure, the impact of its efforts was magnified through fanfare and robust press coverage. Whereas American cultural diplomacy focused singularly on influencing foreign entities and kept these efforts hidden from the view of the

Chinese Pavilion (exterior), Indian Industries Fair, New Delhi, India, October 29, 1955–January 1, 1956. Image courtesy of Massey Archives. Photograph by USIA.

21 Between 1955 and 1966, the budget doubled from US \$10 million to US \$20 million. In 1955, China sent 5,833 people to 33 countries and received 4,760 official visitors from 63 countries. In 1956, it sent about the same number of delegates abroad—5,400—to 49 countries, and received 5,200 visitors from 75 countries. Gregg Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry during the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 135.

American public, China prominently displayed its international gambit to its own citizenry in order to cultivate a collective sense of national identity.²² Although infrequent for most artists, such trips permitted moments of convergence between their roles as artists and administrators-turned-diplomats. Through the exhibition and publication of work created during such travel, the impact of these trips could last for months and even years.

To give an example, in 1955 Shi Lu traveled to Delhi (now New Delhi) to oversee the design of the Chinese pavilion at the Indian Industries Fair, a trade fair that attracted the participation of major international powers at the time, including the Soviet Union and the United States.²³ Emboldened by his youth (at 36 years old) and lack of international experience at the time, Shi Lu felt compelled to criticize the Chinese ambassador to India, Yuan Zhongxian, for his obsequious response to Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In the artist's mind, Khrushchev behaved disrespectfully during his walk through the Chinese pavilion. Yuan reportedly instructed his colleague Shi Lu to subdue his nationalistic pride in the name of diplomacy.²⁴

Incidents such as this one speak to the high-stakes nature of China's participation in events such as the Indian Industries Fair. In order to court nonaligned nations like India, capitalist and communist nations devised propaganda programs both to portray themselves abroad in a positive light and to track the activities of the other side. It was no coincidence that China's intensified participation in trans-

22 See Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); and Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945–1961* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1998). In *Winning the Third World*, Gregg Brazinsky analyzes China's cultural strategy in competing with the United States for a favorable position in the third world.

23 In addition to Chinese biographical sources on Shi Lu, a publication by the Indian government also mentions Shi Lu's trip as an example of bilateral cultural exchange, in *Encyclopedia of India-China Cultural Contacts* (New Delhi: MaXposure Media Group, 2014), 688. Although Chinese sources never mentioned the Indian event by name, Shi Lu's travel dates (July 1955–Spring 1956) and the descriptions of his involvement match the Indian Industries Fair, held in Delhi from October 29, 1955, to January 1, 1956. The event is discussed in Jack Masey and Conway Lloyd Morgan, *Cold War Confrontations: US Exhibitions and Their Role in the Cultural Cold War* (Baden, Switzerland: Lars Müller, 2008).

24 "Guohua dashi Shi Lu de yishu lichen chuanqi," *Shoucang jie* (blog), July 21, 2011, <http://collection.sina.com.cn/cqyw/20110721/175133001.shtml>.

national cultural activities overlapped with the Sino-Soviet split. While the reasons behind that split were manifold, the tensions between Beijing and Moscow motivated China to aggressively court the third world and to leverage its position as a non-White nation in building rapport with other Asian and African nations. China's unique status, both racially and as a former victim of Western imperialism, gave it an edge over the United States and the Soviet Union.²⁵ In response to the threat of China's growing influence, a 1955 United States Information Agency (USIA) memorandum referred to Chinese and Soviet activities in India as "serious business which should receive the attention of the Agency."²⁶ In August of the same year, the Eisenhower administration unveiled the concept of "People's Capitalism" as a prophylactic strategy for the USIA to foster a benevolent image of capitalism abroad, based on the thriving American middle class.²⁷

China's approach to the Indian Industries Fair was no less measured and reveals the early formulations of a national style that employed the appearance of traditionalism as a rejection of Western culture and ideology. While the USSR and the United States showcased modern industrial achievements at events such as the fair, China adopted an alternative approach by exhibiting its traditional culture, including ink painting, ceramics, textiles, and handicrafts.²⁸ According to former USIA Exhibits Officer Jack Masey, who designed the "Atomics" exhibition at the Delhi fair, the Chinese pavilion was distinctively traditional in style, "like a large Chinese restaurant filled to the brim with stuff."²⁹ While the American pavilion, according to Masey, fell short of connecting with local attendees through its technical and conceptual focus, its Chinese counterpart was popular because it featured an abundance of consumer goods and handicrafts that resonated

25 Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World*, 184. Belonging to a recent upswell of scholarship on the Cold War are recent publications on the Sino-Soviet split: Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018); Lorenz M. Luthi, *Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

26 "Communist Cultural Program in India, Feb. 16, 1955"; USIA Cultural Program—India, 1954 (1/2); Office of the Assistant Director for Near East, South Asia, and Africa; Records Relating to India, 1952–1956, box 2 (P 265); Records of the US Information Agency, 1900–2003 (RG 306); National Archives College Park, College Park, MD.

27 Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 131.

28 "Guohua dashi Shi Lu de yishu lichen chuanqi."

29 Jack Masey, interview with Yang Wang, New York City, February 13, 2015.

with the Indian fairgoers.³⁰ This strategic focus on premodern achievements also enabled China to highlight a strength and conceal its inferior industrial capabilities. At the same time, the strategy revealed the burgeoning pride that China took in its ancient history and culture.

The architectural designs favored by the Americans versus the Chinese were statements of individualized modernity. In contrast to the 20th-century international modernist style of the American pavilion, the Chinese pavilion was built in traditional Chinese palace style, which was considered the “international” style during its heyday in East Asia. The design, along with the history of the palace style, was a deliberate statement about the relevance of Chinese tradition in a contemporary international setting. The pavilion also matched architectural trends in China at the time, characterized by the integration of traditional Chinese forms, whether in structure or ornamentation, atop Soviet-style structures.³¹ The addition of a monumentally sized sculpture of Mao at the pavilion’s entrance bridged past and present realities. Although it remains unclear whether Shi Lu participated in the design of the Chinese pavilion or merely implemented the construction of someone else’s designs, his eventual reflections on the importance of national heritage and ink painting match the ethnically specific design of the pavilion.

Artist-diplomats like Shi Lu explored a creative space opened up by China’s growing sense of confidence by making art that redefined how the Chinese public understood its nation’s place in the world. After the fair, Shi Lu remained in India to sketch its people and landscape, the second mission of the trip. A selection of finished paintings based on his sketches was published the following year as a set of postcards titled *Quick Sketches from India (Zai yindu de suxie)*. The ink-painted sketches of local scenery focused on rural life and exhibited the orientaling gaze of the Chinese artist, who emphasized the subjects’ most distinctively ethnographic features. The sketches are surprisingly devoid of revolutionary themes—absent are images of industrial progress, such as power lines and modern buildings, that might have explicitly drawn a connection to the valorization of unindustrialized self-sufficiency advocated by Mahatma Gandhi. Furthermore, the

30 Ibid.

31 Peter G. Rowe and Seng Kuan, *Architectural Encounters with Essence and Form in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 87–93.



Chinese Pavilion (entrance), Indian Industries Fair, New Delhi, India, October 29, 1955–January 1, 1956. Image courtesy of Masey Archives. Photograph by USIA.

figures are generally realistic, not robust and heroic as dictated by Socialist Realism, a style that would eventually dominate Chinese art during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). Even though these paintings rejected the thematic exaggeration enabled by Western oil painting, Shi Lu imbued Chinese ink with novel stylistic flourishes reminiscent of Western watercolor. For example, whereas traditional ink painting generally abstains from the portrayal of directional lighting, Shi Lu's figures have cast shadows, suggesting a clear orientation of light. This type of painting served as the prototype for Shi Lu's later work in the Chinese countryside, particularly paintings of the Loess Plateau, in which he continued to experiment with a synthesized approach to ink painting that he had first developed in the mid-1950s, around the time of his international trips.

In addition to dispatching artists abroad, China looked to its art institutions and artist-diplomats to host cultural delegations. Although official meetings with foreign heads of state were generally conducted in Beijing, a number of cultural-exchange activities were extended to Xi'an, a city attractive to visitors because of its ancient historic sites. Foreign delegations were treated with honor when they traveled to this



provincial capital.³² For example, a 1955 visit by a group of Indian musicians and dancers, the first of its kind after China and India had established diplomatic relations in the early 1950s, was carefully orchestrated to great fanfare, and the visit earned a place not only in Xi'an history but also in the complex diplomatic history between the two countries.³³ The organizers prepared a full itinerary for the visitors, including a reception with high-ranking provincial and city officials.

The activities for the Indian guests included visits to Buddhist relics and sites, chosen because they spoke to the connection between ancient India and China, specific to the city of Xi'an, through the vehicle of Buddhism. While Zhao Wangyun was listed prominently as a member of the welcoming committee, Shi Lu was an official representative from CAA Xi'an among cadres from other cultural work units.³⁴ CAA's

prominent location in the city center, coupled with the state's high regard for the organization as a model work unit worthy of showcasing to foreigners, helped put it in the spotlight.

EGYPT THROUGH THE LENS OF CHINA

In August 1956, shortly after his return from India, Shi Lu traveled with Zhao Wangyun to Cairo, Egypt, where they attended the Asian-African Art Exhibition, taking place a year after the Bandung conference and just three months after Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser had formally recognized the People's Republic of China.³⁵ The

32 Ying, song yindu wenhua daibiaotuan jihua [Plan for welcoming and sending off Indian cultural delegation, June 26, 1955], Shaanxi sheng wenhuating yishuchu, Shaanxi sheng wenhuating 1954 zhi 1955 waishi gongzuo anpai zongjie (203, 6), Shaanxi Provincial Archive, Xi'an.

33 The visit is mentioned in an aforementioned publication edited by the India Ministry of External Affairs: *Encyclopedia of India-China Cultural Contacts*, 661 and 817.

34 Ying, song yindu wenhua daibiaotuan jihua.

35 Shi Lu teji. *Han Mo* 47 (Hong Kong: Hanmoxuan chuban youxian gongsi, 1993), E12-13; Osgood Caruthers, "Nasser Will Visit Communist China; Plans Bid to Chou," *New York Times*, May 25, 1956, 1.



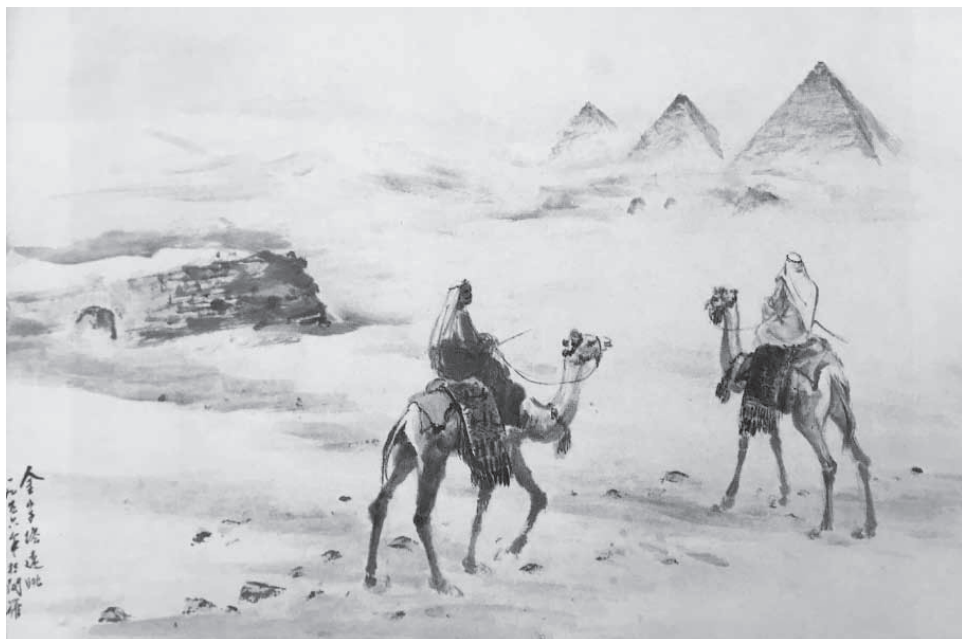
Shi Lu (second from left) and Zhao Wangyun (far right), Egypt, 1956.
Image courtesy of Cheng Zheng.

artists sought ample opportunity for sketching during their three-month trip.³⁶ Their depictions of unindustrialized Egypt led to a minor incident with that country's government, as Egyptian officials grew suspicious of Zhao's paintings of village life that depicted remnants of the past instead of the expected signs of modernity. To address their concern, the artists explained that they depicted similar subject matter in China and only wanted to introduce the natural characteristics of Egypt to the Chinese people. This explanation placated the local hosts' concerns—so much so that they then provided additional assistance, allowing Zhao to continue to work in the countryside for the remainder of the trip.³⁷

Despite clear differences between the two colleagues in terms of their preferred subjects, Shi Lu and Zhao Wangyun converged in their shared interest in the ancient historical sites of Egypt. Whereas the trip seemed to have inspired Shi Lu toward a greater degree of stylistic flourish in his paintings of figures and landscape, Zhao Wangyun's style and repertoire of subjects remained consistent with his domestic paintings. As he had demonstrated since the 1930s, Zhao was more interested in depicting human labor, with minimal contextual landscape. By the mid-1950s, however, the influence of his colleagues

36 Zhang Yi, *Shi Lu zhuan* (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin meishu chubanshe, 2001), 207.

37 Ling Hubiao, "Zhao Wangyun shengping jilue," *Duoyun* 13 (Shanghai: Zhongguo huihua yanjiu jikan, 1987), 158.



Zhao Wangyun. *Pyramids Seen from Afar*, 1936. Ink and color on paper, 49 × 75 cm.
 Published in Zhao Wangyun Shi Lu aiji xiesheng hua xuanji (*Selected Sketches of Egypt by Zhao Wangyun and Shi Lu*) (Xi'an: Chang'an meishu chubanshe, 1957).

compelled Zhao to move landscape from the background into the focus of his visual interests. The rhythmic sturdiness of the forest in *Palm Groves* conveys the artist's sense of awe expressed for the novelty of the desert climate. Known as a "Painter of the Masses," Zhao was a self-trained artist who during the 1930s had worked as a freelance artist for the newspaper *L'Impartial* (*Dagongbao*).³⁸

Exemplary of his modest, unassuming style, Zhao's painting of the Pyramids at Giza evokes the complexity of the monument's global heritage, even though the pyramids are barely visible. Only when the viewer follows the gaze of the camel riders in the foreground do the familiar peaks come into focus. Because the depicted monuments are put in the context of human interaction, the viewer is reminded that sites like the pyramids are markers of civilization, belonging to both the local and the global cultures that treasure them. Applying his distant, journalistic perspective to his host country, Zhao maintains an emphatic consistency across his paintings of domestic and foreign

38 Lillian Tseng and Christine Ho have written about Zhao Wangyun's *L'Impartial* serials: Lillian Tseng, "Pictorial Representation and Historical Writing: Zhao Wangyun's (1906–77) Visual Reports on Rural North China for *L'Impartial*," in *Visual Representation and Cultural Mapping in Modern China*, ed. Ke-wu Huang (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 2003), 63–122; Christine I. Ho, "Drawing from Life: Mass Sketching and the Formation of Socialist Realist *Guohua* in the Early People's Republic of China, 1949–1965" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2014).



Shi Lu. *Historic Remains at Luxor*, 1956. Ink and color on paper, 19.7 x 14.6 inches (50 x 37 cm). Published in *Zhao Wangyun Shi Lu jiji xiesheng hua xuanji* (Selected Sketches of Egypt by Zhao Wangyun and Shi Lu) [Xi'an: Chang'an meishu chubanshe, 1957].

locales, of quotidian and exotic subjects alike, so that their cultural and spatial differences are leveled.

By contrast, Shi Lu's depiction of the Tomb of Hatshepsut exaggerates the monumentality of the cliffs into which the tomb was built in order to convey its grandeur as a site of global culture. The composition is reminiscent of classical Chinese ink landscapes (*shanshuihua*) in which towering cliffs are the central focus, but Shi Lu also integrates elements of architectural painting (*jiehua*) to show the structural integrity and cultural significance of the tomb. This blended approach is also seen in the brushwork, which combines Chinese and Western techniques. While the rocks are rendered in dry, angular brushwork, the artist also conveys a sense of chiaroscuro and natural light in his application of a dark ink wash that is more reminiscent of watercolor technique. Taken in its entirety, the painting is an amalgamation of styles that marries multiple traditions; as an image it is overwhelming, seemingly reaching for the sublime.

TURNING INWARD

In his speech delivered at the 1956 Afro-Asian Art Conference, Shi Lu made clear his views regarding the necessity of maintaining the distinctive identity of indigenous Chinese heritage as a form of resistance to hegemonic influences:

We are not saying that national art forms are independent and exist without outside artistic influence. To the contrary, we are still influenced and stimulated by pre-Tang Western Wei, Northern Wei, Sui as well as Buddhist art styles from India. Today we must absorb nutrients from arts around the world but we can't allow our art to become imitations of outside art. Just like the treasure chest left by our history—styles from the Dunhuang caves—we absorbed components from outside art traditions, and made them our own national form. We think that to develop our national art forms, non-Chinese art must not be ignored for reference. National forms are still the most important. Art is unique in that the more ethnically specific it is, the more international it can become.³⁹

The speech acknowledged the paradox of advocating for indigenous Chinese art forms at a time when the global current favored interna-

39 Shi Lu, "Guanyu yishu xingshi wenti [On the issue of artistic form]," in *Shi Lu yi shu wen ji* [Collected writings on Shi Lu's art], edited by Shi Dan and Ye Jian (Xi'an: Shanxi renmin meishu chubanshe, 2003), 33.

tional modernist styles. Even though the event took place in Egypt, it was appropriate and poignant that Shi Lu referred to the internationalism of China's ancient past and evoked the concept of pan-Asianism that looked westward to India—a current political ally—rather than eastward to Korea and Japan, China's historical allies. During a heavily publicized visit by another Chinese delegation that toured India in 1955, writer and delegation leader Zheng Zhenduo (1898–1958) spoke of the two countries' ancient connections that date back 2,000 years, as well as a recent uptick of interest in Indian art and culture among Chinese students.⁴⁰ He cited in particular Chinese translations of works by Bengali writer Rabindranath Tagore and the number of Chinese students then studying in Delhi.⁴¹ The effort to strengthen the relationship between China and India was jointly enacted by both countries through the workings of cultural exchange.

Whereas exposure to other countries and cultures often inspired artists to adopt international styles, Shi Lu took the opposite course. After his trips abroad, he concluded that cultures with ancient histories such as China must preserve their own heritage. From then on, the once-prolific artist of woodcuts, new year's prints, and oil painting dedicated himself to *guohua*.⁴² Shi Lu's turn to indigenous culture anticipated the official state position of re-embracing traditional Chinese culture and matched China's insertion of itself as a powerful player in international politics, legitimized by its historical exceptionalism.

In a later essay, Shi Lu reflected upon his travels, articulating an artistic formulation that recognized the inherent contradiction between traditional Chinese culture and the imported political ideology of socialism, but also maintained the importance of preserving the heritage as a matter of national sovereignty:

Despite having been colonized and having its economy operated entirely by foreigners, [Indian] culture, including its music and painting, still belongs to its people. When we visited Indian uni-

40 Described in the Bengali newspaper *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, January 7, 1955.

41 Along with wide journalistic coverage of the delegation's activities, newspapers also advertised performances of Chinese folk dance and music, as well as Peking opera, performed by the Chinese delegation. As was typical of these cultural exchange trips, the group was also scheduled to visit the Academy of Fine Arts and the Indian Museum. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, January 7, 1955.

42 Shi Dan, *Shi Lu (Zhongguo ming huajia quanji)* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003), 77–78.

versities, we saw that their ethnic arts retained a native flavor. Egypt is different. Much of its culture has been influenced by France, but its artists still seek after their ethnic methods and traditions in architecture and sculpture. They adhere to their own artistic traditions. Look at these long-lasting ancient cultures: we must learn from them in order to be as resilient.⁴³

This praise of “ethnic” specificity reveals the artist’s recognition that China’s path to modernity—via socialism—must be built on its indigenous heritage in order for it to retain its identity and ultimately succeed in a new, postcolonial world.

THE COSMOPOLITAN ARTIST

As a result of the Egypt trip, Shi Lu emerged as an “expert” on African affairs as China became involved in “anti-imperial” revolutions that swept across Africa in the 1950s and 60s, earning him a number of administrative roles through his connection with Africa. He was named a member of the Sino-Arab Alliance Friendship Association, formed in 1958—shortly after the second Afro-Asian Conference in Cairo—to promote goodwill between China and Arab nations. The association supported the United Arab Republic’s efforts to claim and maintain sovereignty in the wake of the Suez Crisis, which further established Egypt’s independence from Britain and also led to independence for other colonies and former colonies in Africa.⁴⁴ In 1960, Shi Lu joined a second organization, the Sino-African Friendship Association, thereby further solidifying his political involvement. In February 1962, Shi Lu denounced the assassination of the Republic of the Congo’s first democratically elected prime minister, Patrice Lumumba (1925–1961)—whose killing was widely believed to have been sanctioned by the United States and Belgium—in *People’s Daily*, where Shi Lu was identified not as an artist but as a member of the Sino-African Friendship Association:

When I heard the news that the imperialists and their cronies killed the Congolese national hero Patrice Lumumba and his

43 Liang Xinzhe, *Chang’an huapai yanjiu* [*Chang’an School Research*] (Xi’an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2002), 15.

44 “Zengjin Zhongguo he alabo lianhe gongheguo de youyi—Zhong a youhao xiehui zucheng [Promote the friendship between China and the United Arab Republic—Sino-Arab Friendship Association Is Formed],” *People’s Daily*, March 1, 1959, 1.

comrades, unmatched anger swelled in me! No matter how the evil American imperialists disguise themselves, their viciousness cannot be concealed. . . . Wearing a thin veil of civilization, the colonialist wild beast employs this kind of shameful tactic to extinguish Africa's fire. I firmly denounce American and Belgian imperialists, as well as their cronies, for this blood-soaked atrocity, and I firmly support Congolese and African people's fight for justice!⁴⁵

The subject—though perhaps not the passion—of Shi Lu's essay seems to belie his identity as an artist. However, this is less surprising when considered alongside propaganda art of the period. China's interest in the Congo Crisis is possibly visualized in the oil painting *Chairman Mao with People of Asia, Africa, and Latin America* (1961) by Wu Biduan (1926–) and Jin Shangyi (1934–), a conjecture supported by the work's date. The painting, which depicts Mao standing in the middle of a group of international guests while warmly shaking hands with an African man, has been read by Eugene Wang as a statement of China's support for Egypt in the aftermath of the 1956 Suez Crisis, with the dark-skinned African figure at the center providing maximum visual contrast to Mao.⁴⁶

The simultaneously nativist and transnational tendencies within Shi Lu's writings and synthesized visual style over the period discussed here evoke the concept of “socialist cosmopolitanism,” a term coined by Nicolai Volland in the context of Chinese literature, where it refers to a form of transnationalism experienced by socialist nations that valorizes the collective over the individual as the agent of cosmopolitan cultural practice.⁴⁷ As a proxy for the socialist state, the collective reconciles the national with the transnational to become cosmopolitan.⁴⁸ Shi Lu's artistic and theoretical formulations similarly bypass not only the spatial, but also the temporal, boundaries of Maoist China, to broker

45 Shi Lu, “Jinri de da la si, nan tao ru renmin de panjue [Today's Dalasi will not evade people's verdict],” *People's Daily*, February 23, 1962, 6.

46 “A Presentation by Eugene Wang, in conjunction with CHINA IN ASIA/ASIA IN CHINA,” Columbia University, April 18, 2012, www.aaa-a.org/programs/a-presentation-by-eugene-wang-in-conjunction-with-china-in-asiaasia-in-china/.

47 Volland defines “socialist cosmopolitanism” as “a set of attitudes and practices that appreciate a shared yet diverse socialist culture and promotes transitional circulation across the socialist world.” Nicolai Volland, *Socialist Cosmopolitanism: The Chinese Literary Universe, 1945–1965* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 13.

48 *Ibid.*, 13–15.



a new artistic language that is at once innovative, anachronistic, and vaguely familiar for its integration of various global traditions. His personalized brand of cosmopolitanism, shaped by his Chinese socialist context, equipped the artist to travel confidently through the third world, paint its inhabitants, and pen an essay on Patrice Lumumba with equal finesse.

The multifaceted identities of Maoist-era artists like Shi Lu and Zhao Wangyun attest to the political demands of their time, which required artists to give shape and dimension to the national agenda. Helped by their international experience provided by the state, they articulated historical cosmopolitanism as a dimension of Chinese exceptionalism, and by extension, a form of Chinese modernity that was inflected by, and not in spite of, nationalism. The cumulative activities of these artists as painters, administrators, and cultural attachés promoted a narrative of a third world struggle in which China played a key role.

When Shi Lu set out for India and Egypt as a rising star in the Maoist art system, he could not have known that the trips would have such a lasting impact on his career.⁴⁹ The integration of the ink medium with realism and *plein air* technique first came together for Shi and Zhao when they were abroad, and they continued to apply this synthesized approach to their paintings of domestic subjects in north-western China. Style, however, was not the only factor in their overall success. As the Xi'an *guohua* painters began to gain national attention for their work, they developed a motto for their theoretical stance: "Reach with one hand toward tradition, and with the other toward life." It is tempting to interpret this motto as a simple call for neotraditionalism, but "tradition" here represents a counterpoint to the hegemony of Western modernism, not to contemporary Chinese conditions. In essence, "tradition" to the Chang'an School was Chinese modernity, visualized through a reformulation of *guohua* in the specific context of international diplomacy as a form of modernism.

In this article I have presented an alternative model for examining the Maoist era, by focusing on art that evolved from points of contact between artists of provincial China, on the one hand, and its third world "allies" around the world, on the other. In response to the volatile nature of postwar geopolitics, China's transnational engagements were robust and far-reaching, surpassing the limits of its fraught interactions with the Soviet Union and the United States. Through the examination of artists and activities affiliated with the provincial art center of Xi'an, I argue that transnationalism could be redefined not just through the widened lens of non-Western states like China, but also from peripheral Chinese spheres outside the political nucleus of Beijing.

Because most Chinese artists of this period were state actors, their perceived lack of artistic autonomy has hindered the recognition of 20th-century Chinese art as embodying significant artistic value. Moreover, with its accommodation of the traditional medium of ink and its preference for realism, art in the People's Republic of China may seem like an inchoate adaptation of Soviet precedents, or a conservative holdout in the context of global modernism as defined by post-war American abstraction. However, when evaluated on their own

49 Like many Chinese artists of the time, Shi and Zhao eventually fell victim to an increasingly radical political climate. Shelley Drake Hawks examines the impact of the Cultural Revolution on Shi Lu in her aforementioned book, *The Art of Resistance*.

terms—in the context of China’s sociopolitical conditions and transnational aspirations in the early stages of the Cold War—proponents of Maoist-era ink painting emerge as full-fledged participants in an under-recognized global effort among self-identified members of the third world to localize modern art through indigeneity. It is also important to note that even within the context of the same political framework, the two close colleagues, Shi Lu and Zhao Wangyun, developed different aesthetic and conceptual responses. Though they may both have painted similar subjects that fall under the umbrella of “realism,” the differences between their works should not be ignored. The brief analysis offered in this article shows that a reconsideration of Chinese socialist art can be helpful for an expanded understanding of postwar modernism that sidesteps entrenched historiographical binaries.



MODERNISM AND WORLD ART, 1950–72

NIKOLAS DROSOS

The visitors to the first Documenta in Kassel (1955) were greeted by two photomurals in the vestibule of the Museum Fridericianum. Created by the designer and co-organizer Arnold Bode, they consisted of photographs of artworks spanning a wide variety of periods, cultures, and media, ranging from African masks to European medieval reliefs and from Greek archaic sculptures to unidentifiable geometric ornaments. Cropped in ways that eliminated differences in context, scale, and material, the photographs invited direct formal comparisons from the viewers, a sort of preparatory exercise before encountering the modernist artworks in the exhibition. The aesthetics of the photomurals, as well as the universalist conception of art that underpinned them, owes much to André Malraux, whose famous essay “Le musée imaginaire” (1947) then held wide appeal in West Germany, especially amongst the country’s curators.¹ This ad-hoc *musée imaginaire* emphasized archaic, medieval, and tribal art, thus presenting some of the sources of modern art, while simultaneously excluding the classicism that had served as a model for Nazi

¹ On Bode’s photomurals, see Harald Kimpel, *Documenta: Mythos und Wirklichkeit* (Cologne: Dumont, 1997), 263–68; Walter Grasskamp, *Book on the Floor: André Malraux and the Imaginary Museum* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2016), 121–28. Grasskamp discusses at length Malraux’s reception in Germany and locates some of the sources for Bode’s photomural in the illustrations of “Le musée imaginaire.”

art.² Bode's photomurals rendered visible the supplementary relationship that often existed between modernism and "world art" (*Weltkunst*). As Hans Belting has shown,

World Art is an old idea complementary to modernism, designating the art of the others because or although it was mostly to be found in Western museums. It continues to signify art from all ages, the heritage of mankind. In fact, world art included art of every possible provenance while at the same time excluding it from Western mainstream art—a colonial distinction between art museums and ethnographic museums.³

In its postwar, Malraux-inflected version, such a concept of world art included previously marginalized aspects of the European tradition such as Byzantine, Romanesque, or Greek preclassical art, thus making greater claims for a "universal" definition of art that did not privilege the distinction between Western and non-Western traditions. Still, such divisions were latent in Documenta and in the greater artistic culture of postwar Europe. The exhibition itself contained mostly European modernist works, the majority German. While the reproductions in Bode's two photomurals were presented as anonymous testaments to a universal human creativity, another set of photomurals on the back side of the vestibule celebrated the individuality of the modern artist. Construed as exclusively European and male, it consisted of portraits of artists such as Piet Mondrian, Max Beckmann, Paul Klee, and others, complemented by a reproduction of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's 1926–27 painting *Eine Künstlergruppe* (*A Group of Artists*).⁴

Read together with the exhibition, Bode's photomurals encapsulate two distinct tendencies that defined both the practice of art history and

2 It is significant, however, that other inspirations for modern art, such as the art of children or the mentally ill, were expunged from Bode's mosaic of influences, since that would invite uncomfortable comparisons to the Nazi rhetoric of "degeneracy." See Walter Grasskamp, "'Degenerate Art' and Documenta I: Modernism Ostracized and Disarmed," in *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, ed. Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff (London: Routledge, 1994), 170.

3 Hans Belting, "From World Art to Global Art: View on a New Panorama," in *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds*, ed. Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, and Karlsruhe, Germany: ZKM/Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, 2013), 178.

4 This renewed emphasis on the artist's subjectivity is also evident in the exhibition catalog, which included a separate section of twelve full-page black-and-white photos of artists working in their studios or posing with their works. See the exhibition catalog, *Documenta: Kunst des XX. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Prestel, 1955).



Arnold Bode. Photomural by the entrance of Museum Fridericianum, Documenta 1, 1955.

© Documenta Archiv, Kassel. Image courtesy of Documenta Archiv. Photograph by Günther Becker.

the making of exhibitions in postwar Europe: on the one hand, the historicizing of modernism as a specifically European story; on the other, a desire for the expansion of Eurocentric concepts of art and the constitution of an all-encompassing art history that would integrate different periods and cultures into a single narrative. These tendencies resumed trends that had emerged in the first half of the 20th century and were now being deployed to repair the damages of fascism, which had denigrated both modernism and non-Western cultures.⁵ Both endeavors shared a universalist logic, evidenced by modernism's positing of abstraction as a universal visual language, as well as the cross-cultural and cross-geographical juxtapositions of world art. Modernism and

5 The prime example of a German history of world art from the interwar period is the series *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte*, which was initiated in 1923. By 1944 it contained twenty-four volumes, including Carl Einstein's volume on 20th-century art. See Carl Einstein, *Die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts: Propyläen Kunstgeschichte*, vol. XVI (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1926).



Arnold Bode. Photomural by the entrance of Museum Fridericianum, Documenta 1, 1955.

© Documenta Archiv, Kassel. Image courtesy of Documenta Archiv. Photograph by Günther Becker.

world art thus sought to speak for and about humanity at large, beyond local, historical specificities. This was the connecting thread between Bode's world art photomurals and the modern art showcased at Documenta: the universality of the former was implicitly continued in the latter. Yet modernism and world art were also separate enterprises, which were kept at a safe distance from each other. While the world art narrative focused on eras before the 19th century or on traditional cultures "untouched" by industrialization, the heroic succession of "ism"s that formed the narrative of modernism's progression focused on Paris and rarely ventured beyond Western Europe.

This article traces the frictions between modernism and world art as the two came into proximity during the 1950s. It posits the tension between the two as a key guiding principle in the history of international exhibitions of the postwar period and analyzes the strategies devised in the late 1950s and 1960s by exhibition organizers to maintain the distance between them, thus deferring the possibility of a more

geographically expansive view of modernism. Although this is a mostly Western European story, the Soviet Union serves as a counterpoint. Realist art, despite being practiced across the globe, was implicitly aligned with socialism during the Cold War. Often functioning as a catalyst for new articulations between modernism and world art, realist art provides a productive counterpoint to cases such as the first Documenta. Indeed, the interpretation of abstraction as an international visual language could only be premised on the suppression of realist trends in 20th-century art.⁶ In the context of Kassel in 1955, realism was doubly problematic, given its previous embrace by fascism and its continuing dominance in the German Democratic Republic. By presenting such a narrowly conceived retrospective of pre-1945 art, the first Documenta also suggested a strictly limited path for modernism for the years to come, one that was Eurocentric and bound toward abstraction.

Such entanglements between world art and modernism reached an apex by 1958, in the exhibition *50 Ans d'Art Moderne* (Fifty Years of Modern Art), organized under the auspices of the world exposition in Brussels, the first of the Cold War era.⁷ While Western modernism, world art, and realism were kept at a safe distance in Kassel, the three came into direct conflict in Brussels. Already in the fall of 1955, an International Committee of Fine Arts, consisting of critics and museum professionals from Europe, convened in Brussels with the aim of planning the official art exhibitions of the fair.⁸ This core group

6 Ian Wallace, "The First Documenta, 1955," in *Documenta 13: The Book of Books* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2012), 66. Despite the pronounced national focus of Documenta, major, politically engaged realist artists from Germany (such as Käthe Kollwitz) were excluded, along with most artists associated with the *Neue Sachlichkeit* and other realist currents of the interwar years—with the exception of Otto Dix.

7 A version of this section has appeared previously, in Nikolas Drosos, "Reluctantly Global: The Exhibition 'Fifty Years of Modern Art' (Brussels, 1958)," *Post: Notes on Modern and Contemporary Art around the Globe* (blog), Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 15, 2017, http://post.at.moma.org/content_items/1072-reluctantly-global-fifty-years-of-modern-art-at-the-1958-brussels-expo.

8 Its members were David C. Röell, director of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam; Philip Hendy, director of the National Gallery in London; Herbert Read, director of the Institute of Contemporary Art in London; Oto Bihalji-Merin, critic from Yugoslavia; Jean Cassou, chief curator of the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris; Gino Bacchetti, chief of the Italian Department of Antiquities and Fine Arts; and Kurt Martin, director of the Karlsruhe Museum. For regular reports on the meetings, see the issues of *Objectif '58*, a magazine issued in French and English that focused on the preparation of the Expo, specifically issue 14 (April 1956), 17–18, and issue 21 (December 1956), 40. For a summary of the meetings, see "La section internationale des Beaux-Arts," *Le Point: L'Exposition universelle et internationale de Bruxelles fait le point*, no. 2 (1957), 45.



Installation shot from the exhibition *50 Ans d'Art Moderne*, Brussels, 1958.
Image courtesy of the State Archives in Brussels, Belgium. Photographer unknown.

(*comité restreint*) was expanded by the addition of an International Committee of Experts that had less involvement than the core group and whose precise membership remained in flux. By the opening of the fair, the two committees included twenty-six members from a wide range of countries.⁹ From an early stage, it was decided that two official exhibitions would form the core of the expo's fine arts program: one that would contain masterpieces from all periods and cultures, provisionally entitled *L'Homme et l'Art*, and a separate retrospective exhibition of modern art from the past fifty years, titled *50 Ans d'Art Moderne*.

As stated in the promotional material for the expo, the mandate of *L'Homme et l'Art* was to demonstrate the “fundamental unity of human sensibility that lies underneath all the different art forms.”¹⁰

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- 9 In addition to the members of the core group listed above, the committee of experts included Mikhail Alpatov (USSR), Cevad Menduh Altar (Turkey), Guglielmo de Angelis d'Ossat (Italy), Diogo de Macedo (Portugal), Dimitrios Evangelidis (Greece), Fernando Gamboa (Mexico), Atsuma Imaizumi (Japan), Francisco Iniguez Almech (Spain), Salah Kamel (Egypt), Canon Lanotte (Belgium), Vinzenz Oberhammer (Austria), Natalia Sokolova (USSR), Georges W. Staempfli (USA), Michel Stoffel (Luxemburg), Jan Tomes (Czechoslovakia), Stanisław Teisseyre (Poland), John Walker (USA), and L. J. F. Wijnsenbeek (Netherlands). See Émile Langui, ed., *50 ans d'art moderne* (Brussels: Expositions Internationales des Beaux-Arts, 1958), exhibition catalog, unpaginated.
- 10 Maurice Lambillote, “Synthèse,” in *Exposition universelle et internationale de Bruxelles, 1958*, vol. 8 (Brussels: Commissariat général du Gouvernement près l'Exposition universelle et internationale de Bruxelles 1958, 1959–1962), 20. Except where noted, all translations are by the author.

André Malraux was yet again a key source, since his “Musée imaginaire” was repeatedly quoted by its organizers.¹¹ Like many other universalist projects of the time, *L’Homme et l’Art* involved the flattening of cultural and historical specificities in favor of loose thematic groupings according to “universal” human experiences. Already in 1956, these sections had been defined and titled according to the formula “L’Homme face à . . .” (Man Facing . . .), followed by themes including the cosmos, God, himself, maternity, society, death, love, the unknown, war and peace, and work and play.¹² Instead of following the conventional division according to periods and cultures commonly found in encyclopedic museums, this temporary exhibition aimed for the sort of cross-cultural comparisons that abounded in Malraux’s writings.

Malraux’s “Musée imaginaire” relied on photography and its ability to remove artworks from their contexts, making them equivalent through processes of selection, cropping, and reproduction. The decision to forgo photography and recreate a “museum without walls” (as “Le Musée imaginaire” is often translated in English) with three-dimensional objects inside a physical exhibition space was profoundly paradoxical. Burdened by the constraints of scale, distance, provenance, and historical and political contexts, these physical objects posed a challenge to the universalist fiction of world art. While enticing on paper, this trope became untenable when confronted with the real-world difficulties of organizing a large loan exhibition against a background of political divisions. Indeed, *L’Homme et l’Art* was cancelled in late 1957, with the Belgian organizers offering little explanation other than “certain events of international politics,” which were never named but could have ranged from the Suez Crisis to the Soviet invasion of Hungary, to anticolonial conflicts in Africa, including the Congo, which at the time was a Belgian colony.¹³ Eventually the project returned to the realm of the imaginary: its only public traces are some mentions in an essay published in the world exposition’s official eight-volume catalog, which is replete with clichés about art’s ability to

11 See, for example, *Objectif ’58*, no. 14 (April 1956), 18: “This audacious plan will endeavor to give concrete form to the Imaginary Museum of André Malraux.”

12 “La section internationale des Beaux-Arts,” 41.

13 Lambillote, “Synthèse,” 20–21. The organizers seem to have hoped until the last minute that the exhibition would open, albeit toward the end of the fair, in August 1958. Mentions of a specific opening date for the exhibition can be found as late as April 1958. See *Objectif ’58*, no. 37 (April 1958), 15–17.

represent our shared humanity and the expressions of hope that L'Homme et l'Art would be realized in the future.¹⁴

The cancellation left 50 Ans d'Art Moderne as the only major official art exhibition of the 1958 Expo, one that now had the task to take up the humanist rhetoric of art's universality in the context of the 20th century. The separation between world art and modernism that was upheld in Kassel collapsed in Brussels as the established format of the modern art retrospective confronted the task of showcasing a 20th-century version of world art that underlined unity rather than difference across recent art from around the world. Despite this new development, the Western European curators and critics in the organizing committee envisioned a conventional narrative around familiar "ism"s focusing on French, German, and Italian artists. Other members of the committee, such as the Yugoslav critic Oto Bihalji-Merin, insisted on a selection of works that would be more geographically inclusive and would emphasize artists from lesser-known international localities.¹⁵ To this proposal, the chief of the Fine Arts Committee, Émile Langui, sternly responded with his refusal to "make this exhibition a sort of tribunal of rectifiers of injustices against the *petites littératures* because they have been suppressed for a thousand reasons."¹⁶ While it appears that the majority of the organizers envisioned a sort of internationalist version of Documenta, they were hesitant to rewrite the extant history of modern art. If important artists from "young nations" (as they called them) were to be showcased, they suggested this happen within their respective national pavilions.¹⁷

The exhibition's structure was another point of contention. While Langui proposed a conventional sequencing of schools and movements, the ever-vocal Bihalji-Merin countered that this form of classification was strictly European, if not Parisian, and cannot be applied to the whole world.¹⁸ He pointedly stated that the established terminology could not operate across countries, even within Europe itself: the *fauves* of France would be the Expressionists of Germany, yet the movements

14 Ibid., 20.

15 For a detailed account of the exhibition's organization based on archival sources, see Florence Hespel, "Bruxelles 1958: Carrefour mondial de l'art," in *Expo '58: L'art contemporain à l'exposition universelle*, ed. Virginie Devilez (Ghent: Snoeck, and Brussels: Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, 2008), 13–59.

16 Ibid., 21.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

are hardly commensurate. Belgian critics and curators on the committee wanted to end the exhibition with abstraction. By contrast, Bihalji-Merin, along with the Italian Gino Bacchetti and the Pole Stanisław Teisseyre, suggested that it would be unwise for the exhibition to foreclose any further possibilities for contemporary art. Instead, they advocated an open-ended narrative ending with “a question mark” rather than a neat culmination with abstraction.¹⁹ Additional pressure came from experts based in countries with rich collections of ancient art, such as Greece, Egypt, and Turkey, whose inclusion on the committee may well have been motivated by a desire to borrow their national treasures for the L’Homme et l’Art exhibition.²⁰

Ultimately, 50 Ans d’Art Moderne comprised 348 works by 240 artists from thirty-six countries and included a significant number of artists from outside Europe and North America, an unprecedented fact for a large European survey exhibition.²¹ The Venice Biennale boasted a similar diversity, though in this case it was presented through a decentralized system of national pavilions rather than a single exhibition.²² Also uncommon for European surveys of modernism was the inclusion of a significant number of early 20th-century American works shown alongside works of Abstract Expressionism, which was better known in Europe thanks to US-organized traveling exhibitions.

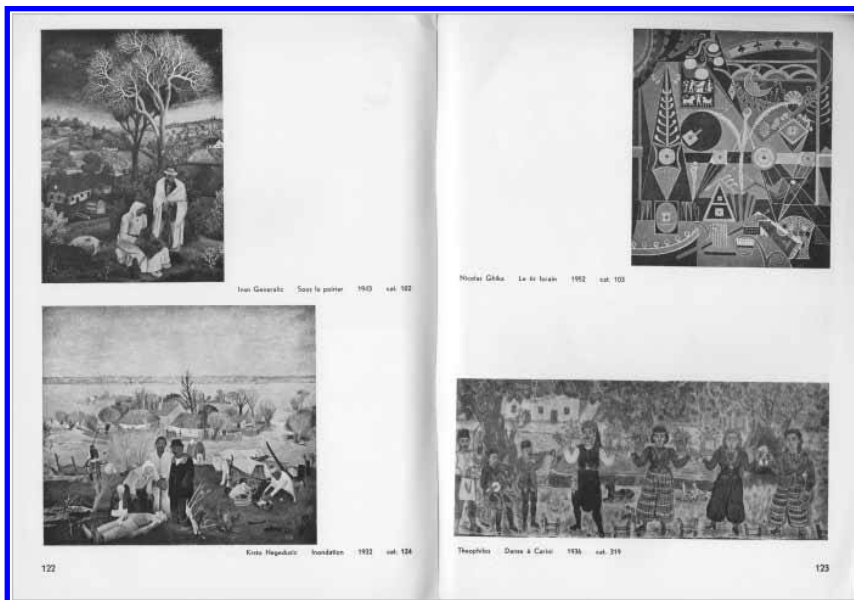
Far from being a curatorial choice, such diversity was imposed by the mandatory internationalism of the world exposition and a curatorial

19 Ibid., 22.

20 Their inclusion in the committee after the exhibition’s cancellation presumably led to the inclusion of a number of Greek, Egyptian, and Turkish modern artists in 50 Ans d’Art Moderne, including Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghikas and Theophilos Chatzimichael from Greece; Abdel Hadi El-Gazzar, Mohamed Nagy, Sayed Abdel Rasoul, and Gamal el-Sagini from Egypt; and Zeki Faik İzer and İlhan Koman from Turkey.

21 In addition to the aforementioned artists, these included Yūichi Inoue, Yūkei Tejima, Tomioka Tessai, and Ryūzaburō Umehara from Japan; Candido Portinari from Brazil; Mordecai Ardon from Israel; and José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and Rufino Tamayo from Mexico.

22 By 1956, for example, the Biennale counted thirty-four national participants. See the chart published in *La XXVIII Biennale di Venezia: Catalogo* (Venice: Alfieri, 1956), iv–v. One should note that the increased presence of noncanonical artists in Venice did not necessarily mean increased attention paid to them by the Western European art establishment. For example, in his exhaustive account of the postwar biennales published in 1958, the Belgian critic André de Ridder focuses on the French and Italian pavilions in great detail, but often ignores non-European contributions, often stating cursorily that there was too much art to keep up. See André de Ridder, *De levende kunst gezien te Venetië. XXIV Biennale 1948, XXV Biennale 1950, XXVI Biennale 1952, XXVII Biennale 1954, XXVIII Biennale 1956* (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1958).



Page spread from the exhibition catalog *50 Ans d'Art Moderne*, 1958, showing works from the "Naïf" section, by artists Ivan Generalić, Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghikas, Theophilos Chatzimichael, and Krsto Hegedušić.

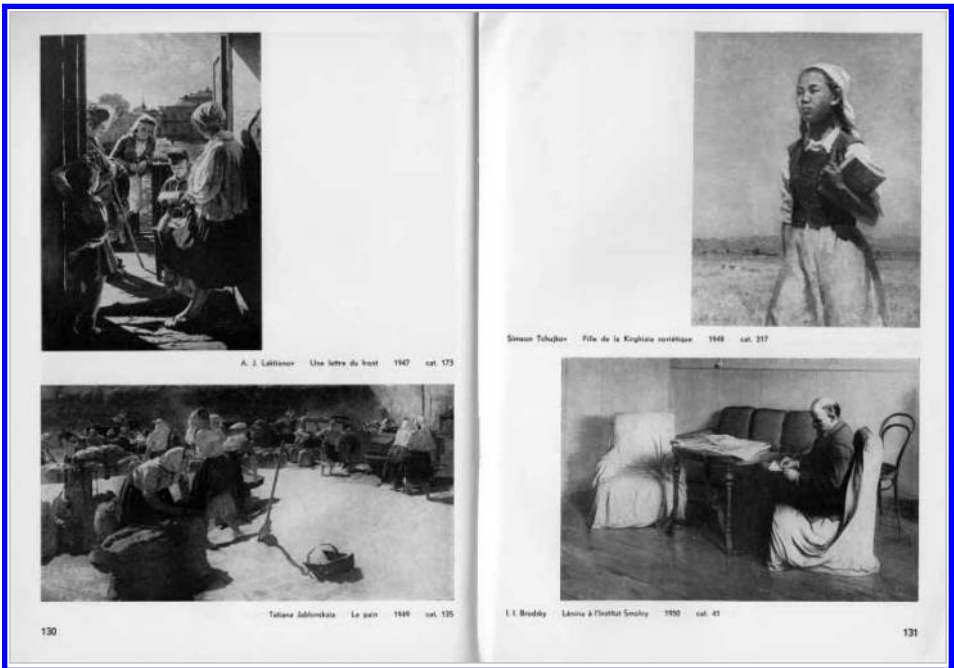
committee conceived for the very different program of the now defunct show *L'Homme et l'Art*. More importantly, capaciousness in this case did not lead to integration. While the exhibition catalog reproduced all the works, its essay, authored by Langui, discussed only those from Western Europe.²³ Moreover, it organized the works according to the familiar succession of "ism"s in Western modernism—Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism, and so on—and summarily relegated the works from Egypt, Turkey, and the periphery of Europe (Portugal, Yugoslavia, and Greece) to the category of "Naïfs,"²⁴ despite the fact that many of

23 Langui, *50 ans d'art moderne*.

24 The prominence of the "naïf" category can perhaps be attributed to Bihalji-Merin, who had dedicated much of his work to the study and promotion of outsider art. Concurrently with *50 Ans d'Art Moderne*, an exhibition entitled *Les Peintres Naïfs du Douanier Rousseau à Nos Jours* was held in the Belgian city of Knokke, curated by Bihalji-Merin. The exhibition led to Bihalji-Merin's book *Modern Primitives: Masters of Naïve Painting* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1959), which was followed by ever-larger publications on naïve art in English in the following decades, such as *Masters of Naïve Art: A History and Worldwide Survey* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971) and (with Nebojša-Bato Tomašević) *World Encyclopedia of Naïve Art: A Hundred Years of Naïve Art* (London: Bracken Books, 1985). Each subsequent iteration expanded its geographic scope: the strictly European checklist of 1959 had expanded by 1985 to include artists from all continents. Still, Bihalji-Merin's criteria for designating an artist as *naïf* were quite strict, and he would not have agreed with the catchall employment of the term in *50 Ans d'Art Moderne*.

those artists could have been integrated into established movements. For example, although Abdel Hadi El-Gazzar from Egypt was actively involved in the development of Egyptian Surrealism, he was isolated from the Surrealist section of the show. Similarly, Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghikas from Greece had studied in Paris and worked in a Cubist idiom but was featured in the catalog next to his compatriot (self-taught) artist Theophilos Chatzimichael rather than with the more fitting European Cubists.

The *petites littératures*, as Langui called them, were thus placed adjacent to the exhibition's narrative of modern art and did not become a part of it. Their wholesale classification as "naïf" belied the initial reason why they were included in the first place, as stand-ins for L'Homme et l'Art and its broader geographical scope. The primitivism inherent in much of the postwar world art enterprise thus became the primitivism of the "naïfs" when transposed to the 20th century. The naïf and the primitive emerged as two sides of the same coin—the first operating synchronically, the latter diachronically.



Page spread from the exhibition catalog *50 Ans d'Art Moderne*, 1958, showing works from the Socialist Realist section by Aleksandr Laktionov, Semyon Chuikov, Isaak Brodskii, and Tetyana Yablonska.

The designations functioned as a rhetorical maneuver that served to enforce and preserve the discourse that underpinned a Eurocentric conception of modern art.

The admixture of modernism and world art engendered subtle deviations from the standard narratives of modernism's history, yet it did not entirely destabilize them. Realism, which had been omitted from Documenta, made the most dramatic incursion into 50 Ans d'Art Moderne, which showcased a number of oversize Soviet Socialist Realist works by artists such as Aleksandr Gerasimov, Vera Mukhina, and Isaak Brodskii, many made in the late 1930s at the height of Stalinism. Their inclusion had been imposed by Soviet authorities in exchange for key works by Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne, Matisse, and Picasso from the collections of Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morozov at the Hermitage and the Pushkin Museum.²⁵ For their part, the curators of 50 Ans d'Art Moderne were eager to exhibit paintings that had not been shown outside of Russia since the October Revolution.

This extensive display of Soviet Socialist Realist art stood in defiant opposition to the rhetoric of modern art's inevitable progression toward abstraction that the exhibition aimed to espouse. Socialist Realism had its own section in the exhibition catalog, since it did not fit into any of the "ism"s of canonical modernist art nor under the catchall label *naïf* used for the non-Western works in the show. Langui's essay swiftly changed its tone in this section, relaying Socialist Realism's basic theoretical tenets while also keeping a firm distance from it. In his text, Langui wonders whether the cause of Socialist Realism could be served better by such painters as Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco from Mexico or Renato Guttuso from Italy, who were all committed to political figuration that was not attached to the Soviet academic model.²⁶

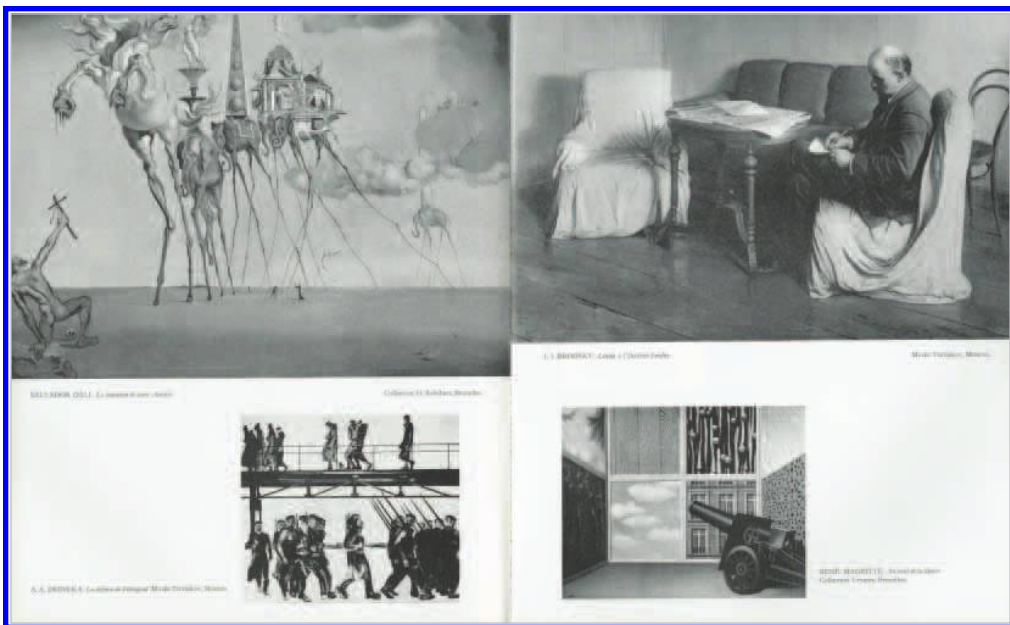
Langui's reference to Mexican and Italian realist painters in the exhibition catalog is an oblique acknowledgment of the other extant model for exhibiting modern art, the Venice Biennale, which was also undergoing deep transformations at the time. After its cooptation by the Italian fascist regime during the interwar period, the Biennale followed a distinct leftward shift during the 1950s, when realist painting

25 Hespel, 26.

26 Ibid.

and communist artists left an indelible mark.²⁷ Arguably, it was politically engaged realism that also opened the Biennale's doors to non-European artists. In 1950, the Mexican pavilion showcased the political painting of Rivera, Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, creating a sensation and garnering a major award for Siqueiros.²⁸ Thus, while realist painting was the exception in 50 Ans d'Art Moderne and had been entirely omitted from Documenta, it was largely the rule for the Venice Biennale at the time.²⁹ The Soviet Union was absent from such realist fervor with its pavilion, which had occupied a central location in the Giardini since 1913 but was closed between 1934 and 1956. This hiatus coincided with the imposition of Socialist Realism as the official aesthetic dogma in the USSR.³⁰ At the reopened 1956 pavilion, however, rather than announcing a new, post-Stalinist direction in the art of the Soviet Union, visitors instead met a retrospective of canonical works from the preceding twenty years.³¹ Paradoxically, the Soviet contribution to the 1956 Venice Biennale approximated the retrospective logic of the first Documenta: it also sought to reverse the isolation established since the 1930s, while at the same time historicizing and solidifying the USSR's own alternative history of 20th-century art. Expunging the experimental tendencies of the avant-garde, this was a history of

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- 27 For an overview of the Biennale in the 1950s, see Nancy Jachec, *Politics and Painting at the Venice Biennale, 1948–64: Italy and the Idea of Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007). See also John Berger's review of a painting by Guttuso: John Berger, "A Social Realist Painting at the Biennale," *Burlington Magazine* 94, no. 595 (October 1952), 294–97.
- 28 Philip Stein, *Siqueiros: His Life and Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1994), 184–87.
- 29 Even the United States pavilion, under the management of the Museum of Modern Art, showcased Ben Shahn's realist paintings in 1954, alongside Willem de Kooning's works. See Frances K. Pohl, "An American in Venice: Ben Shahn and the United States Foreign Policy at the 1954 Venice Biennale, or Portrait of the Artist as American Liberal," *Art History* 4, no. 1 (March 1981): 80–113.
- 30 On the history of the Russian and Soviet participation in the Venice Biennale, see Nikolai Molok, ed., *Russian Artists at the Venice Biennale, 1895–2013* (Moscow: Stella Art Foundation, 2013). In 1936, the pavilion hosted an exhibition of Italian Futurism, filling in the void left by the withdrawal of the Soviets from the exhibition. Andrei Kovalev has argued that the Soviet withdrawal from the Biennale had less to do with politics and the relations between the USSR and fascist Italy, and more with the Biennale's salon model, which was inadequate for fulfilling Soviet ambitions for international propaganda—a desire served better by world fairs, such as that of Paris in 1937. See Andrei Kovalev, "Empty Space? The Soviet Pavilion during the Cold War," in *ibid.*, 70–79.
- 31 See the pamphlet *L'arte Sovietica alla XXVIII Biennale Internazionale d'Arte di Venezia* (Venice: Giugno, 1956).



Page spread from the official catalog of the 1958 Brussels World Exposition, showing (clockwise from top left): Salvador Dalí, *Temptation of St. Anthony* (1946); Isak Brodskii, *Lenin at Smol'nyi* (1930); René Magritte, *On the Threshold of Freedom* (1930); and Aleksandr Deineka, *Defense of Petrograd* (1928).

realism's long-heralded triumph, mirroring the teleological narratives of abstraction on display in Documenta and 50 Ans d'Art Moderne. The presence of works such as Semyon Chuikov's *Daughter of Soviet Kirghizia* (1948), for example, made a subtle claim for realism's reach beyond Europe and the urban centers of Moscow and Leningrad, to Central Asia, the People's Republic of China, and beyond. Thus, while Western European modernism's dominance was premised on maintaining its distance from the art produced in other parts of the world, Soviet-inflected realism's international relevance arguably hinged on embracing them.

50 Ans d'Art Moderne represents a crucial moment in the history of exhibitions. Its linear, Eurocentric vision of art inherited from Documenta was adulterated by the eclectic spirit of the 1950s Biennale, with its embrace of realism and overtures to non-European art. Out of this unlikely and haphazard amalgam emerged an exhibition that, in retrospect, can be seen as an accidental precursor to more recent shows such as *Postwar: Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965*, at the Haus der Kunst in Munich (2016–17).³² In terms of inclusion, the organi-

32 See Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes, eds., *Postwar: Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965* (Munich: Haus der Kunst; Prestel, 2016), exhibition catalog.

zation of 50 Ans d'Art Moderne appears to have led to a number of the non-European artists represented there reappearing in similar large-scale exhibitions shortly thereafter. The second installment of Documenta in 1959, which focused on art produced since 1945, had a somewhat broader geographical scope than its predecessor and included artists such as Yūichi Inoue and Yūkei Teshima from Japan and Mordecai Ardon from Israel, who had been shown in Brussels the year prior.³³ As Walter Grasskamp has pointed out, the agenda of Documenta 2 was to advance a thesis supporting the universality of abstraction.³⁴ As was often the case with such universalist discourse in the postwar period, the aim was less the inclusion of non-European cultures than the universalization of European idioms. Accordingly, Inoue and Teshima, both practitioners of calligraphy, which was undergoing a process of adaptation and renewal in Japan, were brought into the context of European gestural abstraction, including the French Informel movement.³⁵

50 Ans d'Art Moderne also proved influential for subsequent representations of Soviet Socialist Realism outside the USSR. In fact, the awkward inclusion of Soviet works in the show was gradually recast in another light over the following years. Thus, the eight-volume official catalog of the entire Brussels Expo, published after the fact in 1961, reproduced many works from 50 Ans d'Art Moderne.³⁶ While the works of non-European artists were entirely omitted, some Soviet works were shown prominently. On one page spread, Isaak Brodskii's *Lenin at Smol'nyi* and Aleksandr Deineka's *Defense of Petrograd* (1928) are reproduced alongside Salvador Dalí's *Temptation of St. Anthony* (1946) and René Magritte's *On the Threshold of Freedom* (1930). Unlike the original catalog of 50 Ans d'Art Moderne, which had isolated Socialist Realism from other movements, this playful (albeit jarring) juxtaposition assimilates Soviet art into a broader history of naturalist painting in modern art. A similar strategy appears in the accompanying text, where these

33 See the catalog, *Documenta II: Kunst nach 1945* (Cologne: M. DuMont Schauberg, 1959).

34 Grasskamp, *The Book on the Floor*, 127.

35 On postwar Japanese calligraphy and its relationship to Art Informel, see Alexandra Munroe, *Scream against the Sky: Japanese Art after 1945* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1994), 129–32. Already in 1955, the Belgian artist Pierre Alechinsky collaborated with the Japanese Shiryū Morita on the film *Calligraphie japonaise* (1956), which explored the affinities between Informel and Japanese calligraphy. See also Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 77–81.

36 *Exposition universelle et internationale de Bruxelles 1958* (Brussels: Commissariat général du Gouvernement près l'Exposition universelle et internationale de Bruxelles 1958, 1959–1962).

works are likened to paintings by the American artists Ben Shahn, Edward Hopper, and Charles Sheeler.³⁷ Rather than a curatorial inconvenience imposed by Soviet authorities, the inclusion of Socialist Realist works was now recast as a major accomplishment of the Brussels World Exposition that appeased Cold War antagonisms and instigated a *rap-prochement* of artistic traditions from opposite sides of the Iron Curtain.

At about the same time, an alternative articulation of modernism and world art was emerging east of the Iron Curtain, in the form of the eight-volume Soviet *Universal History of Art* (*Vseobshchaya istoriya iskusstv*). Commissioned by the Soviet Academy of the Arts, it was published between 1956 and 1966 and subsequently translated into German in East Germany.³⁸ This was not the first such large-scale undertaking in the Soviet Union. Between 1948 and 1955, art historian Mikhail Alpatov had published a three-volume art history under the same title.³⁹ While it did contain shorter chapters on Islamic, South Asian, Chinese, and Japanese art, Alpatov's history mostly focused on European art, and none of the non-European sections ventured past the 18th century.⁴⁰ Like its Western European counterparts, it upheld a division between world art and modernism.⁴¹ The new iteration of the

37 Paul Davay, "50 ans d'art moderne," in *Exposition universelle et internationale de Bruxelles, 1958: Vol. 5. Les Arts* (Brussels: Commissariat général du Gouvernement près l'Exposition universelle et internationale de Bruxelles 1958, 1960), 13.

38 Boris V. Veimarn et al., eds., *Vseobshchaya istoriya iskusstv* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1956–66). See also its German translation, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Kunst* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1956–74). The adjective *vseobshchii* is usually translated as "universal" or "general." Its etymology suggests something that is common (*obshchii*) to all (*vse*). Technically, the work consists of six volumes, but volumes two (on medieval art) and six (on 20th-century art) are each divided into two books, thus resulting in a total of eight physical volumes of approximately equal length (almost one thousand pages each, including illustrations and back matter).

39 Mikhail V. Alpatov, *Vseobshchaya istoriya iskusstv*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1948–55). The fourth volume of Alpatov's history, which would cover modern art, had not been published by the time the Soviet Academy's *Universal History of Art* appeared. From the 1960s onward, a revised and expanded version of Alpatov's original work was translated into many languages of the Eastern Bloc, including Romanian (1962–67), Hungarian (1963–65), Polish (1968–69), and Slovak (1977–78), thus becoming a standard reference work for art history in Eastern Europe.

40 The only exceptions were brief mentions of Hokusai and 19th-century decorative art in Japan. All the non-Western sections are grouped together with ancient and medieval European art in the first volume (1948).

41 For detailed comparisons between such general art histories from both sides of the iron curtain, see Robert Born, "World Art Histories and the Cold War," *Journal of Art Historiography* 9 (December 2013), <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/born.pdf>; and Vardan Azatyan, "Cold-War Twins: Mikhail Alpatov's *A Universal History of Arts* and Ernst Gombrich's *The Story of Art*," *Human Affairs* 19, no. 3 (2009): 289–96.

Universal History of Art was therefore a marked departure, as it contained extensive sections on 19th- and 20th-century art from outside Western Europe, including substantial accounts of art in countries as diverse as Indonesia, Australia, Ethiopia, and Argentina. This is not to say that its narrative is a unified one. The Cold War divisions are evident on every level of this history, from its abundant use of Marxist-Leninist clichés to the book's very structure. For example, the project's final two volumes (on 20th-century art) are divided politically rather than chronologically, with one volume dedicated to countries "on the path to socialism" and the other to capitalist countries. The volume on socialist countries also covers the presocialist histories of such countries as China, Cuba, and satellites of the Soviet Union such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, none of which could be said to have been on a definite "path to socialism" until 1945. The book thus subsumed these pre-1945 art histories under a teleology that prioritized early-20th-century tendencies toward the official adoption of Socialist Realism in all its different national variations.

Although, unsurprisingly, realism is privileged in the volume on 20th-century art, abstraction and other avant-garde tendencies were not entirely expunged. Works by artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Kazimir Malevich, Piet Mondrian, and Jackson Pollock are reproduced and discussed, albeit disparagingly. For example, Dada "did not bring any serious aesthetic results, but it is instead instructive as a socio-psychological symptom of the time, as a manifestation of a collapse, which is typical for the incurable crisis of the old culture in the era of imperialism."⁴² Predictably, it is the art of communist artists and "fellow travelers," such as Renato Guttuso or Diego Rivera, that is praised and analyzed at greater length.⁴³ The *Universal History of Art* also includes an extensive discussion of American 20th-century art, especially the realist tendencies of the pre-1945 period. This suggestion of an affinity between Soviet and American art challenges the binary interpretations of Cold War culture and echoes the *rapprochement* advanced by the official catalog of the Brussels World Exposition.

42 Yuri D. Kolpinski, "Iskusstvo Frantsii," in *Vseobshchaya istoriya iskusstv*, vol. 6, book 1, ed. Boris V. Veimarn and Yuri D. Kolpinski (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo "Iskusstvo," 1965), 93.

43 *Vseobshchaya istoriya iskusstv*, vol. 6, book 1, 237–49 and 359–75.

In the Soviet model of the *Universal History of Art*, realism allows the world art narrative to extend into the 20th century while preserving its expanded geographical scope. The colonial division between European modernism and so-called naïf art that underpinned 50 Ans d'Art Moderne is thus unraveled, yet it is also displaced into a new division, that of realist and antirealist tendencies and their supposed political orientations. While these trans-historical conceptions of realism have their roots in the 1930s, at the time they were being mapped onto a postwar world of shifting alliances between the Soviet Union and sympathetic countries and allies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Despite its ideological and formal biases, the Soviet articulation of modernism and world art, as emblemized in the *Universal History of Art*, allowed for some important insights and generated an elaborate archive of global modernism, as one would call it today. The book included extensive chapters on 20th-century art from Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, subjects that are still conspicuously lacking from many reference volumes and textbooks on modern art today.⁴⁴ This radical equality stands in stark contrast with the discomfort of the organizers of the 50 Ans d'Art Moderne regarding the sudden incursion of art from “young nations”—an apprehension that, likewise, still has echoes in art history and exhibition practice to this day.

In 1967, a year after all volumes of the *Universal History of Art* had been published in the Soviet Union, a new large-scale exhibition project in North America revisited the trope of art's universality. Entitled *Man and His World*, the exhibition was part of the Montreal World Exposition of that year.⁴⁵ In many ways, the exhibition was a resuscitation and realization of the aborted *L'Homme et l'Art* from the fair in Brussels, showcasing objects from different periods and cultures organized around a similar list of “universally human” themes: man and work, man and love, man and play, and so forth. The exhibition was an

44 Specifically, separate chapters of varying lengths were dedicated to the 20th-century art of these different countries and regions: France, Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, East and West Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Spain, Scandinavian countries and Finland, the United States, Canada, Latin America, Australia, Japan, India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Indonesia, Burma (Myanmar), Afghanistan, Turkey, Arab countries, Ethiopia, South Africa, USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania, Mongolia, China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba.

45 See the catalog, *Man and His World: International Fine Arts Exhibition, Expo 67, Montreal* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1967).

impressive undertaking that included canonical works from major museums, such as Millet's *Gleaners* (1857) from the Louvre. Prominent museum professionals, such as Alfred Barr, director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Mexican curator Fernando Gamboa, and Émile Langui, the chief of the Fine Arts committee of the Brussels Expo, comprised the organizing committee. The committee also included André Malraux himself, then the French Minister of Culture under Charles de Gaulle. Having planted the seed of such an endeavor twenty years prior with the first publication of his "Musée imaginaire," Malraux now was involved in one of the most prominent translations of his concept into the realm of the physical exhibition space.

Whereas the relationship between world art and modernism was still being determined in Brussels, in Montreal it crystalized into a pattern still operative in many museums and art history departments today. While a significant number of works from non-European cultures were included, they were all from premodern times: ancient Egyptian sculptures, Chinese Song dynasty ink paintings, or objects of unspecified date, such as African and Oceanian masks. With the exception of a single ink painting by the Japanese artist Shiryu Morita, all works from the 20th century originated in Europe and North America. The division was made even more explicit by the chronological arrangement of each thematic section, all invariably beginning with ancient and "primitive" objects and ending with canonical works by European modern masters. The works of non-European modernisms were thus eliminated, and with them, the need for the "naïf" designation. Like the first Documenta of 1955, the exhibition acknowledged modern art's sources in the archaic and the primitive, but it employed those forms to construct a thoroughly Eurocentric teleology. Even the Socialist Realism of the Soviet Union seems to have found a fixed, yet limited place in the scheme: only two Soviet works were included, Brodskii's *Lenin at Smol'nyi* and Deineka's *Defense of Petrograd*, the same two reproduced in the Brussels Expo catalog of 1961.

The exhibition in Montreal is arguably the last instance in this series of projects that sought to reconcile world art and modernism; it marked the realization and exhaustion of Malraux's vision, which would be put to rest a year later, with the emergence of the 1968 movements that revolted against the conciliatory culture of the post-war generation. In addition, it was de Gaulle's government, of which Malraux was a member, that was the target of the May 1968 protests

in France. By the time the landmark Documenta 5 opened in 1972, all universalist pretenses of the past had been dropped. Curator Harald Szeemann brought a higher degree of authorship into the process of selecting and organizing the exhibition, thus establishing a model for curatorial practice that is still valid today.⁴⁶ The most famous section of this exhibition was entitled “Individual Mythologies,” stressing the new direction of Documenta toward specific, thematically grouped individual artistic responses. The impulse to survey, which had defined previous iterations of Documenta and had connected them to the encyclopedic logic of museums both imaginary and real, was replaced by more schematic forms of selection by an individual curator. Inextricably bound to the curator’s own lived experience and biases, this highly “authored” selection was now almost entirely limited to Western European and American art.⁴⁷ If Szeemann’s exhibition was one of the sites where “contemporary art” was constituted, then in 1972 this new category had a distinctly North Atlantic orientation.⁴⁸ A renewed engagement with broader geographies, untethered from the aporias of postwar universalism, would only emerge in Europe a couple of decades later, reaching its apex with the eleventh iteration of Documenta, curated by Okwui Enwezor in 2002. Still, Szeemann’s exhibition was capacious in other ways: it included displays of political propaganda posters, religious kitsch, advertising, and other modes of nonartistic image-making that often appear at the margins of mainstream society.⁴⁹ These objects functioned as a counterpoint and framing device for the contemporary art that was shown adjacent to them, in a way that was structurally similar to the aforementioned photomurals by Arnold Bode at the first Documenta of 1955. The universality of world art in 1955 was,

46 On the abolition of the exhibition council and the centralization of decision-making in Documenta 5, see Hans-Joachim Müller, *Harald Szeemann: Exhibition Maker* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2006), 38. On the establishment of the star-curator model at Documenta 5, see Charles Green and Anthony Gardner, *Biennials, Triennials, and Documenta* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2016), 19–47. See also Tobia Bezzola and Roman Kurzmeyer, eds., *Harald Szeemann—with by through because towards despite: Catalog of All Exhibitions 1957–2005* (Vienna: Springer, 2007).

47 Szeemann became increasingly interested in art from Eastern Europe and China during the 1990s, and is often seen as pioneering their inclusion in Western European exhibitions. Still, this was not the case in the early 1970s.

48 See Green and Gardner, *Biennials, Triennials, and Documenta*, 20–21.

49 See the catalog *Documenta 5: Befragung der Realität, Bildwelten heute* (Kassel: Verlag Documenta, 1972).

in 1972, replaced by the ubiquity of commercial images, propaganda, and kitsch.

Documenta 5 also marked an endpoint for the admixture of Socialist Realism into exhibitions of modern and contemporary art. Szeemann (who, ironically, had the official title of Secretary General in Kassel) had intended for a display of “classic” Socialist Realism from the 1930s and 1940s to be displayed at Kassel’s Neue Galerie, along with a reproduction of the iconic sculptural ensemble of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the *Rent Collection Courtyard*.⁵⁰ However, none of these loans were secured, though the exhibition catalog acknowledges their absence by listing Socialist Realism as a separate section, followed by a blank page and a mention of the declined loans.⁵¹ Had these works been lent to Documenta 5, their status would have been ambiguous: would they have formed part of the corpus of kitsch and vernacular images, or would they function as autonomous artworks, in the manner of Western photorealist paintings by artists such as Richard Estes, Chuck Close, and others that were also part of the section on realism? In any case, the point is that, yet again, Socialist Realism was envisioned as a foil against which Western artistic discourse could be articulated.

The absence of Socialist Realism and non-Euro-American art from Documenta 5 concludes this story of negotiations between world art, modernism, and indeed, realism. Arguably, the retiring of the trope of world art and its universalist aspirations accompanied the withering away of modernist narratives of art. By 1972, Western contemporary art was neither articulated in opposition to realism nor construed as an endpoint for an all-encompassing fiction of world art. In the minds of Western curators, critics, and viewers, it was the *only* possible art, as attested by the checklist of Documenta 5. The tension between modernism and world art was never fully settled. The strategies devised for negotiating it, such as the designation of non-European artists as naïfs,

50 Ibid. The exhibition’s film program, which consisted mostly of experimental films by Kenneth Anger, Paul Sharits, Stan Brakhage, and others, also included a filmed performance of the Beijing opera *Red Detachment of Women* (1964), one of the eight “model operas” of the Cultural Revolution.

51 Ibid. See also the correspondence between Szeemann and the Soviet authorities, Getty Research Institute Archives, Harald Szeemann papers, Box 302 folio 7 and Box 306 folio 19. A part of the correspondence with Chinese officials is reproduced in Roland Nachtigäller, Friedhelm Scharf, and Karin Stengel, eds., *Wiedervorlage d5: Eine Befragung des Archivs zur Documenta 1972* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2001), 118–20.

still relied on troubling colonial legacies, which several of the exhibitions discussed here never quite managed to move beyond. The problem of a so-called global perspective on modernism became an impasse and was eventually deferred until the collapse of the Cold War world order. The pressing need for a global art history and curatorial practice today thus calls for a thorough historical revisiting of the aporias discussed here, which first laid bare the inner contradictions of late modernism's universalist claims.

This article has been cited by:

1. Christianna Bonin. 2021. The art of the Sixtiers in Soviet Kazakhstan, or how to make a portrait from a skull. *Central Asian Survey* **3**, 1-23. [[Crossref](#)]

ON CURATING POSTWAR

ROMY GOLAN AND KATY SIEGEL

On March 8, 2017, curator and art historian Katy Siegel delivered a lecture at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, about the exhibition *Postwar: Art Between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965* she curated with Okwui Enwezor and Ulrich Wilmes at Haus der Kunst, Munich from October 2016 to March 2017. *Postwar*, and its accompanying publications, explored how artists responded to the Holocaust, the atomic bomb, a radically transforming world in the aftermath of World War II, and—amidst Cold War divides—decolonization movements, the struggle for civil rights, and the invention of new communication technologies. Ambitious in scope, generous in outlook, and remarkable in its capacity for critical and self-reflexive dialogue, *Postwar* exemplified many of the qualities that made Enwezor the most significant curatorial voice of the last quarter century. As the final event in the Art, Institutions, and Internationalism conference on which this special issue is based, Siegel's lecture capped off two days of intensive discussions on how political internationalism and its attendant institutions impacted the development of art around the world in the mid-twentieth century. During a conversation with art historian Romy Golan following her lecture, Siegel outlined the

curatorial decisions that went into Postwar and discussed how exhibitions can confront entrenched ideas of quality and belatedness inherited from Eurocentric readings of modernism.

Find the complete conversation between Siegel and Golan at www.artmargins.com.



INTRODUCTION

This Artist Project is the culmination of a series of dialogues between artist Naeem Mohaiemen and researcher Uroš Pajović on the relative absence of Non-Aligned Movement co-founder and former President of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, from Mohaiemen's 2017 video installation on the history of the movement. First shown at Documenta 14, Kassel, in 2017, *Two Meetings and a Funeral* is a three-channel installation that unfolds as a series of conversations between Vijay Prashad, Samia Zennadi, Atef Berredjem, Amirul Islam, and Zonayed Saki that chart a history of the Non-Aligned Movement, founded in 1961 after the groundbreaking Bandung Conference of 1955.

For this special issue of *ARTMargins*, Pajović becomes a new collaborative interlocutor within the framework of *Two Meetings and a Funeral*, following a screening of the work in Berlin in 2017, during which Pajović noted the occlusion from Mohaiemen's film of Yugoslavia, one of the three founding countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, along with India and Egypt. In historical terms, Pajović's text reintegrates the Yugoslav bloc federation into *Two Meetings and a Funeral* post facto. Mohaiemen in turn responded to Pajović's text with a series of images from unused footage collected for the original work. While Pajović's text concludes with a hopeful view of the potential of

the Non-Aligned Movement, Mohaiemen's images and the superimposed quote from Tito instead express an ironic doubling back. In Mohaiemen's superimposed text, the Indian coalition that pushed for Bangladesh's independence in 1971 intersects with Tito's confident comment to Indira Gandhi's delegation that such problems of "tribalism" were only happening in Asia. In Tito's view, Yugoslavia had already solved the "Balkan problem," a confident pronouncement made exactly twenty years before Tito's nation would split apart during the Yugoslav Wars. The geopolitical struggles that Tito failed to see in 1971 are harbingers of the blind spots that would cause the collapse of the Non-Aligned Movement.

A close-up photograph of a middle-aged man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a white dress shirt and a patterned tie. He is looking down at a document he is holding in his hands. The background is a dark, wood-grained surface.

Nikada više

SOUTHWARD AND OTHERWISE

Uroš Pajović (Text) + Naeem Mohaiemen (Images)

The year was 1961. The world—our *home*—was one where wall and curtain stood as crucial elements of discourse. Not only as spatial determinants, but also as demarcations in the space of international politics. In terms of our *home*, there was the idea of the morning alarm, the broken window, the call to lunch (a cold one).

Tread carefully! This *home* was by no means a regular one. In an Escherian twist, the walls could be walked and the curtains could be entered. Half a world away from West and East (not an in-between, but also not not-one), a claim to a space within, but concurrently outside the political division of the world into two blocs, a third world birthplace of the Non-Aligned Movement.

“You Can Never Leave” reads a title in the first half of chapter three (*Dhaka*) in *Two Meetings and a Funeral* (dir: Mohaiemen, 2017). The independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971 was followed by a reversal via the pincer movement of unlikely allies—China vetoing UN membership for Bangladesh, and the Nixon White House blocking aid shipments to the country. Facing these twin obstacles, Bangladesh turned to the Non-Aligned Movement, which enrolled the new country as a member during the 1973 Conference in Algeria. This was meant to be a proxy for the ultimate goal—to be recognized by the United Nations.

At the same time, Non-Aligned Movement member Saudi Arabia and its allies were possibly concerned that the Non-Aligned Movement’s embrace of liberation movements may have started with the Palestinian struggle, but would eventually target constitutional monarchies as well. Work to neuter such support progressed on many fronts, including the increasingly influential Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which chose Pakistan to host the second OIC Summit in 1974. In exchange for OIC recognition of Bangladesh’s independence, which would open access to desperately needed reconstruction funds, Bangladesh attended the 1974 summit. This was a decisive break with India, which was banned from OIC membership over Kashmir.

These events exemplify some of the many ruptures with the wider Non-Aligned Movement. Barrister Amirul Islam, organizer of the Bangladesh delegation to the 1973 Algeria conference, addresses this pivot toward pan-Islamist politics in the closing credits of *Two Meetings and a Funeral*: “Non-Aligned Movement, born in Bandung, midwifed in Algeria, died in Bangladesh.”¹

Meanwhile, already in 1973, in the audience footage of the conference, blurry signals of the internal contradictions of nonalignment can be glimpsed, if you look closely. The gathering feels at times like an old boys’ club—Indira Gandhi of India, Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka, and Madame Binh of Vietnam are the exceptions.

1 Naeem Mohaiemen, *Two Meetings and a Funeral*, three-channel digital video, 89 mins., 2017.

A group of diverse call center agents, both men and women, are shown from the chest up. They are all wearing large, white over-ear headsets with microphones. They are dressed in professional attire, including blouses, shirts, and jackets. The background is a blurred office setting with vertical wood paneling. The agents are smiling and looking towards the camera. A red banner with white text is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

neće biti

In the audience, one of the few women who can be seen during Tito's long speech in Algeria is his wife Jovanka Broz, a former fighter with the Yugoslav partisans in Nazi-occupied Croatia. The television stills displayed within this essay are borrowed from footage of the Algeria speech, but the "subtitles" we attach to them are not from 1973. They are lifted instead from an earlier statement by Josip Broz Tito.

»Nikada više neće biti pitanja Balkana na svijetu«

which translates from Serbo-Croatian as

»There will be no Balkan question ever again in the world.«

These far too confident words were spoken by Josip Broz Tito during a meeting in 1971 to discuss the spiraling war that would split Pakistan into two countries—Pakistan and Bangladesh. In Tito's conception, Asia was still struggling with the problems of "tribal" partition which Europe had seemingly resolved forever. Tito could not yet see the coming collapse of Yugoslavia—that was far away, and would become full-fledged war in 1991.

In the quadriptych of images here, the 1971 sentence floats over Tito's 1973 speech in Algiers. By that time, 1971 is "settled history."

Listening to his speech with a seeming half smile is Jovanka. The couple separated in 1975, and Jovanka Broz was not allowed to see Tito again until his death in 1980.

We return to take a closer look at the geopolitical position of Yugoslavia, emblematic of the positioning of the Non-Aligned Movement as a whole. Yugoslavia was one of three countries behind the founding initiative, along with India and Egypt, and one of only two European countries among the Movement's original members. On the one hand, Yugoslavia was a socialist Eastern European country; on the other, soon after World War II, it had cut ties with the Soviet Union and Stalinism. It was these events that engendered the peculiarity of the position of Yugoslavia in the (third) world.

Until the end of the 1940s, the social system in Yugoslavia was centralist, with state institutions controlling all aspects of the country's mechanisms, especially the economy, education, and culture. However, in 1948, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (later the League of Communists of Yugoslavia), led by Tito, broke with the USSR (and, effectively, with all other Eastern European/Soviet-satellite states) and was expelled from the Cominform. Yugoslav state officials immediately began refuting centralist-State socialism as Stalinist and reductively unhelpful for the emancipation of the working class.

This moment was the actual birth of "the Yugoslav experiment." As historians Dragan Bogetić and Ljubodrag Dimić write:

Yugoslavia and the newly freed countries of Asia and Africa alike saw the preservation of their hard-earned independence solely in the opposition to the Bloc-division of the world (that is, the forces which until recently virtually

A group of diverse call center agents, including men and women of various ethnicities, are shown wearing headsets and working at their desks. The image is oriented vertically on the page.

pitanja Balkana

disabled their autonomous advancement) and the respect for the principle of peaceful coexistence as the only acceptable bases on which the complex of international relations could grow.²

This form of internationalism was to a great extent rooted in unrealistic observations of the political leanings of the time, and the interests of the great forces (namely, the US and the USSR) cast their shadows on the road to nonalignment from the moment of its political formalization on September 1, 1961, in Belgrade. But before Belgrade, there was Bandung.

In 1955, the Bandung Conference took place with the aim of promoting Asian-African cooperation, particularly in opposing colonialism and neocolonialism. Yugoslavia was not part of this Asian-African conference, but the principles stated in the final *communiqué* of the conference were close to, and sometimes even overlapped with, those of Yugoslav foreign policy. Some of them were pointed out in 1970 by politician Leo Mates:

The principles on which the gathering of nonaligned states [of Africa and Asia] was based were initially formulated within the bilateral negotiations between India and China, made public in the mutual statement of Nehru and Zhou Enlai, given in Delhi on June 28, 1954. It encompasses the following five principles: respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; noninterference in internal affairs; nonaggression; equality and mutual benefit; peaceful coexistence. . . . On this occasion, the cooperation of countries with different social systems was emphasized as something that “shouldn’t stand in the way of maintaining peace and shouldn’t create conflict.” . . . This declaration in many ways inspired the participants of the Bandung conference and influenced the content of the resolution brought in Bandung.³

Tito was informed of these principles, along with the preparations for the meeting in Bandung, by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at the beginning of January 1955. After his return to Belgrade from India, a special committee was formed to follow the activities surrounding the preparation of the Bandung Conference. Bogetić and Dimić write:

The demands for the establishment of economic cooperation on the basis of “mutual interest and respect for national sovereignty” were along the lines of policies led by Yugoslavia. . . . Much like the representatives of the countries

2 Dragan Bogetić and Ljubodrag Dimić, *Beogradska konferencija nesvrstanih zemalja 1–6. septembra 1961: Prilog istoriji trećeg sveta* [The Belgrade Conference of Non-Aligned Countries 1–6. September 1961: A Contribution to the History of the Third World] (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2013), 13. All translations are by the author unless otherwise noted.

3 Leo Mates, *Nesvrstanost. Teorija i savremena praksa* [Nonalignment: Theory and Practice] (Belgrade: Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu, 1970), 248–49.

TCR. 01:09:48:00*

na svijetu

gathered in Bandung, the political leaders of Yugoslavia also found that cultural cooperation was one of the most powerful means to improve the understanding between nations, and wholeheartedly supported this idea. Yugoslavia strongly condemned colonialism, racism, foreign exploitation, and fought for the freedom and independence of the colonized world.⁴

On the idyllic islands of Brijuni along the Croatian coast, these ideals were once more brought to light. Inspired by the unfolding of the Bandung Conference, Tito arranged overlapping visits with his two closest allies in the Afro-Asian world: Jawaharlal Nehru of India and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. The three spent several days in Tito's summer residence discussing the question of nonalignment and establishing some principles toward its formalization.

Their joint Brijuni statement is considered by some historians to be the first official multilateral document of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, already in this seemingly relaxed meeting, the cracks in the foundations of nonalignment were showing. While Nehru was resistant to publishing a joint *declaration* and insistent on reducing the length of the three leaders' multilateral *statement*, both he and Tito took issue with the fact that Nasser never mentioned his intentions to nationalize the Suez Canal—their concern was that Yugoslavia and India might be accused of encouraging such a radical decision by proxy.⁵

Several months before the conference, the unsuccessful US-sponsored attack on Cuba brought the world to the brink of destabilization. Several days before the conference, construction began on the Berlin Wall. On the day the conference commenced, the Soviet Union launched a series of nuclear tests. These events provided the leaders of the new Non-Aligned Movement with much to reflect upon and criticize, but they largely fell short in doing so. The conference was compromised by diverse, sometimes conflicting, objectives of the state leaders involved. Burdened with economic dependency to great forces in the West and the East, as well as an eagerness to prioritize national interests over those of the nascent Non-Aligned Movement, the conflicting positions of the participating countries were reflected in the struggle to establish a unified tone and agenda.

Despite these struggles, there was also some agreement: on the call for nonalignment itself, which extended to nonmembership in any military bloc dominated by one of the great powers; a commitment to equality in the relations between nations; the right of every country to self-determination; the avoidance of force as a means of settling international disputes; a focus on economic development; and the condemnation of colonialism.⁶

4 Bogetić and Dimić, *Beogradska konferencija nesvrstanih zemalja*, 144.

5 State Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia (1956–57), *Yugoslav-Indian Relations in 1956/57* (f-1, 156 and f-3, 325); *England* (f-20, 415, 926). See also Bogetić and Dimić, *Beogradska konferencija nesvrstanih zemalja*, 28.

6 State Archive of Yugoslavia (1961), KPR (837), I-4-a/K-202, *Belgrade Conference*.

Yugoslavia ties itself to the birth of the Non-Aligned Movement. Since 1989, the Cold War has ended, the Berlin Wall has fallen, and the Soviet Union has disintegrated. So has Yugoslavia, in a set of bloody conflicts that substantially betrayed the Non-Aligned Movement's principles. The Movement now persists only in the form of remnants, echoes, and formalities. Often obscured by conflicts and contradictions, there are still lessons to be found in the existence of the Movement and the path of its member countries towards nonalignment. The most valuable of these lie exactly on the thin line between romantic nostalgia and *a priori* judgment, reminding us of a framework outside of the paradigm of the East/West division of 20th-century history, and beyond the gaze of its two dominant worlds.

To consider the Movement lost to history would, then, be unnecessarily pessimistic. Instead, as we stand before its many voices and forms, let us consider these various meetings as a structure of potentialities to revisit, as a set of questions to retrieve and reactivate. For in every principle worth remembering, there lies the possibility for another worth engendering.

RE-WORLDDING POSTWAR

RATTANAMOL SINGH JOHAL

Postwar: Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965. Curated by Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes. October 14, 2016–March 26, 2017. Haus der Kunst, Munich.

If there is a universal principle it is in the incessant renegotiation of difference. Such a principle is an impossible starting point for anything. It is better to keep working away at the impossible than to make things seem possible by way of elegant polarizations. I end therefore, in spite of everything, with congratulations and thanks to the organizers [of *Magiciens de la Terre*]. It is, for better or for worse, the moment for a step such as this exhibition, in this place. It is better to take this step than not take it. Many of us hope you will remember that first steps must often be taken again. We have offered you our participatory and persistent critique—the best sign of interest—in the hope of a new next time.

—GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK, “LOOKING AT OTHERS” (1989)¹

1 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Looking at Others,” in *Making Art Global (Part 2): ‘Magiciens de la Terre’ 1989*, ed. Lucy Steeds (London: Afterall Books, 2013), 266. I quote the concluding sentences from the published transcript of Spivak’s contribution to the two-day colloquium organized in conjunction with *Magiciens de la Terre*, which took place at the Centre Georges Pompidou on 3 and 4 June 1989.

1989 was a landmark year in the history of exhibition making. At the Centre Pompidou and the Grande Halle de la Villette in Paris, the self-proclaimed “first worldwide exhibition of contemporary art”—*Magiciens de la Terre*—presented works by more than one hundred “artist-magicians” under the sign of universal creative genius unte-thered to geography or cultural context.² Across the Channel, at the Hayward Gallery in London, Rasheed Araeen organized *The Other Story: Asian, African and Caribbean Artists in Post-War Britain*, strongly underscoring the aesthetic contributions of minority artists in postcolonial Britain as well as their systematic exclusion from the country’s institutions and discourses of modern art.³ Traversing the Atlantic, the third Havana Biennial, curatorially driven by Gerardo Mosquera and Llilian Llanes Godoy, consciously moved beyond its Caribbean and Latin American roots to establish alliances among third world “avant-gardes,” interrogating the categories of tradition and con-temporaneity.⁴ All three exhibitions continue to generate debate, as evinced by a series of recent publications that seek to evaluate the prob-lems and long-term impact of these major cultural manifestations.⁵ Yet in the three decades since 1989, only a handful of (nonbiennial) exhibitions have attempted to bring together similarly synthetic accounts of international artistic production during the 20th century.⁶

2 Jean-Hubert Martin, ed., *Magiciens de la terre* (Paris: Editions du Centre Pompidou, 1989).

3 Rasheed Araeen, ed., *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain* (London: South Bank Centre, 1989).

4 *Tercera bienal de La Habana, '89 Catálogo* (La Habana, Cuba: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1989), exhibition catalog. See also Rachel Weiss, ed., *Making Art Global (Part 1): The Third Havana Biennial 1989* (London: Afterall Books, 2011); and Geeta Kapur, “Proposition Avant-Garde: A View from the South,” *Art Journal* 77, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 87–89.

5 An important catalyst in this regard was the Exhibitions and the World at Large conference, organized by Afterall and TrAIN at Tate Britain in April 2009, following which Afterall began publishing its Exhibition Histories series. See the Afterall publications cited above and Exhibitions and the World at Large, Afterall: Events, April 3, 2009, <https://www.afterall.org/events/exhibitions.and.the.world.at.large>.

6 *Global Conceptualisms: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s* (1999) was an influential step in this direction, followed closely by Tate Modern’s opening gambit, *Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis* (2001). Both exhibitions employed teams of external specialists but drew highly mixed reviews, with some verging on outright dismissal. More recent endeavors have paid close attention to specific non-Western contexts, surveying transmissions and hybridizations of canonical art movements—*The World Goes Pop* (2015) and *Art et Liberté: Rupture, Guerre et Surréalisme en Égypte, 1938–1948* (2016)—or presenting a history of modernism within a region or nation—*The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945–1994* (2001), *Inverted Utopias:*

The immense task of moving from focused, admittedly partial, perspectives toward a totalizing and thematically connected account of art produced all around the world during a given period was taken up by *Postwar: Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965* (hereafter, simply *Postwar*), curated by Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes at the Haus der Kunst in Munich in 2016.⁷

Organized around eight broad themes, *Postwar* orchestrated a multipronged view of the mid-20th century that did not pivot around the master narrative of a shifting center from Paris to New York, nor the Cold War binaries of realism and abstraction. A few of the exhibition's sections—"Concrete Visions," "Realisms," and "Form Matters"—took formal concerns as their central problematic. "New Images of Man" and "Cosmopolitan Modernisms" captured artistic responses to the violence of war and decolonization, the hypocrisies of Western humanism, and a reconfiguration of cosmopolitanism in terms of "the loss of place for artists migrating from one culture or national frontier to another" and the related emergence of "new hybridities."⁸ "Nations Seeking Form" addressed the shifting political landscape of the era, articulated aesthetically through the dynamic relationship between postcolonial modernisms and newly created nations. The dystopian and utopian technological developments of the postwar period bookended the exhibition, with "Aftermath: Zero Hour and the Atomic Era" and "Networks, Media, and Communication," respectively. Although the show retained an institutional format, display etiquette, and curatorial structure arrived at through half a century of "global" survey exhibitions of modernism and contemporary art, visitors to *Postwar* were confronted with aesthetic and archival evidence of modernism as an

Avant-Garde Art in Latin America (2004), and *India Moderna* (2008). See the catalogs for these exhibitions: Jessica Morgan and Flavia Frigeri, eds., *The World Goes Pop* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015); Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, eds., *Art et liberté: Rupture, guerre et surréalisme en Égypte, 1938–1948* (Paris: Centre Pompidou and New York: Skira, 2016); Okwui Enwezor, ed., *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945–1994* (Munich: Prestel, 2001); Mari Carmen Ramírez, ed., *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press and Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2004); and Juan Guardiola, ed., *India Moderna* (Valencia, Spain: Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, 2008).

7 *Postwar* was planned as the first in a trilogy of large-scale exhibitions, to be followed by *Postcolonialism and Postcommunism*. With Enwezor's resignation from the Haus der Kunst in June 2018, and his death from cancer in March 2019, plans for the other two exhibitions are currently in limbo.

8 "Cosmopolitan Modernisms," in *Postwar: Art between the Atlantic and the Pacific, 1945–1965*, ed. Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes (Munich: Prestel, 2016), 559.

always already transnational project and were encouraged to critically resist simplistic assertions regarding ownership of ideas and styles, derivativeness, and indeed, quality.

The category of “quality,” long used as a connoisseur’s weapon against work that seems to privilege politics over form by parading its “ugliness” or “literalness” as a sign of inferior pedigree, has been particularly damaging to the possibility of staging an exhibition like *Postwar*. Previous attempts to tell a more comprehensive story were consistently met by conservative rebukes concerning quality. British art critic Brian Sewell, writing in *The Sunday Times Magazine* about *The Other Story*, which featured several of the artists included in *Postwar* (Frank Bowling, Avinash Chandra, David Medalla, Anwar Jalal Shemza, Francis Newton Souza, and the curator, Rasheed Araeen), declared of the artists in the show, “They are not good enough. They borrow all and contribute nothing,” and concluded that “for the moment, the work of Afro-Asian artists in the west is no more than a curiosity, not yet worth even a footnote in any history of 20th century Western art.”⁹ Araeen’s exhibition had insisted on the systemic blindness of the White art establishment to the contributions of Black and Asian artists living in the UK, as evidenced by their near-complete absence in art history as well as museum collections and exhibitions. While the situation has improved in the intervening years, attitudes of racist condescension still prevent serious discussion of the merits of these artists’ works, as demonstrated by Jonathan Jones’s 2016 review of the Baroda painter Bhupen Khakhar’s exhibition at Tate Modern: “The only reason to give Khakhar a soft ride would surely be some misplaced notion that non-European art needs to be looked at with special critical generosity: that Khakhar’s political perspective on the world is more important than the merits of his art.”¹⁰

In the case of *Postwar*, the *post-* functioned both as a temporal marker for the official end of World War II and as a point of departure

9 Brian Sewell, “Pride or Prejudice?,” *The Sunday Times Magazine*, November 26, 1989, quoted in Rasheed Araeen, “The Other Immigrant: The Experiences and Achievements of Afro-Asian Artists in the Metropolis,” *Third Text* 5, no. 15 (Summer 1991): 17–28. *The Other Story* was also dismissed for its apparent racial exclusivity by critics such as Peter Fuller, with no hint of historical irony. See Peter Fuller, “Black Artists: Don’t Forget Europe,” *The Sunday Telegraph*, December 10, 1989, quoted in Araeen, “The Other Immigrant.”

10 Jonathan Jones, “Bhupen Khakhar Review—Mumbai’s Answer to Beryl Cook,” *The Guardian*, May 31, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/may/31/bhupen-khakhar-review-you-cant-please-all-tate-modern>.

for exploring the relationships between *continued* sociopolitical antagonisms and art production around the world in the ensuing two decades. Postwar complicated the hegemonic narrative of American exceptionalism rehearsed in textbook art histories and bolstered by a long record of airtight scholarship and institutional investment in postwar American art. It foregrounded an altogether messier picture of mid-20th-century artistic praxis, drastically reconfigured by forces from the atomic bomb and Cold War polarizations to early cybernetics. The exhibition also presented to a broad (largely European) audience the cultural and aesthetic import of decolonization—from national liberation struggles to the independence of nations, transfers of power to native elites, revolutionary stirrings thwarted by Cold War maneuvers, and movements for third world solidarity—which played out not just in the distant reaches of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, but also in Western metropolises, where struggles against centuries of discrimination and oppression gathered momentum. The entire undertaking was literally framed by the architectural heaviness of Haus der Kunst's building, originally constructed as the Nazi house of art, which opened in 1937 with the Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung (Great German Art Exhibition).¹¹ The museum's history was a major actor in curating and viewing Postwar, an ever-present reminder of the atrocities committed and the follies conceived in the name of racist nationalism, and of its effects on prevailing regimes of representation.¹² As Enwezor states in his catalog foreword, Postwar “responds to the multifarious conceptions of art among artists working with a vital awareness of a world created from conflict and within the experience of change.”¹³

The show's opening section, “Aftermath: Zero Hour and the Atomic Era,” directly took on wartime violence, addressing the defeat of the Axis powers, the liberation of the camps in Europe, and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The effects of the latter are visualized in Yōsuke Yamahata's haunting black-and-white photographs of imploded buildings, barren landscapes, mangled bodies, and tangled

11 It is important to note that the counterexhibition to the Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung, staged at the same time and across the street from it, was the Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art) show of artworks condemned by the Nazi regime.

12 During the run of Postwar, a parallel exhibition titled Haus der Kunst—The Postwar Institution, 1945–1965, was staged in the institution's Archive Gallery, displaying materials related to the reconfiguration of Haus der Kunst in the years following World War II.

13 Okwui Enwezor, “Director's Foreword,” in *Postwar: Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic*, 14.

wire presented with extreme compositional precision. Such documentary depictions of destruction and death were the exception in this section, which focused on abstracted mediations of apocalyptic violence. Visitors to the exhibition first encountered Joseph Beuys's *Hirschdenkmäler* (1958/82), which channels his fascination with myth and malleable materials to produce an arresting installation of sculptural elements imbued, in the artist's telling, with regenerative possibilities. During the same period, Gerhard Richter's work drew on his compendium of collected photographs, newspaper cuttings, and sketches, *Atlas* (1962–2013), and *Postwar* included a couple of his early canvases painted in grisaille that referenced the war: fighter planes dropping bombs and coffin bearers at work. Benjamin Buchloh's trenchant critique of Beuysian myth-making as reactionary, and his championing of Richter's painting as a form of "pure realism" emerging from the artist's critical relationship to history and materials, did not deter the exhibition curators from collapsing into the same section these drastically different, albeit coeval, modes of engaging with Germany's Nazi past.¹⁴ Overall, rather than an extended reflection on the aftermath of the war—in Germany or elsewhere—the section loosely tied together similarly disposed aesthetic experiments and motifs emerging from wartime conditions of production and critique: built-up surfaces using collage techniques employing paint, plaster, and discarded materials in Jean Fautrier's *La Juive* (1943), Karel Appel's *Hiroshima Child* (1958), and Norman Lewis's *Every Atom Glows: Electrons in Luminous Vibration* (1951), and mushroom-cloud-related imagery in Mieczyslaw Berman's *Apoteoza* (1947) and Roy Lichtenstein's *Atom Burst* (1965).

"Form Matters" was the exhibition's largest section and featured a profusion of exuberant gestures, surface treatments, and diverse materials that encompassed Abstract Expressionism, with a welcome emphasis on women artists (Helen Frankenthaler, Lee Krasner, Joan Mitchell); Art Informel (Alberto Burri, Jean Dubuffet, Jean Fautrier); and Gutai (Shozo Shimamoto, Kazuo Shiraga). Gutai's prominent inclusion seemed to maintain conventional Anglophone readings of the movement as an internationalist formal vanguard in line with its Euro-American counterparts, which felt like a missed opportunity to

14 Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Beuys: The Twilight of the Idol, Preliminary Notes for a Critique (1980)" and "Readymade, Photography, and Painting in the Painting of Gerhard Richter (1977)," in *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 60 and 366.

problematize the translation of these artists' specific claims for originality and individuality.¹⁵ The section also included artists such as John Latham, Jeram Patel, and Ramsès Younan (from England, India, and Egypt, respectively), who developed what Geeta Kapur names “an aesthetic of enhanced materiality,” tracking an international set of postwar practices with historical avant-garde allegiances (specifically, Constructivist and Surrealist) that were “material driven, improvisatory, and in relation to modernist ‘integrity,’ antiformal.”¹⁶ While such a characterization recaps the doxa of Euro-American modernism, foregrounding a preoccupation with form, facture, and materiality, the exhibition proffers an against-the-grain reading through a large number of works by artists who came from decolonizing and postcolonial geographies but spent significant amounts of time in London, Paris, and New York. Such cosmopolitan experiences, not without xenophobic encounters and struggles for recognition, were formative for figures that included Ernest Mancoba from South Africa and Testumi Kudo from Japan, who went to Paris; Rasheed Araeen from Pakistan, David Medalla from the Philippines, and Fahrelnissa Zeid from Turkey, who went to London; and Mohan Samant from India, who spent time in New York. Each of these artists negotiated a multiplicity of contexts and methods of experimentation, the specifics of which were elided under the rather imprecise category of “form.” One might ask what interpretive possibilities this combined display of “materialist abstraction” generated, given the widely varying approaches and motivations lumped together under this capacious category?

“Concrete Visions,” which surveyed postwar geometric abstraction, was similarly structured around formal resonances. The salon-style hang of the section exacerbated the impression of an organizing logic that at times verged on pseudomorphology. Latin American artists—specifically, followers of Joaquín Torres García and proponents of Concrete and Neoconcrete art, including Lygia Clark, Waldemar Cordeiro, Hélio Oiticica, and Lygia Pape—were featured for their interventions into the rationalist dogmas of prewar European geometric abstraction by foregrounding the physical and psychological aspects of space and subjecthood. Meanwhile, in Beirut, Saloua Raouda

15 For a detailed discussion of Gutai's intervention into the field of Japanese wartime cultural politics and its position within the transnational postwar avant-gardes, see Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

16 Geeta Kapur, “Material Facture,” in *Postwar: Art between the Atlantic and the Pacific*, 227.



Installation view. "Concrete Visions." Postwar: Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965 (2016).
Image courtesy of Haus der Kunst. Photograph by Maximilian Geuter.

Choucair constructed her 1960s modular sculptures using stacked and interlocking wood pieces with carefully carved curves and holes. While the works were visually compelling together, significant differences between the artists' precedents, contexts, and training were obscured by the seamless simultaneity of their placement. Given the scarcity of wall texts, which reflects the inability of exhibition didactics to gloss vast literatures, this section reduced a panoply of geographical diversity to an easily identifiable formal grammar.

On the other hand, "Cosmopolitan Modernisms," which took its title from Kobena Mercer's eponymous edited volume, was the exhibition's smallest, though most generative, section.¹⁷ Besides Mercer, it was informed by the scholarship of Salah Hassan, Iftikhar Dadi, and Chika Okeke-Agulu, who each have sought to detach the idea of cosmopolitanism from its elitist baggage and to include the realities of forced displacement and movement due to conflict, decolonization, and the quest for opportunity. Such "voluntary" and "involuntary"

17 Kobena Mercer, ed., *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* (London: InIVA and Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).



Ibrahim El-Salahi. *The Prayer*, 1960. Oil on board, 61.30 x 44.50 cm. Iwalewa Haus, University of Bayreuth, Bayreuth. Image courtesy Haus der Kunst and VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

cosmopolitanisms describe the lived experiences of a majority of artists in this section, including Erol, Siah Armajani, Sadequain Naqvi, Ibrahim El Salahi, Anwar Jalal Shemza, and Ahmed Shibrain. These artists employ the Arabic script, liberating it from its signifiatory function and appropriating its forms as abstract devices that appear as marks on canvas. In an essay on Shemza published in 2009, Dadi writes: “Transcending national boundaries by its nature, calligraphy—in its dialogue with post-Cubist figuration—opened up a textual conversation, acknowledging its specific historical legacy but speaking to transnational modernism as an equal.”¹⁸ The exhibition extended this understanding of “calligraphic abstraction” beyond artists from Islamicate cultures to include the American Mark Tobey, who performs similar operations on Chinese and Japanese characters, and the little known Soviet abstractionist Evgeny Mikhnov-Voitenko. This section also showcased such work as Uche Okeke’s *Ana Mmuo (Land of the Dead)* (1961), wherein the silhouettes of ritual dancers at an Igbo *ikwa ozu* (ceremonial burial) are rendered in precise black lines over a field of undulating, hard-edged, sculptural forms in saturated red, yellow, and white. Okeke’s handling of pictorial space and color while adapting traditional Igbo motifs is exemplary of the process of “natural synthesis” at play in the work of artists who were part of the Zaria Art Society until 1961, then becoming members of the Mbari Club, Ibadan (1961–64). The hybrid visual vocabularies of modernism in Nigeria were catalyzed through such transnational vanguard formations of artists, writers, and intellectuals, drawing on traditional styles, modernist grammar, and postcolonial discourse.¹⁹

The curators of Postwar built upon recent scholarship and critical exhibition-making practices to integrate formerly cloistered art histories into a single exhibition. In doing so, they drew upon their own reserves of knowledge from previous projects, while also mining the

18 Iftikhar Dadi, “Shemza and Calligraphic Abstraction,” in *Perspectives 1: Anwar Jalal Shemza—Calligraphic Abstraction*, ed. Anita Dawood and Hammad Nasar (London: Green Cardamom, 2009), 4. See also Iftikhar Dadi, “Sadequain and Calligraphic Modernism,” in *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, ed. Iftikhar Dadi (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 134–76; and Salah Hassan, “When Identity Becomes ‘Form’: Calligraphic Abstraction and Sudanese Modernism,” in *Postwar: Art between the Atlantic and the Pacific*, 220–25.

19 See Chika Okeke-Agulu, “Introduction,” in *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 12–15 and 140–51.

burgeoning scholarship of non-Western modernisms produced over recent years by scholars including Anneka Lenssen, Saloni Mathur, Ming Tiampo, Reiko Tomii, and Zheng Shengtian, among many others.²⁰ Without this scholarly apparatus of “global” modernisms, the exhibition would have been impossible to stage, and certainly easier to dismiss. That said, whether a museum exhibition can effectively and adequately distill, adapt, and present such a body of knowledge through the selection, organization, and juxtaposition of artworks is a crucial question ultimately left unresolved by Postwar. While the ambitions of the exhibition proposed such a possibility, the gallery-viewing experience consistently undermined an appreciation of historical specificities, conditions of production and reception, and the deeper structure of relationships between works. These aspects were, however, articulated and theorized in the exhibition’s accompanying publications, most importantly an 850-page catalog penned by a wide range of historians and theorists, as well as a more modest though indispensable exhibition guidebook.

Postwar’s curatorial model gained coherence through the expansive intellectual labor of specialist postdoctoral scholars, curatorial workshops at Tate Modern and Haus der Kunst in 2013–14, and a major conference in May 2014. The scale and variety of its discursive output (publications, microsite, conference videos) represent the show’s most enduring contribution as a tool for studying and teaching this art historical period. No longer can art history courses offered at European and American universities sustain their occlusion of the transnational interconnectedness of artistic production and critical thought during this period. Postwar counters the widely adopted textbook *Art since 1900*, compiled by the longtime editors of the journal *October*, who provided little to no room in their scholarship for a majority of the artists included in this exhibition.²¹ However, Postwar’s strength is that it does not omit the *October* story. Instead, it complicates that hegemonic discourse with parallel possibilities and permutations—juxtaposing art-

20 I refer specifically to Okwui Enwezor’s *The Short Century* (2001–2) and his landmark Documenta 11 (2002), to Katy Siegel’s engagement with contemporary art’s connection to history in *Since ‘45: America and the Making of Contemporary Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), and to Ulrich Wilmes’s vast experience in Germany working with artists and institutions emerging in the postwar period.

21 See Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, eds., *Art since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004).

ists such as Andrzej Wróblewski and Gerhard Richter, Ernest Mancoba and Asger Jorn, Waldemar Cordeiro and Ellsworth Kelly—highlighting the absurdity of a single, centralized history of 20th-century art and opening up the field for different narratives to emerge.²² This decentering, undergirded by postcolonial theory, was central to Postwar’s curatorial conceit.²³ However, the exhibition’s accumulation of canonical artists and works into a long-overdue dialogue with their lesser-known counterparts arguably pushed its additive decentering in the direction of articulating new universalist claims.

Exemplifying this approach was the section “New Images of Man,” which paid homage to the eponymous 1959 MoMA exhibition of American and European artists confronting a postwar crisis of Western humanism. The section included a number of the participants in the original show (Francis Bacon, Jean Dubuffet, Alberto Giacometti, Willem de Kooning) while exploding its Euro-American limits to incorporate considerations of the human (and humanism) emerging across postcolonial contexts during the same period. For example, the Nigerian artist Colette Oluwabamise Omogbai painted dismembered bodies in unlikely shades of orange and pink, producing visceral, foreboding encounters with works like *Agony* (1963), much like the experience of viewing a midcentury Giacometti or de Kooning. Another radical affinity this section made possible was chromatic and cultural explorations of “blackness” as critical otherness between, for instance, African American painter Jack Whitten’s *Head IV* (1964), a spectral apparition in wispy grays, and Goan-Indian artist Francis Newton Souza’s black-on-black oils painted in London during the same period. Both men had grown up in colonized and segregated spaces, marked by racial and religious difference, and had traveled elsewhere to establish themselves as artists.

Through its exploration of such transgressive figurations, the exhibition presented a fuller range of midcentury solidarities—Bandung,

22 Prominent critiques of *Art since 1900* include Partha Mitter, “Decentering Modernism: Art History and Avant-Garde Art from the Periphery,” *Art Bulletin* 90, no. 4 (2008): 531–48; and Nancy J. Troy, Geoffrey Batchen, Amelia Jones, Pamela M. Lee, Romy Golan, Robert Storr, Jodi Hauptman, and Dario Gamboni, “Interventions Reviews,” *Art Bulletin* 88, no. 2 (2006): 373–89.

23 A perceptible methodological influence is Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000). Chakrabarty also contributed to the exhibition publication. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Legacies of Bandung: Decolonization and the Politics of Culture,” in *Postwar: Art between the Atlantic and the Pacific*, 74–79.

Négritude, Pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism—emerging out of the violence of colonialism, thereby countering the dominance of World War II in Europe in historical (and exhibitionary) narratives of the period.²⁴ Across the entire exhibition, these discourses were presented through the strategic yet limited addition of ephemera (publications, pamphlets, catalogs, etc.) and video/film footage, including a powerful televised interview featuring Hannah Arendt in conversation with Günter Grass (1964) at the entrance, excerpts from Alain Resnais's *Nuit et brouillard* (1956) and *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959) in “Aftermath: Zero Hour and the Atomic Era,” documentation of the opening session of the First Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung (1955), and newsreels reporting the independence and partition of India and the creation of the state of Israel in “Nations Seeking Form.”

While Europe was engaged in postwar reconstruction and the United States reckoned with its own social and political issues during the period (most significantly, the enduring oppression faced by peoples of color), newly independent nations articulated a sense of nationalism rooted in idealism, hope, and pride as they engaged in institution-building and cultural promotion. The section “Nations Seeking Form” explored how artists grappled with these opportunities and challenges, drawing on Chika Okeke-Agulu’s characterization of the dynamic relationship between postcolonial modernism and the nation as one of “celebration *and* critique.”²⁵ In Nigeria, Négritude adherent Ben Enwonwu was appointed to important cultural leadership and teaching positions by the government and became recognized for paintings such as *Going* (1961), which renders in a horizontal format a lively march of imagery, including masks, figures, and textiles that reference a range of pan-African groups and practices. Similarly evocative, though evincing a very different relationship between the artist and the ruling regime, is Egyptian Inji Efflatoun’s *The Queue* (1960) with its long line of crouching, abstracted figures painted while the artist was incarcerated by Nasser’s government for her political activism. Ismail Shammout’s *Beginning of the Tragedy* and *A Sip of Water* (both 1953) are realist, contemporary history paintings executed when the Palestinian artist returned to Gaza after his training in Cairo.

24 See Irit Rogoff, “Horror’s Difference,” in *Unpacking Europe: Towards a Critical Reading*, ed. Salah Hassan and Iftikhar Dadi (Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2001), 86.

25 Okeke-Agulu, *Postcolonial Modernism*, 288.

Shammout's work could easily have found a place in the "Realisms" section, which stood physically apart from the rest of the exhibition. This separation indicated the influence of state-sanctioned styles, subjects, and formats on works by Soviet and Chinese artists, and their corresponding mode of collective reception. These factors also contributed to the section's ideological and formal distance from the show's broader structuring narratives of global modernism linked to decolonization. Thematic echoes were nevertheless present in the transnational practice of Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros, represented by a reproduction of part of his mural *From the Dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz to the Revolution* (1957–65). A key figure in the transnational left avant-garde of the midcentury, owing to his extensive travels, Siqueiros influenced artists as far afield as China (Yao Zhonghua), Egypt (Efflatoun), and the United States (John Biggers). In a similar vein, the figures in Boris Taslitzky's *Riposte* (1951), a painting based on an incident involving French police brutality against dock workers tasked with packing off troops and supplies to Indochina, are ripped from the headlines à la Géricault, while the Chinese "realists" Jia Youfu and Li Xiushi draw on traditional genres—monumental landscape and ink painting from the Song period (10th–13th centuries)—as well as officially promoted Socialist Realism in order to render proletarian subjects on a grand scale. Meanwhile, in Western Europe, tensions between "bourgeois abstraction" and Socialist Realism are wittily captured in the Italian painter Renato Guttuso's *Boogie-Woogie* (1953), which relegates its titular referent (Piet Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, 1942–43) to a kind of background decoration for a party of youthful dancers with vacant, zombie-like expressions.

Postwar's concluding section, "Networks, Media and Communication," surveyed artwork engaging with technologies of communication (broadcast television, radio, telephone, airmail) that allowed artists to envision a connected world with increased possibilities for dissemination and exchange, while also pre-empting to some degree the forms of surveillance, control, and domination made possible by the very same means. The 1960s saw the emergence of avowedly international formations including New Tendencies and Fluxus, both of which had radical ambitions for the future of art in its aesthetic configuration and potential for travel and translatability. Such visions of the world brought together by technological innovation stood at odds with the reality of the intensifying Cold War and the memory of a

world pushed to the brink of destruction just two decades earlier by the atomic bomb.

The show's organizing categories—schematically summarized as formalism, concretism, humanism, internationalism, and technology—were conventional yet accommodating of internal differences. However, such general classifications risked overdetermining certain aspects of individual artworks or undercutting layered readings of multifaceted practices. Some artists were placed in multiple sections (Lygia Clark, Ben Enwonwu, Ibrahim El-Salahi, Anwar Jalal Shemza), and one could easily imagine others being afforded similar mobility between categories. This was especially true of artists who were limited to the “Form Matters” (Fahrelnissa Zeid) or the “New Images of Man” (Maqbool Fida Husain) section, and who could have been placed in “Cosmopolitan Modernisms” or “Nations Seeking Form,” respectively. As in a survey text, the exhibition offered only a glimpse into individual artistic practices by presenting single works as exemplary of the artist's formal and conceptual concerns.

Despite these shortcomings, Postwar was an invaluable contribution to the ongoing project of intellectual and institutional decolonization. The selection of 350 works by 218 artists from sixty-five countries told a story that, while not perfect, felt faithful to the current directions of critical work that have irrevocably shifted the discussion around the art of this period. As the story of postwar art in the West hardened around historical and theoretical claims made for the neo-avant-gardes, work outside this paradigm was devalued by default. The exhibition confronted head-on the challenge of perceived incommensurability, closely related to the notion of quality, that had for decades prevented many artists in the show from exhibiting alongside their more credentialed peers. It broke down such constructed divides, provoking viewers to confront their blind spots, past judgments, and predispositions. It richly rewarded close-looking and extensive background reading, offering visual evidence against the internalized hierarchies that have been upheld by widely disseminated histories of mid-century modernism.

FOTO CINE

Boletim

DOCUMENT INTRODUCTION

ANO VI — N.º 62

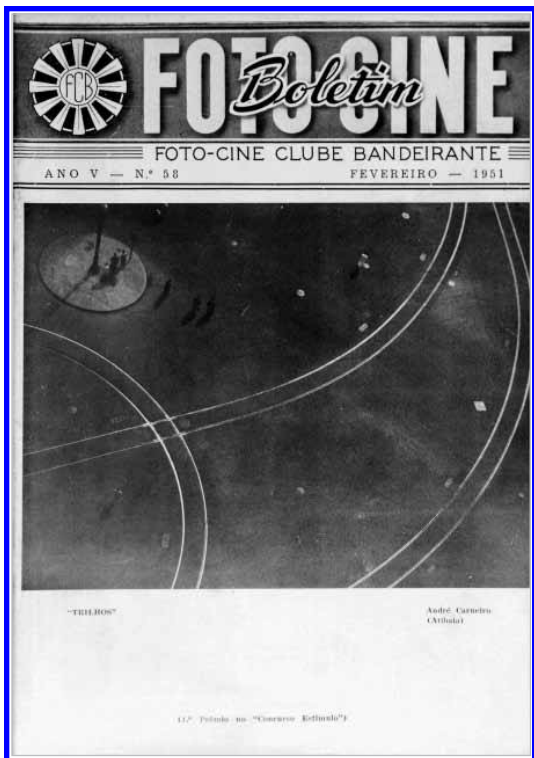
JUNHO — 1951

INTRODUCTION TO JOSÉ OITICICA FILHO'S “SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHTER”¹

ALISE TIFENTALE

A key figure in Brazilian postwar photography, José Oiticica Filho (1906–64) established a link between Brazilian modernist photography and the international photo-club culture of the 1950s. Although his legacy today remains overshadowed by that of his son, artist Hélio Oiticica (1937–80), scholarship in Brazil acknowledges him as an important experimental photographer.² Little, however, is known about his work as a statistician. During the 1950s, he compiled extensive data tables pertaining to the activities of hundreds of photographers throughout the world. Oiticica Filho laid the foundation for his innova-

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- 1 The author thanks art historian and curator Marly T. C. Porto for her indispensable help in locating José Oiticica Filho's article and for providing access to the issues of *Boletim Foto Cine* where it was published. She also thanks Raul Feitosa, secretary to the photo-club Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante, for his assistance and his kind permission to reprint the article.
 - 2 Recent publications include Andreas Valentin, "Light and Form: Brazilian and German Photography in the 1950s," *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift/Journal of Art History* 85, no. 2 (2016): 159–80; Andreas Valentin, "Nas asas da mariposa: A ciência e a fotografia de José Oiticica Filho," *ARS* 13, no. 25 (2015): 31–49; Carolina Etcheverry, "Geraldo De Barros e José Oiticica Filho: Experimentação em Fotografia (1950–1964)," *Anais do Museu Paulista* 18, no. 1 (2010): 207–8; Beatriz Scigliano Carneiro, "Uma inconsútil invenção: A arteciência em José Oiticica Filho," *ponto-e-vírgula* 6 (2009): 107–46. The unavailability of source materials complicates further research, as many of Oiticica Filho's prints and negatives are believed to have perished in a fire at his brother César Oiticica's house in Rio de Janeiro in 2009. See Francisco Alambert, "The Oiticica Fire," *Art Journal* 68, no. 4 (2009): 113–4.



Cover of February 1951 issue of *Boletim Foto Cine*, where the first part of José Oiticica Filho's article "Setting the Record Straighter" was published. Image courtesy of Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante.

tive statistical work in an article he wrote, titled "Setting the Record Straighter," part of which is reprinted here. The original article was published in three consecutive issues of the magazine *Boletim Foto Cine* in 1951, a publication of the São Paulo photo-club Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (FCCB).³ FCCB was founded in 1939 and played a central role in the São Paulo avant-garde art scene during the 1950s, when its members began to explore semi-abstract or entirely nonrepresentational photography. Although based in Rio de Janeiro, Oiticica Filho was an active member of FCCB and among the pioneers of the São Paulo modernist photography scene.⁴ Other notable FCCB mem-

bers include Gertrudes Altschul (1904–62), Geraldo de Barros (1923–28), Thomaz Farkas (1924–2011), German Lorca (b. 1922), Ademar Manarini (1920–89), and José Yalenti (1895–1967). Oiticica Filho was a regular contributor to *Boletim*, established in May 1946 as a newsletter for FCCB. By 1951, *Boletim* had evolved into an illustrated forty-page monthly magazine under the editorial guidance of Jacob Polacow (1913–66) and the general leadership of Eduardo Salvatore (1914–2006), the club's founder and president. Alongside single-page reproductions of selected works by FCCB members and detailed chronicling of the club's social events, *Boletim*

3 José Oiticica Filho, "Reforçando os pontos dos ii," *Boletim Foto Cine* 5, no. 58 (February 1951): 21–25; no. 59 (March 1951): 28–30; and no. 60 (April 1951): 26–28. Scans of *Boletim Foto Cine* issues are available online at the FCCB website: <http://www.fotoclub.art.br/acervo/>.

4 For the history of FCCB, see Raul Feitosa, *Bandeirante: 70 anos de história na fotografia* (São Paulo: Editora Photo, 2013), and *MASP FCCB: Coleção Museu de Arte de São Paulo Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante* (São Paulo: Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, 2016).

featured reviews of photography exhibitions and articles on artistic and technical aspects of the medium.

Photo-clubs had existed as informal organizations in many countries since the late 19th century, but Oiticica Filho was among the first to grasp the unprecedented rate at which photo-club culture expanded on a global level beginning in the late 1940s. The most important clubs of the 1950s united professional photographers, photojournalists, and dedicated artists by providing the principal self-governed institutional structure for the development and promotion of photography as an autonomous and creative field. These clubs offered a social structure, an organizational framework, and exhibition opportunities for a wide range of photographic practices. As historian Kerry Ross argues, photo-clubs functioned as “the primary institutional setting for the democratization of the fine arts,” as “venues of aesthetic socializing” and “politically neutral spaces to exercise liberal ideals.”⁵ While clubs across the globe shared similar organizational structures, the lives and careers of participating photographers, and the kinds of work they produced, varied radically from location to location. The photographers’ shared aspiration for respect and prestige, something that photography lacked in the 1950s, united these diverse groups. The photo-club culture was therefore instrumental in shaping the recognition of photography as an art form, contributing to the gradual professionalization of photography and the conscious separation of the medium into distinct functional fields such as photojournalism, fashion photography, portraiture, advertising, fine arts photography, and so on, distinctions that are taken for granted today.

The work of most photo-clubs revolved around international juried exhibitions (also referred to as *salons*) selected through open calls. Photo-club salons of the 1950s depended exclusively on the initiative and unpaid labor of photographers who were their organizers, jurors, and participants, as well as their primary audience. There was no market for the photographic prints circulated in these photo-club salons, and at the end of each exhibition, all the prints were returned to their authors. Participants even had to pay a small application fee to help organizers cover expenses. The word *salon*, when applied to these juried photography exhibitions, indicates the photographers’ desire to

5 Kerry Ross, *Photography for Everyone: The Cultural Lives of Cameras and Consumers in Early Twentieth-Century Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 12, 101, 127.

elevate the medium to the status of art. During the 1950s, photographers relied on photo-club salons as their primary exhibition venues because the established systems of art museums and galleries welcomed their work only as rare exceptions. In Brazil, such exceptions were the solo shows by FCCB members German Lorca and Ademar Manarini at the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo in 1952 and 1954.⁶ Moreover, FCCB as a group was invited to participate in the second São Paulo Biennial in 1953. Club members Geraldo de Barros, Ademar Manarini, Eduardo Salvatore, and José Yalenti orchestrated this participation.⁷ FCCB also showcased their work in subsequent editions of the biennial. Nevertheless, as Oiticica Filho's article indicates, exhibiting in photo-club salons was paramount to the photographers' debates. Historians of Brazilian photography have coined the term *fotoclubismo*, derived from the term *foto clube* (photo club) in Portuguese, to describe the creative yet competitive culture that prevailed in the 1950s photo-clubs.⁸ Oiticica Filho's writings about *fotoclubismo* offer detailed insight into the struggle of a diverse group of photographers for recognition of their work.

Oiticica Filho chose to use scientific methods including statistics and data analysis, an approach not often used to explain art or art exhibitions, to address the complex and often confusing culture of photo-club salons and *fotoclubismo*. Typical of his colleagues in the FCCB, most of whom had successful careers in the legal, medical, and industrial fields, Oiticica Filho had no formal training in the arts, and in fact, he came from a family of scholars.⁹ In 1930, he graduated from the National School of Civil Engineering in Rio de Janeiro. Between 1928 and 1962, he lectured in mathematics at several schools in Rio, and from 1943 to 1964 he worked as an entomologist at the National

6 Helouise Costa, "O Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante no Museu de Arte de São Paulo," in *MASP FCCB*, 13.

7 Costa, "O Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante," 13.

8 Oiticica Filho did not use the term *fotoclubismo* in this article, but it appears in later critical literature, most notably in Paulo Herkenhoff, "A trajetória: Da fotografia acadêmica ao projeto construtivo," in *José Oiticica Filho: A ruptura da fotografia nos anos 50* (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1983), 10–19; and Helouise Costa and Renato Rodrigues, *A fotografia moderna no Brasil* (São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2004). The most recent contribution to the field is Marly T. C. Porto, *Eduardo Salvatore e seu papel como articulador do fotoclubismo paulista [Eduardo Salvatore and His Role as Articulator of the São Paulo State Photo-Club Movement]* (São Paulo: Grão Editora, 2018).

9 See the biographies of FCCB members in *MASP FCCB*. Oiticica Filho's father, José Rodrigues Oiticica (1882–1957), was a professor of philology and linguistics, a poet, and a political activist and anarchist.

Museum of the University of Brazil.¹⁰ His interest in photography began with the detailed images of insects and flowers he took as part of his scientific work in the late 1940s. In 1947 he received a Guggenheim Foundation grant for research in organismic biology and ecology at the Smithsonian Institution, where he worked from 1948 to 1950. During these two years he and his family lived in Washington, DC.¹¹ His background in engineering and the sciences helped shape Oiticica Filho's analytic perception of photographic art as it emerged from photo-club culture, while his stay in the United States broadened his perspective on the international scope of this culture.

In the article partially translated here for the first time, Oiticica Filho illuminates the inner workings of photo-club culture, photographers' motivations to participate, and their major concerns about the salon system. At the core of Oiticica Filho's "Setting the Record Straighter" is a debate on participation in salon exhibitions, informed by the ongoing rivalry between São Paulo-based "Paulista" photographers and Rio de Janeiro-based "Fluminense" photographers, and especially between members of the FCCB, of which Oiticica Filho was a part, and the Sociedade Fluminense de Fotografia (SFF), based in the municipality of Niterói in the state of Rio de Janeiro.¹² Since the salons in which these groups participated depended on a jury selection



Opening of the first São Paulo International Salon of Photography, October 3, 1942. Photo from the Archive of Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante. Image courtesy of Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante.

10 "José Oiticica Filho," Enciclopédia Itaú Cultural de Arte e Cultura Brasileiras, accessed April 21, 2018, <http://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br/pessoa10674/jose-oiticica-filho>.

11 "José Oiticica Filho," Projeto Hélio Oiticica, accessed December 11, 2018, www.heliooitica.org.br/english/biografia/biojof1940.htm. Data about his Guggenheim Foundation grant can be found at "José Oiticica Filho," John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, accessed December 11, 2018, <https://www.gf.org/fellows/all-fellows/jose-oiticica-filho/>.

12 The rivalry to which photographers attached such significance illustrates the competitive spirit that thrived among them. The principles of competitive photography in the photo-club culture of the 1950s are outlined in Alise Tifentale, "Rules of the Photographers' Universe," *Photoresearcher*, no. 27 (2017): 68–77.

process that was highly subjective and often obscure, Oiticica Filho meticulously accumulated available data to lend a certain clarity, and even scientific logic, to a field where participation, and even the number of prints accepted at different salons, had become crucial indicators of success. A member of FCCB but also a resident of Rio, Oiticica Filho emerged as a mediator between the two groups—an impartial scientist who sought a solution in data, not in clashes between egos.

Oiticica Filho's theoretical work is based on statistical data collection and analysis—scientific methods that are closer to sociology than to art criticism or any other branch of the humanities. His research anticipates the sociology of art, a field that was to emerge in the 1960s and 1970s, with a focus on “the structure in which art is discovered, discussed, defined, purchased, and displayed.”¹³ Central to the sociology of art is the influential research of French cultural sociologist Pierre Bourdieu during the 1960s. Like Oiticica Filho, Bourdieu had once been an active photographer: between 1957 and 1960, he produced numerous photographs in Algeria, where he worked as a lecturer at the University of Algiers.¹⁴ As was the case with Oiticica Filho, Bourdieu looked to statistics as a main source for his sociological study of contemporary photographic practices in France. He conducted this research with colleagues Luc Boltanski, Robert Castel, Jean-Claude Chamboredon, and Dominique Schnapper between 1961 and 1964, and discussed it in the book *Photography: A Middle-Brow Art (Un art moyen; essai sur les usages sociaux de la photographie)*. The authors identify four major social functions of photography and, correspondingly, four types of photographers: occasional family photographers, amateurs, professionals, and photographic artists. Thanks to his choice to study photography rather than a more prestigious form of art, sociologists today recognize Bourdieu's project as a groundbreaking “cultural attack.” Its revolutionary nature comes to light only when we realize, as sociologist of art Nathalie Heinich writes, “just how low photography was at this time in the artistic hierarchy.”¹⁵

13 Richard W. Christopherson, “Making Art with Machines: Photography's Institutional Inadequacies,” *Urban Life and Culture* 3, no. 1 (1974): 13.

14 See Pierre Bourdieu, *Picturing Algeria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). The first edition was *Images d'Algérie* (Arles: Actes Sud Littérature with Camera Austria, 2003).

15 Nathalie Heinich, “Bourdieu's Culture,” in *Bourdieu in Question: New Directions in French Sociology of Art*, ed. Jeffrey A. Halley and Daglind E. Sonolet (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 188.

Bourdieu's book introduces the idea that practicing photography as art was, among other things, a means of upward social mobility. His sociological perspective helps to explain the amount of attention that Oiticica Filho, a distinguished scientist and renowned photographer, dedicated to the minutiae of salon participation. The photo-club salons were of cardinal importance to photographers in the 1950s because they offered an exceptional avenue to accrue individual recognition. The salons were as significant for photographers as gallery and museum exhibitions were for artists working in other media.

The impetus for writing "Setting the Record Straighter" can be found in an earlier article, published in the October 1950 issue of *Boletim*, where Oiticica Filho reviewed the Ninth International Salon of São Paulo. In that article he criticized photographers from Rio de Janeiro for not participating in the salon and accused them of diminishing the overall impact of the Brazilian section of the exhibition.¹⁶ Rio de Janeiro photographers responded to Oiticica Filho in several polemic articles in the SFF magazine and in *Revista Cine Fotográfica*.¹⁷ Among these responses was an anonymous article titled "Setting the Record Straight," which blamed the São Paulo salon organizers for being biased against the work of Rio photographers, eventually leading the latter group to boycott exhibitions organized in São Paulo. To this article from *Revista Cine Fotográfica*, Oiticica Filho responded with the three-part "Setting the Record Straighter," one part of which is translated here.

In the first part of "Setting the Record Straighter," Oiticica Filho illustrates his statistical and data-analytic methodology by presenting his own photo-club activity between 1945 and 1950 in the form of extensive tables listing the prizes and honorable mentions he received as a photographer, along with lists of his articles on photography and reproductions of his works in catalogs and photography magazines.¹⁸ After establishing his expertise in the field, the author introduces a comparative data table showing the numbers of prints by FCCB and SFF members accepted in juried exhibitions between 1947 and 1950. In the article, he claims that he presents these tables "not with the intention of comparing two Brazilian photography clubs, but to reestab-

16 José Oiticica Filho, "Os Brasileiros no IX Salão Internacional de São Paulo," *Boletim Foto Cine* 5, no. 54 (October 1950): 20–22.

17 See *Revista Cine Fotográfica* 2, no. 17 (1951).

18 Oiticica Filho, "Reforçando os pontos dos ii," 21–25.

lish factual truths deeply misinterpreted by disloyal and irresponsible propaganda aimed at harming those who work hard and honestly toward the progress of the art of photography amongst us.”¹⁹ Amid all the subjective judgments that characterized the salons, as well as the confusion about artistic criteria that resulted from them, Oiticica Filho calls for objectivity and a scientific approach to evaluating achievements in the field.

In the second part of the article, which is reprinted here, Oiticica Filho suggests how statistical methods can be helpful for grasping the mechanisms of photo-club culture. Most importantly, he makes a distinction between qualitative and quantitative aspects of *fotoclubismo*, which he argues were too often confused in the past, and suggests that statistical methods and data analysis, if applied correctly, can be useful for evaluating the quantitative parameters of the field. For example, analysis of the numbers of participants and accepted works in international salons reveals different levels of activity from a variety of individuals, clubs, and even countries. Yet such an approach, as Oiticica Filho readily admitted, did not help understand the aesthetics and emotional impact of photographs. He also warns that quantitative factors should not be conflated with qualitative ones: a higher number of accepted works does not automatically mean a higher level of artistic achievement. He further admits that there are limitations to statistical methods, and that they cannot explain, for example, the success or failure of an individual photograph. Judges of the juried exhibitions were typically well-established photographers whose personal preferences solely determined the selection of accepted works. These choices, according to him, cannot be measured scientifically.

The third part of the article uses statistical methods to compare the achievements of FCCB and SFF members. It begins with the assertion that “the reasons for rejection are varied and impossible to analyze in simple data tables.”²⁰ Oiticica Filho argues that SFF members wrongly blamed FCCB for being biased and that their accusation resulted from an incorrect use of statistical methods. While SFF members had compared the *numbers* of accepted works between the clubs to prove that their work had been slighted by the jury of the Ninth International Salon of São Paulo in 1950, Oiticica Filho maintains that

19 Ibid., 24. Translated by Luisa Valle.

20 José Oiticica Filho, “Reforçando os pontos dos ii. Parte 3,” 26. Translated by Luisa Valle.

a comparison should be made between the *percentage* of acceptances from SFF and the acceptances from all submissions to any given salon, calculated as a proportion of the accepted prints among all submitted prints. The acceptance rate of Fluminense works (for example, 30.4 percent in 1948 and 16.6 percent in 1949) is then revealed to be close to the average acceptance rate in the São Paulo salon (36.7 percent in 1948 and 20.7 percent in 1949). This discovery, in the author's view, blunts any accusation of an existing bias against SFF at the São Paulo salon.

Without other established criteria of evaluation, these numbers provided evidence of various photographers' activity and a method of comparing their successes. These debates, and Oiticica Filho's recourse to statistics, also point to photography's outsider status and the frustration of its practitioners in the 1950s, in Brazil as elsewhere. Collecting statistical data about different exhibitions and their participants served as one way of at least outlining the scope of a field that was, in sociologist Jean-Claude Chamboredon's words, "uncertain of its legitimacy, preoccupied and insecure, perpetually in search of justification."²¹

"For me, the most moving aspect of looking at a salon catalog is seeing the names of Brazilians entangled with names of artists from other parts of the world," acknowledges Oiticica Filho.²² He continues that "this is what patriotism means to me, a type of sane patriotism expressed in seeing my name and the name of my country among names of artists from other countries."²³ In his conclusion to the article, Oiticica Filho calls for national unity among Brazilian photographers and reminds his audience that "creating a brotherhood between the clubs and societies of photography in Brazil" is the goal of a new organization, the recently established Brazilian Federation of Photographic Art (*Federação Brasileira de Arte Fotográfica*).²⁴ Over the

21 Jean-Claude Chamboredon, "Mechanical Art, Natural Art: Photographic Artists," in Pierre Bourdieu with Luc Boltanski, Robert Castel, Jean-Claude Chamboredon, and Dominique Schnapper, *Photography*, trans. by Shaun Whiteside (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 129.

22 Oiticica Filho, "Reforçando os pontos dos ii," 22. Translated by Luisa Valle.

23 *Ibid.*, 22.

24 Oiticica Filho, "Reforçando os pontos dos ii. Parte 3," 28. Translated by Luisa Valle. Elsewhere, Oiticica Filho wrote on the Federation's foundational congress, which took place in 1951, and on the ideals of unification that promised to redeem the destructive effects of rivalry among the clubs he had analyzed in "Setting the Record Straighter." José Oiticica Filho, "Se concreto la primera convención brasilera de arte fotográfico," *Correo Fotográfica Sudamericano* (Buenos Aires) 30, no. 653 (February 1951): 38; "First Brazilian Convention," *PSA Journal* (New York) 17, no. 4 (April 1951): 218.

course of the 1950s, the Federation united thirty photo-clubs and a total of 4,106 photographers throughout Brazil, strengthening the ties between Brazilian photographers and the world's photographic art community.²⁵

Oiticica Filho played a role in championing the international connectivity of the Federation, which had been established with the intention of joining the International Federation of Photographic Art (Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique, FIAP), founded in Switzerland in 1950. FIAP perceived photographers as a distinct social and professional group whose geographically scattered members could be united around the idea of the medium's cultural and social autonomy. Embodying postwar humanism and idealism, the founders of FIAP envisioned the organization as a forum that could offer equal opportunity for participation from all countries "regardless of their power or their poverty."²⁶ Each participating country was represented in FIAP by a national federation of photography that united photo-clubs in that country. Over the following decade, FIAP mobilized photo-clubs in fifty-five countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa, becoming the first post-World War II organization to provide photographers with an institutional space that existed outside the market and that transcended political and ethnic borders.

The founder and president of FIAP, Belgian photographer Maurice Van de Wyer (1896–1994), visited São Paulo and FCCB on a regular basis during the 1950s, and while it is not clear whether Oiticica Filho and Van de Wyer ever met in person, Oiticica Filho became an active contributor to the work of FIAP, emerging as the federation's pioneering record-keeper and data analyst.²⁷ During the 1950s, Oiticica Filho published several statistical reports about international photography salons in the FIAP yearbooks and the organization's magazine, *Camera*, thus expanding the application of the statistical tools that he established to analyze photo-club culture in Brazil to a global level.

25 Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique, untitled, *Camera*, no. 2 (1964): 41.

26 Maurice Van de Wyer, untitled introduction, in FIAP, *I. Photo-Biennale der FIAP* (Bern: FIAP, 1950), 7.

27 For example, in 1956, Van de Wyer participated in the celebration of the seventeenth anniversary of FCCB, documented in detail in the club's official publication, *Boletim Foto Cine*. See an illustrated report on his visit: "O XVII aniversario do FCCB," *Boletim Foto Cine* 9, no. 99 (May 1956): 24–26.

One such report provides statistical insight, based on data Oiticica Filho collected from exhibition catalogs, into the world's photo-club salons that took place during 1956.²⁸ This account reveals the geographic reach of global *fotoclubismo* in the mid-1950s, with 126 exhibitions in thirty-four countries, including Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Hong Kong, South Africa, and Yugoslavia. One of the data tables is a list of the 143 most active exhibition participants, who managed to circulate tens, even hundreds, of prints at one and the same time in various exhibitions throughout the world, and it included twenty-four photographers from Brazil.

Understanding Oiticica Filho's statistical work is important for establishing a broader perspective on postwar photo-club culture as an international phenomenon. Photo-clubs became the major venues for exhibiting photography as an autonomous art form, not only in Brazil or Latin America, but also in Europe and Asia. Over the course of the 1950s, FIAP mobilized thousands of photographers from countries all over the world and of all levels of artistic accomplishment and professional involvement to become ardent participants in *fotoclubismo*. While Oiticica Filho's approach does not clarify the contested meanings of photographic art in the 1950s, it makes a thriving, transnational field both visible and quantifiable by providing a helpful guide to the otherwise uncharted field of photo-club culture, while firmly establishing Brazil as one of its creative centers.

28 José Oiticica Filho, "The FIAP Official List of Pictorial Photography for the Year 1956," in 1958 *FIAP Yearbook* (Lucerne: C. J. Bucher, 1958), 159–78.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHTER: PART II¹

JOSÉ OITICICA FILHO

STATISTICS?

Among the nonsense written by [Ademar] Gomes de Deus and published by the SFF [Sociedade Fluminense de Fotografia], what our G. de Deus calls “statistics” is truly disastrous.² I want to remind G. de Deus here that I have earned a civil engineering degree from our ex-Politécnica, today the National School of Civil Engineering. Therefore, I know the meaning of statistics. G. de Deus **gathers data** from catalogs of Bandeirante salons in a captious manner, without distinguishing between statistics and **data collection**, and reaches conclusions off the top of his head.³

Well, any statistical analysis based solely on catalog data to exam-

1 José Oiticica Filho, “Reforçando os pontos dos ii. 2a Parte,” *Boletim Foto Cine* 5, no. 59 (March 1951): 28–30. Translator’s note: The title of the article can be translated into English literally as “Reinforcing the Dots on the I’s.” In Portuguese, however, the expression “dotting the i’s” has a different connotation from the similar English idiom “dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s.” “Putting dots on the i’s” in Portuguese means to clarify something or to set the record straight, rather than to finalize something, which is the meaning of the English expression. Oiticica’s article, which we offer here in English translation for the first time, responds to another article, entitled “Putting the Dots on the I’s” [literal translation], so that his title, “Reinforcing the Dots on the I’s” [literal translation] actually means “Setting the Record Straighter.”

2 Oiticica Filho refers to a letter by Ademar Gomes de Deus, published in the SFF official magazine *Revista Cine Fotográfica* (vol. 2, no. 17, 1951). Here and throughout the Document, explanatory additions in brackets are mine. —A.T.

3 Here and throughout the Document—emphasis in original.

ine **the way judgment is passed at photography salons** is flawed for two principal reasons:

1. One can rarely know (as is the case with the catalogs of the São Paulo and SFF salons) the total number of works sent by **each participant** and the **total number of participants from each club**. What one does know is the number of **accepted works** and the total number of **accepted participants**.

2. It is impossible, using statistics, to take into consideration the psychological, subjective factor that leads a juror to reject or accept a given work.

Comments on reason number 1—Based on a numeric table, let us use “statistics à la G. de Deus” and show the absurdity of where such “statistics” take us.

Referring to the table from a reliable source—*The American Annual of Photography*—that was cited in the previous part of my article, I have shown that in three years, the total number of the Bandeirantes’ works accepted in international salons was 1,037, and for the people of the Fluminense that number was 270. In G. de Deus’ fashion, we should conclude that “the artistic level of the Bandeirantes is four times superior to that of the SFF.” It is clear for the more informed that the table does not express any of that, yet one thing is certain: the people at the Bandeirante Club are working harder and **send more works** to salons than the people of the Fluminense Club; and since **the Bandeirante sends only two works per member**, one concludes that there are more working Bandeirantes than Fluminenses. But is there anything wrong with that? Of course not, and it would be up to the directors of the SFF, if they were more attuned and enlightened, to turn the patriotic activity of the Bandeirante into an incentive to its members, and not to respond to it immaturely through its magazine.

Would you like another example of “statistics à la G. de Deus”? Well, here it is. Going through the table on page 199 of *The American Annual of Photography* of 1951, one sees that I had works accepted in sixty-one international salons, and that there is not another lawful Brazilian on the list, except for [Francisco] Aszmann (who is not Brazilian) and his twenty-two salons.⁴ “A la G. de Deus,” what should one conclude? That I am the best Brazilian photographer and that I am

4 By saying that Francisco Aszmann (1907–88) was “not a Brazilian,” the author refers to the fact that Aszmann was a recent immigrant from Hungary. —A.T.

three times better than Aszmann. Of course, this is a captious conclusion. It is wrong and does not mean anything. But then I ask, was this not exactly what G. de Deus did in his hilarious “statistics” frivolously published by the SFF magazine?

I want here, in passing, to call attention to the fact that the same applies to the comments about North American salons in [Guilherme] Malfatti’s letter published in the July 1950 edition of the *Boletim do Bandeirante*, page twenty.⁵ Referring to his letter, the SFF magazine (no. 11–13, page seventeen) agrees with Malfatti and states that he demonstrated “high statistical spirit.” Well, there is no statistical analysis in Malfatti’s letter, and its conclusions are fundamentally flawed. Among the many reasons for the great acceptance of North Americans at their own international salons is the **high number** of U.S. [photographers] that submit works to their salons. In the last period recorded by the *American Annual*, at 101 international salons, 475 North American participants were **accepted**; and please note that this is **only the number of accepted** works. Of the 101 salons mentioned above, only thirty-six were in the United States, leaving a difference of sixty-five international salons more than the U.S. salons alone.

Comment on reason number two—How can statistical analysis take into consideration the psychological factor of individual responses of art exhibition jury members to a particular work presented to them? As far as I know this has not yet been possible, and therefore any conclusion regarding the decisions of a jury based on salon catalogs or any other numeric table does not make any sense.

I believe there is no doubt that the **aesthetic responses** of jurors to a work of art are individual, not objective, and depend on many factors that I will not analyze or list here. For the sake of clarity, I will illustrate what I have stated above with very revealing examples.

Let the first example be a very well-known artwork of mine whose title is *The Kiosk*. Up until today, the work has been accepted at seventy-eight international salons. It is, therefore, a renowned work of art. Alas, there were some salons in which *The Kiosk* was rejected—five, if I am not mistaken. How does one know, how can one guess the reactions of the jurors who did not accept *The Kiosk*? Following the reasoning of G. de Deus and the SFF, I should stop sending works to salons that

5 Oiticica Filho refers to a letter by Guilherme Malfatti, published within an unattributed article “Falamos Bandeirantes,” *Boletim Foto Cine* 5, no. 50 (June 1950): 20. —A.T.

rejected *The Kiosk* because they rejected a work that seventy-eight other salons had already accepted. Of course, I never thought of such a thing because this sort of behavior does not make any sense.

Let the second example be a work by Aszmann entitled *Serpentine*, also a prized work that has been reproduced in catalogs, including a North American one. Very well, at the 1950 International Salon of Washington, I watched the unanimous rejection of this work by Aszmann with surprise. What should one conclude? Was it a biased judgment? Absolutely. Were the jurors ignorant? Absolutely, after all, they were all recognized artists in international photographic circles. What were then the reactions of the jurors to Aszmann's work? It's a mystery that a numeric table will never be able to resolve.

And examples could be multiplied galore. Each exhibiting photographer knows this phenomenon of a work being accepted and prized in one salon but rejected in another.

Therefore, how can one speak of statistics, how can one condemn **certain salons** without taking into account that it is not the salon that judges the works but human beings, each with their own ego, whose final aesthetic opinion will accept or reject the work he was asked to judge?

THE REASONING OF THE FLUMINENSE

Looking at what has been stated above, one notes that the reason for the Fluminense not sending works to the Bandeirante Salon is indeed lamentable.

In SFF magazine, No. 17, 1951 (no month listed), pages four and five, an anonymous writer gives the reasons why the Fluminense refrained from sending works to the Bandeirante Salon. What was the reason? Do you want to know? Then prepare yourselves for being shocked and upset: it is because the jurors of the Bandeirante Salon have been rejecting works submitted by the Fluminense collectively!! The anonymous author says that the works are rejected "en masse," that "these are photographs prized in various salons," and so on, without concrete evidence of any kind, **prejudging a judgment** that would have been made in São Paulo!!

Here goes an excerpt from the article for the reader's consideration: "We will not arrive at the point—this notion is beyond us—of classifying the jurors of the Paulista as biased, but only for an interpretation of art." He is such a nice guy, right . . . as nonsense. Analyze the

sentence, please: the jurors are not biased, but they reject the works of the Fluminense due to “an interpretation of art.” But, I ask, how does a juror accept or reject a work? Is it not through the interpretation of an artistic message that has been sent for his judgment? It is a senseless sentence, the one above by the anonymous author. Why? Because throughout his article, one notes that the only reason that the Fluminense [do not send their works] is that they do not accept the judgment that the Paulista jurors make of the works that the Fluminense send them, or because the judgment by São Paulo is not how the Fluminense wished it would be. This is the truth, no matter how sad, how pitiful.

The anonymous author bestows upon the SFF directors the great blame of badly advising its members who really want to work and compete in the international salons. Therefore, is having prints rejected by a salon (and there will always be those, in any salon) a good reason for not sending works to that salon ever again?

A good board of directors should insist that its members continue to send works, each time improved and in greater quantities, until they make it into a particular salon. I remember here something that happened at the Foto Clube Brasileiro. In one of their weekly meetings, one of the members asked for the floor and, shouting criticisms of Brazilian works shown in Argentina, asked other members of the Club not to send any more works to that salon. I immediately replied, saying that, on the contrary, if there was criticism against our work it was because the critic in question had judged the works in his own way, and that instead we should continue always to send more and better works to the salons of our sister nation. And today, I am pleased to see that I was right, because works by Brazilians are today well accepted and well regarded in photographic magazines in Argentina. The right to criticize is free; it is one of the pillars of a pure democracy. The recipients of the critique should take advantage of it and either accept it or not, according to their own opinion and aesthetic sense.

An informed board of directors should call to the attention of its members the fact that works often get rejected. It should show its members that a certain percentage of rejections is something to be expected, lift the spirits of its members, and teach them the **true ethics** of exhibitors in art salons.

And all of this is even more lamentable when it concerns a Brazilian salon that is recognized internationally. And in this manner,

the directors of the Fluminense, who often boast of their patriotism, encourage its members to boycott the **Bandeirante Salon**. Against this I hereby revolt and launch my vehement protest against such acts, which in the end only serve to weaken the progress of photographic art in Brazil.

TRANSLATED BY LUISA VALLE

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