Biennial Foundation, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo
and ICCo - Instituto de Cultura Contemporânea present

Making Biennials in Contemporary Times

Essays from the World Biennial Forum nº2
São Paulo, 2014

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Taking the idea of the global South as a starting point, the World Biennial Forum nº2 looked at how this geography shapes the current condition of biennials around the world. The North-South dialectic of post-colonialism is not over, but numerous forms of multilateral order have emerged that reflect South-South dialogues in which the potential for exchange that circumvents the North is being explored. We see this in the economic and political arena as well as in our professional field.

The history of biennials comes mostly from a northern perspective, whereas the southern perspective remains rather unexplored. Anthony Gardner, who participated in our Forum, and Charles Green are doing pioneering academic research in this domain.

The Biennial Foundation is an independent non-profit arts organization founded in 2009. We initiate and facilitate discussions in the field of international biennial making, and our most important activity to date is the World Biennial Forum.

Geared towards biennial practitioners and their collaborators, the World Biennial Forum enables professionals to meet and exchange ideas on common practices, as well as to discuss the foremost topics, questions and concerns within the field.

One intriguing outcome of the Forum has been the disagreement on what South stands for. Is South a useful category for critical thinking? Dakar is north of the equator but is part of the global South in terms of its political history, while Australia is a northern outpost in the South. For many participating in the Forum, South was regarded as a geo-political focus that relates to a certain history tied to the struggle against colonization and the necessity of decolonization, a need to create a counter discourse to engage hegemony. Others represented the notion of the South as a state of mind, a more abstract or creative concept.

Another interesting outcome was the critique the Biennial Foundation received. It was the first time I realized some people see us as a so-called 'global institution'. The critique focused on the fact that our inception took place in the West, and some voiced the fear that the ubiquity of contemporary art biennials threatens to spill over into homogeneity.

The idea for the Biennial Foundation first emerged when I was directing the first Athens Biennial. It was a difficult task, and I felt the need to reach out to colleagues internationally to learn from and exchange with them. As such, mutual curiosity and shared interest are the basic drivers of our activity. The Biennial Foundation does not claim, or indeed have, any authority. We saw a need and took an initiative. I am pleased this book reflects confrontations and difference, which, just as in art, are much more interesting than consensus and unanimity.

Marieke van Hal
Founding Director of the Biennial Foundation

The Bienal de São Paulo Foundation is today one of the most influential institutions of international contemporary art. In addition to producing, every two years, the largest art event in Latin America, it is devoted to the art education of its public, the fostering of research on modern and contemporary art, and the exchange of ideas and educational practices.

It is the second oldest art biennial in the world – after the Venice Biennale (1895) – and has established itself as an event of unparalleled importance to the cultural life of the city of São Paulo, to the affirmation of the artistic scene in Brazil and the exchange between art produced in Latin America and internationally. Since its first edition in 1951, thirty-one biennials have taken place with the participation of approximately 160 countries, 67,000 works, 14,000 artists and more than eight million visitors. Together, the last two editions have received more than one million people.

The Bienal de São Paulo is housed by a building that is an icon of modernist architecture – the pavilion designed by Oscar Niemeyer – and provides a continuous opportunity to think about the challenges of its time, in line with the ever-changing artistic practices and thought. Since 1995, the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation has also been responsible for the curatorship and production of the Brazilian participation in Venice Art and Architecture biennials, in a joint collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture.

It is with great enthusiasm that the Bienal de São Paulo co-publishes this publication, which brings to a wider audience the discussions held during the second edition of the World Biennial Forum, together with the ICCo – Institute for Contemporary Culture and the Biennial Foundation, which are aware of our common mission of cultural articulation. We hope that the discussions ensued in the Forum can bring people together, stimulate reflection, establish new lines of action and expand the repertoire of thoughts and practices of culture and contemporary art.

Luis Terepins
President of the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo *Bienal de São Paulo Foundation*

The publication *Making Biennials in Contemporary Times* brings together essays written on the proposed topics and lectures held at the World Biennial Forum nº2. The event took place during 26-30 November 2014, at Auditório Ibirapuera, in São Paulo, as a result of a partnership between the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation, the Biennial Foundation and ICCo – Institute for Contemporary Culture.

ICCo is a non-profit organisation, established in 2009 and headquartered in São Paulo, that aims to create cultural and artistic actions that fill structural gaps in the Brazilian art system. It presents *exhibitions* inside and outside the country in partnership with other institutions; *publications* that seek the recovery of memory and the preservation of important references for a better understanding of current artistic production; *educational and community actions* – democratising relevant cultural concepts in contemporary times –; and *international exchange activities*, which promote Brazilian art abroad and/or bring important international references to Brazil.

The realisation of the World Biennial Forum nº2 was a rewarding challenge for ICCo, becoming a milestone in the international exchange program of the institution. The discussion was held with the participation of renowned administrators and curators, representatives of honourable biennials, large and small, who have realised the synergy and particularities between the problems and potentials of each of them. In all, there were about 450 participants, including 135 international, representing over a hundred institutions, from five continents.

At a time when advanced communication predominates everyday life, the information and vast knowledge in contemporary art, the confluence between word, dialogue and image are increasingly expected. With this, we hope that this publication in its digital format – but which can also be printed – can contribute to the discussion about the main area of dissemination of the arts today: the biennials.

Regina Pinho de Almeida
President of ICCo – Instituto de Cultura Contemporânea
Institute for Contemporary Culture

Bienal de São Paulo as a Meeting Point

Daniel Rangel

The execution of the World Biennial Forum nº2 in parallel to the 31st Bienal de São Paulo is explained by the time and space in which both events are placed. The Forum, which is a global platform for the discussion of issues relevant to biennials, sought to, in its second edition, make a shift to the so-called 'southern axis of the arts', after having held its first edition in South Korea.

The event found in the power of the work by the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation and in the historical relevance of artistic and curatorial experimentation of its more than thirty editions, the ideal partnership to address different cross-cutting issues of biennials today, from the perspective of a trajectory that took place in this southern axis.

The collaboration became even more effective by the fact that the curators of the 31st Bienal de São Paulo – Charles Esche, Galit Eilat, Nuria Enguita Mayo, Pablo Lafuente, Luiza Proença, Oren Sagiv and Benjamin Seroussi – also developed the Forum's programme, defining its central axis – with its bold and suggestive title *How to Make Biennials in Contemporary Times* – , its themes and guest speakers, conceptually connecting the two events.

In the 31st Bienal de São Paulo, the first conceptual catchphrase released by the same team of curators was the phrase: *How to (...) things that don't exist*. There is a relationship between these two themes, as both are linked to a practice – how to make, how to speak... In a way, they could answer or question one another. The 31st Bienal, despite having been conceived and inaugurated before the Forum, is also a possible answer to challenges posed by the event, which in turn helped to clarify the curatorial proposal of the exhibition itself.

Despite being substituted by other 'how to's' ('how to think..., how to imagine..., how to learn..., etc.), the 'how to talk [about]...' was the most present concept and the most tied to the exhibition – it seems to me that this was intended by the curators. The exhibition's protagonists were artists who are, predominantly, champions of social causes (or social activists), that discuss and create art in favour of these – the so-called *artivists*. The term is a neologism created by Laura Baigorri, art professor at the University of Barcelona, to

refer to an artistic production of activist character with political concerns and of cultural resistance.

In the presentation of the 31st Bienal de São Paulo book, the curators point out that one of the guidelines for the development of the project is the 'belief in art's ability to reflect and intervene in the ongoing processes of social change today'.[1] This is a recurring discourse in contemporary production, but that sometimes runs into the lack of formal spaces and visibility within the art system which, in its turn, ends up being the very target of this defiant production.

It is evident that since Joseph Beuys, or even before, since Marcel Duchamp, artists and curators use the expository space and exhibitions to protest and speak in favour of their ideals. Such relation became very accentuated in the productions of the 1960s and 70s, with the so-called political art, however it was restricted to the artistic object itself and to its consumer public. Important revolutionary discourses and thoughts translated into artworks are often reserved to private collections, theoretical books or periodical exhibitions, whose appreciation alone cannot intervene and provoke a change in the social context in which they are inserted and in the way the artists would hope.

The curators of the 31st Bienal de São Paulo, without making concessions in the choices for good or bad, went for a selection of artists who are, in fact, these emerging *artivists*, whose works are connected to themes of social relevance proposed by them and related to the time and space of the event. The idea of the artist inside his or her studio creating marvelous pictoric, conceptual or aesthetic works is, for the most part, distant from this context. Here, the artist makes him or herself present by speaking up, becoming one who discusses and has strong opinions, many times radical, on a given topic of social interest.

The purpose of most of the 81 projects, mostly conceived for the exhibition and purposely called 'projects' to not be 'misread' as artworks in the classical sense, was to establish a dialogue with the public through processes and experiences which traversed local and global issues. Not coincidentally, a great part was only completed as artwork with the presence and interpretation of the spectator. As emphasised in the curatorial text, 'The ambition of the 31st Bienal de São Paulo is to address our contemporary condition (in São Paulo, Brazil and elsewhere) through an articulation of artistic and cultural projects that have a specific relation to the current moment…'.[2]

The specificities are precisely the current and controversial approaches selected by the curators, in relation to the present moment lived in São Paulo, and in the country, and the movements of change and exchange of the globalised world.

1 Nuria Enguita Mayo and Erick Beltrán (eds.), *31st Bienal de São Paulo – How to (…) things that don't exist* (exh. cat.), São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2014, p.52.

2 *Ibid.*

It has to do with a belief in the power of transformation of art that indicates new paths for society from the freedom of expression and experimentation of the artists. Or, as they wrote: 'Art can help articulate the idea of such turning as disruptive force; it can create situations where the disallowed is recognised and valued. This is the condition we can also call the trans-: trans- for transgression, transcendence, translation, transgender, transit, transsexuality, transformation...'[3]

This Bienal sought to set new paradigms in terms of the existing art system in Brasil, following what is happening in the international art scene. It is an edition that contributes not only to the local scene, but due to the importance and prestige of the Bienal de São Paulo it helps to validate a global tendency of the opening up of the exhibition spaces to new themes, topics, disciplines and audiences – topics that are not directly connected to academia or to the artistic concepts that are more disseminated, but that are of great relevance to society. This process in Brazil surely did not begin at the 31st Bienal, but is a reflection of contemporary artistic production and of a path that the Bienal de São Paulo has been adopting in its last editions through its curatorial and educational practices. A gradual approximation to the public puts the Bienal, currently, as one of the main spaces for the debate, interlocution and dialogue on art and more.

The 28th Bienal de São Paulo, curated by Ivo Mesquita and Ana Paula Cohen, which became known as 'Bienal do Vazio',[4] had as one of its main objec-

3 *Ibid*, p.55.

4 In English, 'Biennial of Emptiness'.

Views of the 31st Bienal de São Paulo – *How to (...) things that don't exist* (2014).

tives precisely the discussion concerning the institution and the biennial format. It consisted of an exhibition with few works, but with many debates and discussions, including an important meeting organised for the sector entitled Bienais, Bienais, Bienais..., whose theme was the very model of the event.

In the following edition, the 29th Bienal de São Paulo, curated by Moacir dos Anjos and Agnaldo Farias, a new step was taken and the discussions started to occur inside the exhibition space, in projects and special locations idealised and developed by artists, identified by the curators as *terreiros*. Distributed throughout the exhibition, these spaces held lectures and discussions on diverse themes with the participation of the public, critics, curators and artists.

In a way, the 30th Bienal, curated by Luis Pérez-Oramas, André Severo and Tobi Maier, opted for a different path, especially in respect to the use of the exhibition space, where a large number of works and artists were impeccably exhibited. The parallel and educational programmes – the latter was widely developed reaching millions of students – were responsible for establishing a more direct dialogue with the public.

In this way, the 31st Bienal de São Paulo institutionalises a functional amplification of these locations, called expository, but that can also hold debates and other cultural actions of social interest. They can hold artistic proposals that are considered radical and that are often at the margin of the 'artworld', disowned by the main museums and biennials. It cannot be denied that this is an important contribution during this period of biennial proliferation as well as crises suffered by the globalisation model present in the world. It configures a direction that points to the need to address the local context without disconnecting from the global and from the issues pertinent to the contemporary times that the citizens of that space are living. An action that brings the artist closer to the common man and art to people's lives.

This edition of the Bienal becomes a reference for the boldness of utilising a large physical, institutional and professional structure of the artistic spheres, not only for the making of art, but also, and overall, to have these debates that are pertinent to society in general and which lack available space. A biennial that searched for new answers and paths for contemporary issues, that will probably only be absorbed with time and with the capacity of feedback and of its influence in the local and global art system, and in the subsequent resonance of future artistic actions and society as a whole. ●

Introduction

The editors

The title of the World Biennial Forum nº2, from which this publication results, did not ask a question, but rather suggested a programme, a proposal. *How to Make Biennials in Contemporary Times*, like *How to (…) things that don't exist* – the title of the 31st Bienal de São Paulo, which served as the occasion, or perhaps the frame, for the Forum – is a sentence that claimed for the conference, as it does for this book, the capacity to show a way, a strategy, a plan… for making biennials today. This ambition carries a risk – the risk of not managing to offer what the title promises, out of inability, modesty or both – that is itself the result of an urgency: biennials and other recurring exhibitions are, still today, a fundamental platform for the production, dissemination and discussion of contemporary art, and, most importantly, for the exploration of what art can actually do. But biennials are also very diverse in their shape, size and institutional nature; their ability to resonate is almost always accompanied by a degree of fragility, be it institutional, financial or political; and the role of curators within them is as undefined as the role of curators elsewhere, only in this case often worsened by a combination of precariousness and intensified visibility – and with it a potential to affect other people's ideas and practices, responsibly or not.

What could then be a meaningful intervention in this context? Which could be the tools that help in the exercise of making? A renewed look at historiography? Further consideration of the way places and contexts might shape practice? An examination of the possible effects of biennials, as a consequence of the choices made in their making? These three lines of thought articulated the Forum in November 2014, and now articulate this book, bringing together a series of perspectives from people who have engaged in the making of biennials and/or have thought intensely about them. The goal was to provide a set of tools, both conceptual and emotional, to address a practice that is always contextual, but which also faces a set of shared pressures, wherever it might be developed.

The notion of tool, and the conviction that a biennial needs to propose models for action – any biennial, but especially, perhaps, a biennial of the size and reach of the one we were involved in – were at the core of our project for the 31st Bienal

de São Paulo: from the workshop Toolbox for Cultural Organisation, which brought together a group of young curators, writers and cultural activists at three moments throughout 2014, to the approaches we tested in relation to working as a group and working with others (horizontality, insistence on process, avoidance of authorial focus, dispersion of discourse production, etc.). These did not end up becoming the subject of public discussions, either to be celebrated or dismissed – a shyness or a lack of interest that perhaps reveals an unwillingness on the part of those engaged in the art context to question how we can work today, in biennials and elsewhere, beyond settled habits and processes, or the protocols agreed upon by the internal politics of the art system.

But for us there was no alternative. The Bienal de São Paulo, as an institution, is the result of a modern and modernising project initiated in the 1950s, and continues today under a very similar institutional model. What has changed is the class structure of Brazilian society (perceptibly, but not fundamentally) and the class relations between those who engage in the Bienal: if the first editions saw a business class brining avant-garde art to undefined urban publics, throughout the 1990s until today the same business class has seen itself bringing avant-garde art to very large numbers of inhabitants of the periphery, in the form of educational programmes made possible by public funding. The hundreds of thousands of school children who make their way through the city today to Ibirapuera Park, thanks to subsidies from the local administrations, create a picture of the Bienal as an educational institution, invested in something other than the development of an avant-garde culture for the few. But the question of what this educational remit consists of, and how it intervenes in the cultural and educational makeup of the city at large, deserves scrutiny. How can a specific culture that emerges from the dominant class – that of contemporary art – be emancipatory for those belonging to the dominated classes? Can an institution run by said dominant class pursue an emancipatory agenda to its final consequences? What would this actually involve, for the institution, and for art itself?

In Brazil after June 2013, when we started working on the 31st Bienal, such questions seemed unavoidable, and remain so nearly two years later. Class confrontation has not only intensified but also become violent in more recent times, revealing opposed visions of living together and the role of culture within this life. It seemed to us then, and it appears to still apply today, that a cultural event that is made possible through public funds – by means of a questionable tax-exemption law that allows companies to decide where 'their' money is spent – and that has such a history of engagement with education, needed to take a fresh look at what

this would involve in terms of relations between the institution, the culture it promoted, and its publics.

If political representation was no longer seen as a legitimate strategy in either the political or the artistic context; if the words, ideas and programme of modernism had lost their ability to explain the world in which we live and the possible worlds to come; if a focus on the figure of the artist or curator as author could not explain the process of cultural production; and if the geography of Brazil was not accounted for by the geography of the Brazilian art system, then new approaches had to be found – approaches that would increment the size, diversity and density of the world, allowing for those 'things that don't exist' to come to the fore, be they invisible things, things that don't yet exist, or things that exist in modes that do not correspond to dominant vocabularies, schemes and structures.

A fundamental way to understand this expansion was, for us, the possibility for every single relation established on the occasion of the Bienal to be one of learning. Pedagogy could not be restricted to something done with children coming from the peripheral areas of the city on buses, on a two-hour drive each way, for a 90-minute visit to the Bienal. It had to traverse the daily experience of the curators, of the artists with their teams and collaborators, of the permanent and temporary staff of the Bienal, of the educators themselves, of every member of the public. If there had to be a test, a 'prova dos nove,' it wouldn't be the joy Oswald de Andrade invokes in his 'Manifesto antropófago' of 1928,[1] but the fact that the exhibition was transformative for those involved in or touched by it, in one way or another, and in different intensities. This transformation would not change the class structure of the Bienal and its publics, but would critically respond to it, and try to articulate different ways in which artistic and cultural production could be made and made available, possibly introducing new habits and proposing new articulations.

Whether this happened on a large or small scale, or at all, is something that it is still too early to assess and, given the imperfect self-assessment devices of the contemporary art context, in Brazil as well as everywhere else, something that might not be decidable.

Can we think of this strategy as the programme promised by the title of the Forum and this book? Perhaps, in the sense that one of the basic principles of this programme was to avoid 'business as usual': not to work as if the self-reproduction of the ideas, beliefs, protocols and structures of the art system were the task or, even worse, the only thing that could be done. If that is the case, perhaps this book may be able to show a few of the ways in which this can be done, on a small, medium and large scale, and in a geography that becomes more complicated each day. ●

1 Oswald de Andrade, 'Manifesto antropófago', *Revista de Antropofagia*, year 1, no.1, May 1929, available at <http://www.ufrgs.br/cdrom/oandrade/oandrade.pdf> ['Anthropofagous Manifesto', in: Carlos Basualdo (ed.), *Tropicália: A Revolution in Brazilian Culture*, (trans. by Aaron Lorenz, Renata Nascimento and Christopher Dunn), São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2005.]

Summary

Histories

Every other Year Is Always This Year
Contemporaneity and the Biennial Form

Peter Osborne

Art today lives – can there still be any doubt? – in the 'age of the biennial': large-scale international exhibitions of contemporary art, which impose upon the artworlds of the world, the professionals who inhabit those worlds, and significant numbers of inhabitants of the cities that host them, a certain, very particular rhythm: the time of the 'every-other-year'.[1] As we know, such events have proliferated exponentially since the late 1980s. The Bienal de La Habana, founded in 1984, was at that point only the 4th generally internationally recognised biennial in the world – following Venice (1895), São Paulo (1951) and Sydney (1975) – although there were several other less well-known ones, of course, between São Paulo and Havana, including in Brazil. Still, today, thirty years after Havana, there are over forty times that number: 175, at least. They extend across a proto-global space and their scope is no longer primarily national, or even regional, but that of a geopolitical totalisation of the globe, homologous with the ongoing, post-1989 expansion of the social relations of capitalism itself.

1 See, for example, Bruce Altshuler (ed.), *Salon to Biennial: Exhibitions that Made Art History, Volume 1: 1863–1959*, London: Phaidon, 2008; *Volume 2: 1960–2002*, London: Phaidon, 2013.

Biennial Map from the Biennial Foundation's website <http://www.biennialfoundation.org/biennial-map/>

Since the end of the 1980s – symbolically, at a world-historical level, since '1989' – we have seen the emergence of biennials characterised by two main features: artistic 'contemporaneity' and geo-political 'globality'. These two features are inextricably linked, since it is the tendential globalisation of relations of social dependence, through the operations of transnational capital, that has produced the new and distinctive temporality of 'con-temporaneity' – a disjunctive unification or coming together of different social times – as a *historically actual* temporality, for the first time.[2]

If we understand the 'modern' – the temporal logic of 'the new' – to be a cultural expression of the temporality of capital accumulation ('the aesthetic seal of expanded reproduction', in the phrase of the German philosopher, Theodor Adorno),[3] its tendential global extension brings with it not just a 'global modernity', but through the latter, a new temporal structure articulating the fractured temporal unity of this global extent. 'Contemporaneity' is the temporality of globalisation: the temporality of global modernity.[4] The temporalities of the modern and the contemporary are not successive historical 'stages' but co-exist in complex and contradictory ways, transforming the conceptual shapes of the modern and the contemporary themselves.

As an art-historical periodization, then, 'the age of the biennial' may be taken to be, for *the first time*, a genuinely, properly or *fully* 'historical' periodization – in the modern philosophical sense of 'history' in the collective singular (*Geschichte* in the German) that emerged in Europe in the course of the eighteenth century. 'Biennial' thus presents itself as the first category of an incipient global art history. Or at least, this is the theoretical ambition implicit in its current understanding: its *constitutive fiction*. It corresponds to a certain practical, intellectual and cultural ambition associated with the recent practices of biennials themselves. In this respect, it is their *collective fantasy*, we might say: the fantasy of providing comprehensive artistic coverage of the globe, through something like a world system of art. Within this system, the biennial would appear as the dominant form, articulating the relations between itself and other elements (museums, art centres, galleries of multiple kinds, festivals, fairs, markets, sponsorships and other forms of institutional funding); 'over-determining' these other elements and the relations between them, whilst being determined in its own development by them in turn.[5] The 'exhibitionary complex' will no longer be museological; it will be 'biennial' – a strangely simple temporal designation for what has become a highly complicated and contradictory institutional reality.[6]

2 See Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art,* London and New York: Verso, 2013, Ch. 1.

3 Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, London: Athlone Press, 1997, p. 21.

4 See Peter Osborne, 'Global Modernity and the Contemporary: Two Categories of the Philosophy of Historical Time,' in Chris Lorenz and Bevernage (eds.) *Breaking Up Time: Negotiating the Borders Between the Present, the Past and the Future*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2013, pp.69–84; and 'The Post-conceptual Condition, or, the Cultural Logic of High Capitalism Today', *Radical Philosophy* 184, March/April 2014, pp.19–27.

5 For the notion of overdetermination, see Louis Althusser, 'Contradiction and Overdetermination: Notes for an Investigation', in *For Marx* [1965], (trans. Ben Brewster), New Left Books, 1977, pp.87–128.

6 Tony Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex' [1988], in *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995, Ch. 2.

This powerful, self-actualizing collective fantasy of a world art system overdetermined by the biennial form achieves a fragile institutional condensation in the Biennial Foundation, under whose auspices we meet here today, at the outset of what is only its second 'World Forum'. Do we therefore meet on the cusp of the institutional consolidation of a new art age? If so, what are its characteristic features, contradictions and prospects?

With regard to the Biennial Foundation itself, one must acknowledge at the outset that it is a European conceit. (Its founding sponsors were from the Netherlands, Germany and, more intriguingly, Greece; and in the case of the Mondriaan Foundation, the avant-garde of the privatisation of the cultural functions of European states.) The language of its business is English (as is that of the Research Council of the European Union, of course), although its Advisory Committee is made up of a wider international selection of curators and directors of biennials, and its 'global' ambition translates into a primary focus on the 'global south'. The coordination of the 'global biennial community' to which the Foundation aspires is thus, structurally, not unlike that of other Western NGOs, negotiating postcolonial and other regional spaces under the conditions of a transnationalizing capital. Indeed, having thus distilled the world-spirit of the biennial, so to speak, into an organisational form, the Foundation is itself beginning to act as the midwife of new ones: in Montevideo last year, for example. All this has a spookily Hegelian look about it.

But what of the development of the biennial *form*, as the product of both deeper and wider histories?

To begin with, to stick with its literal temporal designation, one might note that the mechanistic chronologism dictating the periodic occurrence of biennials (every other year; or once every three for a triennial; or every five for a quintennial…) projects an open-ended, serial, mathematical continuity, which installs a certain ideality or comforting imaginary permanence. In combination with the exponential proliferation of instances, this projects a kind of utopian/dystopian, progressive filling-up of the world – and by extension of the lives of the occupants of the world art system, and of cities more generally – with biennials, until there is one in each major city of the world. Indeed, having a biennial is increasingly one criterion of the status of a city being a major city, one way of 'putting it on the map'. There are currently enough biennials to attend at a rate of more than three every two weeks, prospectively, for a lifetime. 'Every other year' is now (for the global artworld) almost twice a week. As such, that is as a whole, '*the* biennial' is no longer a feasible object of experience for even the most energetic of artworld professionals.

The longevity of the founding instances – Venice and São Paulo – helps sustain the sense of the continuity of biennials as a quasi-natural process. (Venice will be 120 in 2015, its 56th edition; São Paulo is itself 63 years old.) Indeed, thus far, terminations of a sequence once initiated are (given the number) extraordinarily rare; the loss of face is too great, perhaps. Johannesburg lasted only two editions (1995 and 1997), but it was the uniqueness of its failure that was exemplary. Indeed, biennials are also reborn. Here, in Brazil this year, of course, there was the Bienal da Bahia, forcibly closed in 1968 and brought back to life for its third edition, after a 46-year hiatus. This raises the Christological spectre that every terminated biennial is only a biennial waiting to be reborn; just as every city without a biennial is the site of a virtual biennial-to-come. It is the *religious naturalism* of this spectre of an endlessly repeated structure – rapidly 'routinised' and hence culturally entropic, yet not just recurring but spreading: a religious temporality of expanded reproduction, one might say, a new form of 'capitalism as religion' – that has provoked declarations of a 'crisis of the biennial'; although these declarations have mainly emanated from ex-biennial curators, moving on to other parts of the art system, and so should perhaps be taken with more than a small pinch of salt. And in any case, to every crisis, its overcoming. 'To biennial or not to biennial?' was the clever question framing the 2008 international conference on biennials in Bergen, Norway – which gave birth to the 2010 *Biennial Reader*, an early staging post in the increasingly self-reflexive character of biennial discourse. But that conference was organized as part of the preparations for what was to become the Bergen Triennial (first edition, 2013): so whatever views were expressed, the answer was never in doubt: to biennial![7]

One of the interesting things about the proposal behind this year's Bienal da Bahia is the way in which it mediated a return to its original regional project with its new global context; or better perhaps, the way in which its original regional project, retrospectively recoded, now appears as anticipatory of the newly global biennial form. Its title, *Is Everything Northeast?*, is a classical biennial title of rhetorical speculative totalisation. The biennial, its curatorial proposal reads, 'aligns itself with the main aim behind the two other editions of the Bienal da Bahia: instead of being historically and artistically read by the 'Other', it is the local experience, thought universally, that reads this 'Other'.[8] 'Local experience thought universally', posited against the background of its inverse – international experience thought locally – has become a kind of chiasmic motto, or mantra even, of the self-consciousness of the form. It is the main, albeit the most abstract – because purely geographically formulated – mecha-

7 See E. Filipovic, M. Van Hal and S. Ovstebo, (eds.), *The Biennial Reader: An Anthology of Large-Scale Perennial Exhibitions of Contemporary Art*, Bergen: Kunsthall/Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010, pp.292–375.

8 3rd Bienal da Bahia, 'Curatorial Proposal,' available at <http://bienaldabahia2014.com.br/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Vers%C3%A3o-em-ingl%C3%AAs.pdf>. Accessed on 1/11/2014.

nism for producing those 'general socio-political questions' that Charles Esche, in his 'Introduction' to the Afterall book on the 3rd Bienal de La Habana, has argued is one important characteristic of the biennial in its post-1989 form.[9] Yet it is problematic, precisely because of this abstraction: an abstraction from the political-economic processes through which, in the current historical conjuncture, locality is *produced by* a globalisation that is not opposed to it, but which rather *circulates* the 'localities' it produces, *as* localities, as its own constituent internal elements. As Arjun Appaduri has put it: 'histories produce geographies and not [any longer – PO] vice versa'.[10]

I would like to dwell for a moment here on Esche's extraction of a series of distinctive features of the post-89 biennial form, from his interpretation of the 3rd Bienal de La Habana (1989), which, as he points out, 'opened eight days before the Berlin Wall fell' – an event of which we have recently marked the 25th anniversary. From the standpoint of this anniversary, the 3rd Bienal de La Habana represents a kind of historical hinge, or vanishing mediator, which introduced a series of innovations that would subsequently be taken up in a new and very different geo-political context, to be given new meanings that would become constituent features of a new form.

The first five distinctive features of post-1989 biennials that Esche retrospectively finds in the 3rd Bienal de La Habana are:

i) a symbolic recognition of the art of the geopolitical periphery,

ii) a shift towards thematic curatorial authorship, generally taking the form of...

iii) posing socio-political questions, which leads to...

iv) an emphasis on debate and a strong discursive or pedagogical dimension, along with...

v) a demographically based cultural self-definition in terms of 'the political and social mix of the cities that host them'.[11]

As Esche indicates, Havana itself (the 3rd Bienal de La Habana) was an exception to the model it inaugurated in two respects: first, in being an international *socialist* mobilisation of those regional art communities 'marginalised' from the main international networks in 1989; and second in being a self-consciously 'Third World' event. And, I would like to add, there is an internal relationship between these two aspects. The largest exhibition within the Bienal (at the National Museum of Fine Arts/Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de La Habana) was called 'Three Worlds' ('Tres Mundos'). Yet in the wake of the end of state communism in Eastern Europe (and with it, the 'Second World' of so-

9 Charles Esche, 'Introduction – Making Art Global,' in Rachel Weiss (et al), *Making Art Global (Part 1): The Third Havana Biennial 1989*, London: Afterall Books, 2011, p.9.

10 Arjun Appadurai, 'How Histories Make Geographies: Circulation and Context in a Global Perspective,' in *The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition*, London and New York: Verso, 2013, p.66.

11 Esche, 'Introduction', pp.8–11.

called 'historical communism'), 1989 was the very last moment that the concept of the 'Third World' could be mobilised. Subsequent, definitively post-communist biennials may have been increasingly self-consciously postcolonial, but this postcoloniality could no longer be thought as a 'third' world: the object of an ideological struggle *between* two world systems, often struggling for its own, 'third' way (Bandung). This was not because the referent of 'Third World' disappeared, but because the 'Second World' did, overnight, creating, on the one hand, a newly bipolar geopolitical system, symbolically named as 'North' and 'South,' and on the other, more complicated economic and ideological divisions within capitalism: between China and the USA, and between increasingly religiously coded combatants, respectively. The purely 'economic' category of the BRIC countries to which Brazil 'belongs' – Brazil, Russia, India and China – is in this respect a somewhat spurious unity. China is a new global power in the way in which the others are not yet, while Russia is neither a country of the 'South' nor, currently, a prospective engine of the world economy. The recent addition to the group of South Africa, pluralizing the acronym, as BRICS, only draws attention to the incoherence and ideological over-determination of the idea by financial markets, in search of tidy packets of imaginarily mitigated risk. Geopolitics – and the geopolitical imaginary through which politics itself is so often conducted – resists reduction to financial markets.

Ironically, at an ideological level, socialism has remained more recalcitrant to global capitalism than Third Worldism. The general 'socio-political questioning' that came to characterise post-1989 biennials as a result of the recognition of the art of the geopolitical periphery is grounded on a combination of postcolonial nationality and transnational capitalism. As such, it offers less of an *alternative* perspective to the latter than a new mode of its articulation. This resonates with the new political-economic function of the post-1989 biennials, to which we must add a final, sixth feature: namely, (vi) that they are declarations that particular cities are (in Esche's phrase) 'open for business'. The post-1989 biennial form is ineluctably tied up with corporate, municipal, national and regional development projects, and property markets in particular. The important role of biennials within the *art* market is, in this respect, by no means the main capital function at stake in biennials themselves.

The combination of the third of these features (the posing of social and political questions) with the first (the recognition of the geopolitical periphery by cultural institutions and forms of the 'centre') is clearly in tension and potentially direct contradiction with the sixth: the capitalistic political-economic

function of corporate, municipal, national and regional development. It is this contradiction, I think – rather than the 'routinisation' attendant upon repetition, generally cited – which is the more critical rationale behind accounts of the currently perceived crisis in the development of the biennial form. It has led to a displacement of the general (and previously generally critical) socio-political questioning of the 1990s and early twenty-first century into increasingly intense self-historicisations of the biennial form – of which this Forum is an important institutionalisation. Not only do we now have the verb, 'to biennale/biennial', and the concept of 'biennialization' – often a perceived threat to the so-called 'ecology' of local artworlds – but we also have a new proto-sub-discipline of art history: 'bienniology.' These self-historicisations have been accompanied by often quite vaguely defined curatorial poetics, which now distance curatorial thematics from social and political themes, whilst also re-presenting such themes in various quasi-literary recodings. It is the academicisation of the discourse of self-reflexivity, perhaps, that has provoked the poetic character of its supplement/compensation/consolation, as part of what appears to be a withdrawal, not from politics as such, but from a historically imagined critical-political curatorial thematics. This is the real, critical crisis in biennial curation, I think, derived from the increasingly inassimilable legacy of the previous primacy of social and political questions in what we might call the early post-1989 biennial problematic. That problematic expressed itself artistically in the art-critical primacy of postconceptual work. This legacy continues, not at the level of curatorial thematics, but at that of the need to mine the archive of 'as yet unrecognized' formally and conceptually serious work from the 1950s-70s, upon which biennials increasingly depend for their art-critical as well as art-historical legitimacy. To each biennial its own 'rediscovery' is the new moral law of biennial curation here.

Such art – like much of the postconceptual work into whose canon it now enters, as 'contemporary' art in a critical serious sense – has an *immanently artistic* 'critical acceptance of art's relation to politics and social context'.[12] In this respect, one might say, at their best, biennials are places where the contemporaneity of art can engage its geopolitical conditions in the newly global historical contemporaneity itself. (And it need not be especially chronologically recent to be activated as 'contemporary' in this respect.) When this happens, such works perform individual condensations of the cultural forms of historical (that is, political-economic, technological and socio-political) contemporaneity into artistic events.[13]

12 Esche, 'Introduction', p.12.

13 For an emphasis on the 'evental' character of the biennial, in distinction from the museum, see Terry Smith, 'The Doubled Dynamic of Biennials', available at <http://www.globalartmuseum.de/site/guest_author/368>. Accessed on 2/11/2014.

With regard to the historical structure of this new contemporaneity as it manifests itself within the biennial form, it is useful to contrast it with two other historical-temporal problematics, with which it is bound up, but which it definitively transcends: (i) the temporal dimension of the *critique of anthropology*, or *the coeval*, and (ii) the avant-garde temporality of the *socialist postcoloniality*, represented by the 3rd Bienal da La Habana itself. Schematically, as critical-theoretical formations, one might associate the former with the 1960s and 70s, and the latter with the 1970s and 80s. Meanwhile, that of contemporaneity, as the temporality of a global capitalist modernity, emerges from the 1990s onwards – with the postmodern problematic consigned to the past, not as a vanishing mediator, so much as a now-redundant historical placeholder for the new categorial form. (We should note here the fundamental critical irrelevance of the whole 'postmodern' problematic.)

These are three successive problematics that incorporate the previous ones within themselves, not through a Hegelian sublation (negated and preserved, transformed), but in a much more contradictorily 'living' manner, as registers of subordinate but still (at certain times, in certain places) decisive contradictions. Each has its own concept of 'the contemporary', but it is only in the third problematic that contemporaneity comes into its own as a historical-temporal structure, acquiring a distinctive and decisive temporal form.

I shall briefly review these forms before ending with some concluding remarks about the temporality of the biennial form.

Three historical problematics of 'the contemporary'

1. Critique of anthropology, or, the coeval

Classically, anthropology played a founding role in the establishment of a historical differential between cultures (the basis of all developmentalist and modernisation theories) by virtue of positing the existence of non-European cultures in *another time*. The concept of the coeval takes centre stage in the critique of the time-consciousness of the discipline of anthropology via its identification as that which anthropology denies. In the words of Johannes Fabian, whose 1983 book *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* is the basic text here (summing up two decades of critique): denial of coevalness – characteristic of anthropology – is 'a persistent and

systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse'. Coevalness, then, would be a recognition that the referent(s) of anthropology inhabit the same Time as the present of the producer of anthropological discourse, or 'a placing of the referent(s) of anthropology in the same Time as the present of the producer of anthropological discourse'.[14]

There are three things to note here. First, it is more than a simultaneous occurrence in *physical* time that is at stake here (which Fabian refers to instead as synchronicity, or *Gleichzeitigkeit*, in German). Rather coevalness is 'a common, active 'occupation', or sharing, of time'. It is a social, intersubjective concept. Second, this social time of communication is not an intersubjective or a transcendental form, given as a condition of communication. It 'has to be created' through a communicational relationship, and, in the case of anthropology, this is a relationship between different or 'other' social times. However, third, for Fabian himself, this shared time is *not* to be associated with contemporaneity. For Fabian, 'contemporary asserts co-occurrence in... typological time', i.e., it is a sociologically periodizing category. For Fabian, coevalness marks the fact that contemporaneity itself is 'embedded in culturally organized praxis.' Or to put it another way, 'intersocietal contemporaneity' must be actualized as coeval praxis.[15] In other words, for Fabian, contemporaneity is not a theoretical category as such. Nonetheless, coevalness lays a certain groundwork for the subsequent construction of contemporaneity as a theoretical category, once it comes to critical self-consciousness in the course of the 1990s, in the context of globalisation. As a category of the philosophy of historical time, contemporaneity will come to project coevalness at the level of the global social whole. In the process, its conceptual shape (and the shape of the coeval itself) changes, for the open-ended global totalisation of the multiplicity of relations of coevalness (sharings of time) can only be a fractured whole of relations that are as disjunctive (in their multiplicity) as they are conjunctive (in their intersubjectivity). Theoretically, its unity can only be speculatively projected, since it cannot be actually unified, in principle, within the purview of an actual subject. 'The coeval' thus anticipates but is structurally transformed by the globally 'contemporary'.

The second problematic, the avant-garde of a socialist postcoloniality, recognises coevalness as the temporal ground for its construction of traditions, but maintains a much stronger sense of futurity.

14 Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, p.31.

15 *Ibid*., pp.31–4 and 148.

16 Geeta Kapur, 'Contemporary Cultural Practice: Some Polemical Categories', in Weiss et al., *Making Art Global (Part 1)*, p.194.

17 Louis Camnitzer, 'The Third Biennial of Havana', in Weiss et al., *Making Art Global (Part 1)*, p.211.

2. Socialist postcoloniality, or the avant-garde construction of traditions

Here, I shall take Geeta Kapur's presentation to the conference of the 3rd Bienal de La Habana, in 1989, 'Contemporary Cultural Practice: Some Polemical Categories', as my exemplar. It was written on the cusp of the transition from the dominance of the second to the third of these problematics and, although concerned with contemporary art in India, it has a general theoretical significance marked by the context of its presentation in Havana. The two main polemical categories at issue are 'Tradition' and 'Contemporaneity' – the subtitle of the 'Three Worlds/Tres Mundos' exhibition within the Bienal – with the category of modernity as a background-mediating third term. All three categories are treated as 'notations within the cultural polemic of decolonization', which function 'largely as pragmatic features of nation-building'. Kapur writes:

> the term 'tradition' as we use it in the present equation is not what is given or received as a disinterested civilizational legacy, if ever there should be such a thing. This tradition is what is invented by a society's cultural vanguard in the course of a struggle.

Indeed, since

> tradition even in its conservative allegiances emerged in the decolonising process as an oppositional category, it has the power of resistance… the power to transform routinely transmitted materials from the past into discursive forms that merit in consequence to be called contemporary, even radical.[16]

As I said, Kapur is writing about India, but in the case of the 3rd Bienal de La Habana itself, it was the use of 'pre-Columbian traditions in contemporary Latin American art' that was at stake – especially its relations to Latin American constructivism, in the Argentinean context, as discussed by Louis Camnitzer in his review of the biennial.[17]

What is of particular retrospective interest about Kapur's 1989 text is the way in which the term 'contemporary' is introduced, yet 'assumes a kind of neutrality'. It does not yet have a polemical force of its own. Rather, she argues:

> We can, if we want, 'correct' the situation by giving contemporaneity the ideological mantle of the term 'modernity.' Immediately, of course, complications arise, but that is perhaps the point: to induce the turmoil and give a definitional ambiguity to the present so that the future is predicated at a higher level of consciousness.[18]

The modern function here as 'a signaling device for the future', while the contemporary primarily marks off the historical presentness of the present, from the past whose elements it recombines and refunctions. Kapur continues:

> We have to bring to the term tradition... the concreteness of extant practice, and to make the genuine extension of small particularities into new and contemporary configurations. Also, at the same time, we have to bring to the term modern a less monolithic, a less formalistic, indeed a less institutional, status, so at least to make it what it once was, a vanguard notion leading to a variety of experimental moves. Only with such initiatives can Third World cultures begin to justify their worth as alternative cultures.[19]

'Alternative' here has the political sense of offering a political alternative to the current historical state of things (beyond a merely cultural meaning): 'Thus, positing a tradition-in-use in Third World societies encourages an effective method of politicising culture.' In the context of the post-1989 biennials, however, there is an intensification of what was already an inherent danger: namely, (and I quote) 'the commodification of traditions as such, and of traditional forms and artefacts, to serve both the state and the market.'[20] The *trans*-nationalisation of postcolonial economies, associated with the post-1989 globalisation of capital, refunctions national identities forged in the struggle for decolonisation into cultural commodities for international consumption. In the process, an established 'postcolonialism' (as opposed to an ongoing *process* of postcolonial decolonisation) takes the invented traditions *out* of one contemporary use (the building of alternative cultures) into another: using them instead as icons of an imaginary cultural continuity, the imaginary status of which is covered over and repressed. It is for this reason, Kapur concluded, that the task of what she is still calling the Third World intelligentsia, including artists, should be 'to bring existential urgency to questions of contemporaneity'.[21] Her essay thus takes us, with an acute theoretical and political self-consciousness, to the threshold of the current period, in which the historical role of a globalis-

18 Kapur, 'Contemporary Cultural Practice: Some Polemical Categories', p.198.

19 *Ibid*., p.201.

20 *Ibid*.

21 *Ibid*., p.203.

ing transnational capital has given new meaning to the terms 'contemporary' and 'contemporaneity'.

In the internally fractured and multiple modernity of a globally transnational capitalism, the perspective of the agents of decolonisation (of the 1970s) is folded back into the cultural-political dynamics of global capitalism as a residual, but still problematic and contradictory one. It is this set of contradictory relations that many of the biennials of the 1990s and early twenty-first century attempted to present through a new kind of curation of art, but which is rapidly being overridden by dynamics more wholly immanent to the logic of capital accumulation itself.

3. Global modernity/transnational capital: the contradictory contemporaneity of the biennial form

The problem that biennials currently face, at the level of pure temporal form (quite apart from the other problems I have mentioned), is that the periodic rhythm of artistic-cultural definitions of the historical present, in each place, every other year (or every three years, or even every five), has become overcoded, at the level of the whole, by the intensive serial sequence of biennials, the temporality of *two-every-three-weeks*, all of which are competing for the *same* contemporaneity – seemingly without end. Not only is every-other-year always-this-year, but every-other-place is always next-week. This is the famous bad or 'spurious' infinite of the temporality of capital accumulation – expanded reproduction – subsuming the biennial to capital at the level of its temporal form. Terry Smith, among others, has referred to this as a problem of 'overproduction'[22] – the overproduction of biennials and hence of artworks for them to show. In a sense, it is, at the level of the whole, although not necessarily at the level of *local* participants and audiences. However, we should remember that 'overproduction' is a *necessary* systemic effect of capitalist production as the production and accumulation of value. It is not something that can be dispensed with while still producing and accumulating value, and biennials are now, even if only indirectly, an integral part of such production. The logic of contemporaneity as a historical-temporal form and the temporal logic of the biennial as a systemic form are varying *articulations* of the temporal logic of capital accumulation – although not reducible to it, since they articulate it with other temporal forms.

Perhaps it is time to stop historicising the contemporary, to stop asking

22 Smith, 'The Doubled Dynamic of Biennials'.

ourselves, 'When *did* the present begin?' – the question of the durational extension of the present backwards.[23] Rather, perhaps we should begin again to ask, in the present tense, 'When *does* the present begin?': the present as the time of utterance, of enunciation and of action.[24]

Or better, perhaps, in the future tense, 'When *will* the present begin?': the present as the time of the action of the production of a qualitatively different future.

When will the present begin, again? ●

23 See Peter Osborne, 'To Each Present, its Own Prehistory', in Ruth Noack (ed.), *Agency, Ambivalence, Analysis: Approaching the Museum with Migration in Mind*, Mela Books, Politecnico di Milano, Dipartimento di Progettazione dell'Architettura, pp.20–32.

24 'When the Present Begins' was the title of a conference held in Zurich, 10–11 October 2014, at the Museum Rietborg and Johann Jacobs Museum, organised by Roger Buergel, Director of the Johann Jacobs Museum.

South as Method? Biennials Past and Present

Anthony Gardner and Charles Green

An important shift happened towards the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century: biennials became self-conscious. Of course, biennials have long been self-conscious constructs of sorts, with symposium after symposium reflecting, in their recursive form of paranoid vanity, on the content of biennials, on their history, their importance, and their perpetual exhaustion in the wake of the neoliberal revolution.[1] But during that first decade of the 2000s – we might even be able to pinpoint the year 2008, as Okwui Enwezor turned the Gwangju Biennale into his *Annual Report* restaging exhibitions from around the world the previous year, as the plan to create a biennial in Bergen resulted in a congress about biennials, and as a coterie of Melbourne artists dreamed of transforming a suburban backyard into the *West Brunswick Sculpture Triennial* to run over four consecutive weekends the following March – biennials revealed themselves to be concerned with their form as well as their content.

This was, in part, the legacy of Enwezor's Johannesburg Biennial, *Trade Routes: History and Geography*, in 1997 and his Documenta11 of 2002, and their dispersal across multiple cities, time frames and curatorial authors.[2] But it was equally an attempt to remodel or re-energise the biennial format into something other than a neoliberal token. Those ambitions have persisted into the present. Witness the challenges posed by curators Artur Żmijewski, Joanna Warsza and Voina – convolutedly, perhaps, but nonetheless ambitiously – by bringing activist movements such as Occupy into the heart (or, more precisely, the basement) of the 2012 Berlin Biennale, testing the limits of the biennial as sanctuary. Witness as well the transformation of biennial studies, the study of large-scale exhibitions, away from a near-total fixation on certain 'core' exhibitions – Venice, Documenta, Manifesta, São Paulo – towards those on the supposed 'margins' of art's worlds, in Havana, Dakar, or New Delhi.[3]

What we are suggesting, then, is a double helix within the current wave of biennials. As biennials have sought renewal of their formats, so their theorists and curators have sought to renew their histories, looking to other times and other places as inspiration for reimagining biennials past and present. Andrew

1 Among the latest examples of this biennial malaise is the opening salvo in Pamela Lee's book *Forgetting the Art World*, Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2012, especially pp.12-14.

2 A host of other, more latent influences would include the a hundred guests of Catherine David's documenta X (1997) and even Maurizio Cattelan's *The 6th Caribbean Biennial* of 1999, the renowned artistic fabulation in which Cattelan and curator Jens Hoffman invited ten artist friends to St Kitts not to present work, but to spend a week in tropical isolation, away from any art public, in order to party and thereby overidentify with the biennial format as a spectacular leisure industry: see Maurizio Cattelan and Jens Hoffman (eds.), *The 6th Caribbean Biennial*, Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2001.

3 These latter texts include Rachel Weiss (et al.), *Making Art Global (Part 1): The Third Havana Biennial 1989*, London: Afterall Books, 2011; Yacouba Konaté, *La Biennale de Dakar: Pour une esthétique de la création africaine contemporaine*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009; and Nancy Adajania, 'Registers of Participation: Two Cultural Experiments with the Contemporary in 1960s India', in Georg Schöllhammer and Ruben Arevshatyan (eds.), *Sweet Sixties*, Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014, pp.92-106.

Weiner calls this a 'minor' history of biennials; Geeta Kapur and Nancy Adajania declare them to be biennials of the South.[4] And it is a turn to the South that is clearly not restricted to exhibitions, but part of a broader, significant invocation of the South as inspiration for resisting the North Atlantic's devouring of space, resources, alternative histories and epistemologies, indeed any prospects, it seems, for antagonising that neo-colonial sweep.

We want to look more closely at this insistence on 'South' as a model for change, though – or South as method, much as Kuan Hsing Chen has conceptualized Asia as method[5] – because no matter how inspirational that method may be for social, cultural and political intervention, it is also decidedly slippery. This is especially true of the very definition of 'South', which extends beyond geographical location and beyond the contours of the 'global South' as a category of geo-economic development. We see 'South' as a loose working concept for that which tries to resist easy assimilation within hegemonic global currents generated outward from the North Atlantic. Instead, 'South' emphasises two things at once: it asserts a rich history generated from long-standing unease with North Atlantic hegemony, whether through the lingering legacies of colonial and neo-colonial violence, or the struggles for decolonisation and deimperialization figured through the nonaligned politics of the Third World during the Cold War; and, secondly, an awareness that, as Nikos Papastergiadis argues, 'survival requires a coordinated transnational response' through which that hegemony might be displaced.[6] South thus operates on two axes concurrently: a synchronic axis of the transnational – or better still, the trans-local, given the vicious arbitrariness of national frontiers – and the diachronic axis of reference back to rich if unstable histories of trying to conceive different models of trans-local exchange. Yet even as a working concept, this notion of South is one we may wish to problematize somewhat. For if South is a mode of inquiry as well as a cultural marker, then one of its core questions is whether 'South' itself is an adequate category for critical thinking, or one that still limits the actual complexities of trans-local relations.[7]

While much important work has been produced on the Bienal de La Habana as the fount for such change in exhibitions, we see that Bienal less as an origin so much as the *culmination* of an extraordinary if often overlooked history of biennial exhibitions. This is what we call the second wave of biennials that developed throughout the South from the mid-1950s into the 80s. And though we will not provide a chronological account of these exhibitions here,[8] we do want to pinpoint four characteristics that define them, if only to evaluate more precisely

4 Andrew Weiner, 'World Pictures: Toward a "Minor" History of Biennialism', graduate seminar at California College of the Arts, Spring 2014; Geeta Kapur, 'Apropos Southern Biennales', paper delivered at 'Biennialicity', Sharjah Biennial 7, Sharjah, UAE, available at <http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/CollectionOnline/SpecialCollectionItem/3010>; Adajania, *op. cit.*

5 Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

6 Nikos Papastergiadis, 'What is the South?', in Anthony Gardner (ed.), *Mapping South: Journeys in South-South Cultural Relations*, Melbourne: The South Project, 2013, p.32.

7 An elaboration of this notion of South as a mode of questioning, rather than providing maps or answers to contemporary dilemmas, can be found in Anthony Gardner, 'Mapping South: Journeys, Arrivals and Gatherings', *Mapping South*, *op. cit.*, pp.2-8.

8 This is provided in greater detail in Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, 'Biennials of the South on the Edges of the Global', *Third Text*, 27, no. 4, August 2013, pp.442-455.

whether South is an appropriate method for the renovation of biennial cultures and, if so, how.

Second wave, four characteristics

So what are these four characteristics? The first relates to the *production* of the biennials, for in nearly all cases these exhibitions were not initiated by private philanthropists or directors (let alone the corporate leviathans behind biennials today). Among the only equivalents to Ciccillo Matarazzo and his Bienal de São Paulo after 1951 were dentist Leonel Estrada at the Bienal de Coltejer in Medellín in 1968 and industrialist Franco Belgiorno-Nettis at the Biennale of Sydney in 1973. Instead, many of these exhibitions were instigated through carefully devised state programmes. Directors of national galleries or similar civil servant intermediaries between the public and the state certainly play important roles here. Zoran Kržišnik, director of Ljubljana's Moderna Galerija, launched the city's Biennial of Graphic Arts in 1955, while Mukl Raj Anand, the great humanist author and director of India's national art academy, the Lalit Kala Akademi, began its Triennale of Contemporary World Art in 1968.

But it is also remarkable how often these biennials' protagonists were the host country's president, prime minister, or minister for culture. Gamal Abdel Nasser was the chief patron of the Biennial of the Mediterranean in Alexandria in 1955. At each edition, the Asian Art Biennale recalls its launch in Dhaka in 1981 by Bangladesh's President, Ziaur Rahman, shortly before his assassination; while the First International Exhibition of Fine Arts of Saigon – the only Saigon Biennial held, remarkably, in 1962 in the midst of war – was staged 'under the high presidence [sic] of the President of the Republic of Vietnam', with a so-called 'patrons committee' comprising just the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, Cultural and Social Affairs, and National Education.[9] (The equivalent recently in the United States would have been Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and, if they ever thought of having one, a Secretary for Culture running the Whitney Biennial…)

This conception of biennials as state instruments emerges even in the selection of artists, for these exhibitions are models of what we call *consular curating*. Ambassadors and foreign ministers most often selected the artists and works shown; exhibition designers – we might, albeit generously, call them proto-curators – then lay these selections out in the pavilions and rooms that run serially, from one nation to another, in many of these biennials. Artists are

9 H E Vũ-Văn-Mâu (et al.), *First International Exhibition of Fine Arts of Saigon 1962*, Saigon: Tao-Đàn Garden, 1962, p.6.

even, on occasion, referred to as 'delegates' in these exhibitionary equivalents to UNESCO (which, not unsurprisingly, was a regular sponsor and champion of these exhibitions, including those in Saigon, Delhi and Dhaka). And given the tastes and expertise of these national selectors, it is perhaps equally unsurprising that very few of the artists who exhibited in these second wave biennials have maintained much renown forty to fifty years later. While Daniel Buren or Henry Moore would become the first 'biennial artists' through their frequent presentation at Documenta, Paris or Venice, most of the prize winners in these southern biennials – such as US artist Armin Landeck, Japan's Yoshio Kitayama, or Australia's Charles Blackman – struggle for representation in the footnotes of local art histories.

But this array of participating artists and nations, and aesthetic styles from sculptural abstraction to socialist realism, leads us to the second characteristic of these biennials: their *ideology*. The assembly of artists and works from many different parts of the globe is clearly, but not only, a sampling of world cultures to bring international exemplars and local cultural scenes to the forefront of each other's attention. Instead, in catalogue preface after catalogue preface, biennial makers insist that, by replacing cultural division with curatorial adjacency, large-scale international exhibitions can be models for replacing Cold War divides with forms of intercultural friendship. The Saigon organisers claimed their event would be 'a modest affair, serving simply as a gathering place where Vietnamese artists and artists from countries friendly to Vietnam may meet... in an atmosphere of friendly understanding and brotherhood'.[10] (These friendly countries included the US, China, Morocco, Argentina and Korea.) In Dhaka, Lieutenant General Hussain Mohammad Ershad had 'hope [the Asian Art Biennale] will... develop and further strengthen the existing bonds of friendship between the participating Asian countries' – which was a remarkable softening of the General's usual tone, given his principal role was Bangladesh's Chief Martial Law Administrator.[11]

Such rhetoric was not always a broadly conceived, sometimes sweetly naïve humanism. Its roots lay in the rhetoric of international friendship and brotherhood that informed the development of the non-aligned movement during the Cold War. That is, the movement of nations seeking to develop a third mode of international relations, a socialist-leaning Third World, beyond the antagonistic binary of capitalism and communism. This was the explicit foundation for India's Triennale, for instance, the fruit of Mulk Raj Anand's persistent belief in an India that, following its late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, could be a leader

10 *Ibid*., p.29.

11 Lt General Hussain Mohammad Ershad, 'Message', in Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, *2. Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh 1983*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, 1983, np.

of non-aligned international exchange while promoting post-independence India as grounded in secular and socialist solidarities.

But nowhere were these cultural and political connections more evident than in Yugoslavia and Egypt, two countries whose leaders, Tito and Nasser, were eager to spearhead the emergence of non-alignment after the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung in 1955. That same year, both countries hosted their first biennials: the Biennial of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana and the Alexandria Biennale for Mediterranean Countries. And both sought, at least rhetorically, quite purposeful models of cooperation among participating artists and nations. According to Hussein Sobhi, Alexandria's Chief Commissioner, artists from the full span of the Mediterranean – from France and Spain to Egypt, Yugoslavia and Lebanon, from Western and Eastern Europe and from dictatorships and democracies – would 're-establish friendly relations between Mediterranean countries' and a renewed regionalism to overcome geopolitical divisions.[12] And in Ljubljana, artists from South America, Africa, Asia and Australasia, and Eastern and Western Europe came together for the purpose of 'linking... east and west by the bridge of art' and to 'underline the same active non-engagement that coincides entirely with [Yugoslavia's] conception of international relations'.[13] The state's direct involvement in the creation of both biennials suggested that culture could play a central role in local and international politics. But just as obviously, by replicating the agenda and discourse of the Non-Aligned Movement, both biennials risked simply promoting the Presidents' ambitions to be the movement's great leader, its Secretary-General (a position Tito held from 1961 to 1964, which Nasser took over until 1970). The biennials thus stood as markers – or pawns – in the leaders' struggle for hegemony among non-aligned nations.

This draws us to the third characteristic of these biennials, which relates to exhibition *practice*. For as the Saigon organisers argued back in 1962 (and it is worth repeating in full), 'if it is true that there is a humanism of large groups, of vast communities, a social humanism, an international humanism, it is also true that there will be a new art, an art common to all nations, an international art... We should adopt a new... optic which fits our era's ideas and life.'[14] This call for a new vision rarely affected the type of work shown, it must be said, the conservatism of which rarely engaged with radical conceptual practices after the 1950s. It did, however, propel new models through which to exhibit artwork, away from the formats established during the first wave of biennials from the 1890s in Venice and Pittsburgh, to the 1950s in São Paulo and Paris. The distribution of awards for best work or best pavilion was one such challenge – after all,

12 Hussein Sobhi, Untitled preface, in *Première Biennale de la Méditerranée Alexandrie*, Alexandria: Museum of Fine Arts, 1955, p.vii.

13 Miha Košak, 'Avant-Propos', in Moderna Galerija, *10. Biennale Grafike Moderna Galerija Ljubljana Jugoslavija*, Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, 1973, np. See also Zoran Kržišnik, 'Introduction', *10. Biennale Grafike*, *op. cit.*, np. Significantly, Košak's claims would pre-empt the very similar rhetoric espoused by the itinerant European biennale, Manifesta, by more than 20 years.

14 See Đào-Sĩ-Chu, 'Foreword', in *First International Exhibition of Fine Arts of Saigon 1962*, *op. cit.*, p.69.

international cooperation was anathema to international competition – and this led to the eradication of all prizes at Coltejer in 1968, at the infamous 10th biennale in Tokyo in 1970 and in Sydney in 1973. These three exhibitions also marked the rejection of both the selection and presentation of works according to nationality, and the quick take-up of independent curatorial models popularised in particular by Harald Szeemann. Consular selections were replaced with the figure of the peripatetic curatorial author, such as Nakahara Yusuke in Tokyo or Tom McCullough in Sydney, touring the world to choose artworks for exhibitions that diagnosed the era thematically rather than haphazardly. (Among these thematic titles were 'Between Man and Matter' in Tokyo or the rather more prosaic 'Recent International Forms in Art' at the 2nd Biennale of Sydney.)

And it was not only curators who became itinerant; so did biennials themselves, challenging the model of the cultural event locked to a single city as its touristic booster. This mobility was sometimes quite modest, venturing only to other cities within the host country (as Nakahara's Tokyo Biennale did, travelling to Kyoto and Nagoya in summer 1970; or the first Commonwealth Biennial of Abstract Art, focused on artists from the Caribbean, Australasia and South Asia, which left London for an English tour in 1963). But sometimes that mobility was more ambitious. The Saigon biennial, for instance, was originally intended to be remarkably mobile – in its organisers' words, 'itinerant in a pentagonal circuit' – travelling between Saigon, Delhi, Bangkok, Manila and Taipei, and accompanied at each venue by conferences about the Fine Arts in Asia and internationally.[15] War soon put a stop to those ambitions, of course. Similarly, the Arab Art Biennial, begun in Baghdad in 1974 by the Union of Arab Artists, was designed to produce 'a convenient atmosphere for… the creation of distinct Arab art' while 'getting Arab artists to know each other through regular and periodical gatherings'.[16] And it would do this by moving to 'every other Arab capital' for each edition, generating new ideas and collaborations across the region, new collections of Arab art and thus new cultural infrastructure in each city.[17] (The feat would be achieved only once, in Rabat in 1976, before the biennial shut down.)

Indeed, the use of biennials as forms of infrastructural development, even infrastructural activism, is one of the main imperatives of this wave of exhibitions. These biennials were not only conceived as singular events, but to spark new collaborations and trans-local networks, both formal and informal; or be a catalyst for renovating spaces as contemporary art venues (such as this pavilion in Saigon's Tao-Dan Garden); or generate new collections through the acquisition of a biennial's artworks (as we see in the Coltejer collection at the Museo de

15 *Ibid*., 75.

16 Hamed al Jeboori (et al.), 'Foreword', in Higher Committee of the Arab Art Biennial, *The Arab Art Biennial*, Baghdad: Union of Arab Artists, 1974, np.

17 *Ibid*.

Antioquia in Medellín). Whether intended to produce new cultural opportunities, new public holdings of art, or new flows for intellectual and creative exchange, a biennial's recurrence could stimulate cultural, intellectual and financial investment that was potentially more independent than seen in state-run museums, and directed to localities needing it most (especially those struggling for increased independence or decolonisation).

But there is a problem with this, which feeds into our fourth characteristic about these biennials and their *legacy*. For while infrastructural development was central to the rhetoric of these biennials, it was rarely matched by strong documentary records of the exhibitions themselves or the works shown. The archives are full of holes. Installation shots have disappeared or were never taken at all. At the Sydney Biennale's offices in 2012, the archives were shucked and shamed inside a metal locker with only the most desultory form of ordering. If we are lucky, we have a blurred thumbnail image accompanying contemporary reviews in frail magazines, personal photographs and hazy recollections offered by participants still alive, and a series of shaky narrations. The fragile sustainability of these biennials is often understandable, of course, given events in Baghdad since 1974 or Vietnam since 1962, and it is a not uncommon complaint about how we might re-engage with the history of exhibitions anywhere in the world before the archiving impulse struck institutions in the early 1980s. What it means, though, is that these other histories from the Cold War, of biennials of the South or biennials on the edge of art's usual worlds, remain decidedly precarious.

South, now

That precariousness has to be central to any imagining of or through the South today, no matter how tempting it is to romanticise the South as a *Deus ex machina* from neoliberalised conditions. This is especially true as biennials seek different models for their sticky explorations of globality and contemporaneity. Think, for instance, of the resurgence of critical regionalisms and regional solidarities beyond the North Atlantic as an exhibition thematic. (The Biennale Jogja's embrace of the Equator as a geopolitic of cultural exchange comes to mind here, as do attempts by the Asia-Pacific Triennial and Bienal do Mercosul to refract economic programs and free trade agreements through culture.) We can think too of the reclamation of communist and socialist histories as means to shatter the biennial as a champion of neoliberal networks, and to transform

those networks back into solidarities (the Kochi-Muziris Biennial and WHW's 2009 Istanbul Biennial being the most notable examples).

But as some of us know all too well, southern exchanges can sometimes raise great challenges, due less to linguistic or cultural differences across the South than to the bureaucracy of visas or to unexpected breakdowns in communication technologies. To smooth out the South is actually to misrepresent its capacity to jam the traffic of contemporary art. This may be one lesson learned from the Bandung Pavilion, for instance, organised by Agung Hujatnika, Charles Esche and others for the 2012 Shanghai Biennial. While the commissioned collaborations between artists from different parts of the South drew its explicit inspiration from the 1955 Bandung Conference, it was perhaps the censorship of one of the works – a collaboration between Duto Hardono and Meiro Koizumi, censored because of its transformation of an interviewee's reflection on his forced labour during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia into critical thanks for the occupation – that provided the starkest reminder of how the South might operate today. It provided an important reminder that such inspirations are not only about dialogue and collaboration, but also about friction, about rubbing authorities the wrong way, about disruption, from which something constructive can potentially emerge.

Indeed, to return to the southern histories outlined here as inspiration for the future requires a delicate sense of balance. Showcasing the archive of a particular exhibition, as has happened with the Museo de Antioquia's 2013 exhibition dedicated to celebrating the Bienal de Coltejer or Adajania's focused studies on the Triennale-India, can draw much-needed attention to the few archival materials that may remain of an important exhibition history. Yet privileging a singular locality may not only reveal nostalgia for a lost history, but is anathema to the messily horizontal, trans-local ambitions that these exhibitions bore when first staged. And while this history of experimenting with exhibition formats is certainly tantalising, it is hard to see many curators willing to hand over their professional expertise to ambassadors and diplomats, and to revive the models of consular curating that are often inseparable from this experimental impulse.

Where the South has worked best as a method, however, is when the informal and the infrastructural coincide to produce something of the spirit of these past biennials. It is not the regionalist aspirations of Mercosul or the Asia-Pacific Triennial that are most striking; in both exhibitions, regionalism is reduced to a fairly stale formal trope, dependent, as we said earlier, on free market agreements rather than other modes of solidarity for their impetus. Rather, it is their education programmes that have stood out in recent years, and for two main

reasons. First, because the education programme provides the backbone of these biennials, to an extent shaping their content, layout and public engagement; and second (at least in the case of Mercosul's education centre, called Casa M, installed during the 8th edition in 2011), because those programmes are sustained far beyond the two-month timeframes of the exhibition as an 'event'. As such, the biennial's duration and sense of its public not only undergo a major rethinking, but hark back to and build on the similar programmes developed by the earlier biennials of the South: the most well-known of which is the mix of seminars, education and discussion platforms, formal and informal, running throughout the 3rd Bienal de La Habana, but also the similar mix of research and children's education programmes at Coltejer in 1970 and 1972, or the series of town hall discussions and debates in the twelve months prior to the third Sydney Biennale in 1979.

It is this challenge to or push beyond the formal concerns of the South that we want to conclude this paper on, given Gerardo Mosquera's claim that such open and informal discussions epitomize 'a "horizontal" South-South platform very much based on personal contact between people from different art worlds'.[18] That contact has certainly transformed the presentation and experience of biennials; but it can also underpin how we might reflect on their histories. For if the archival record is fragile, incomplete, evanescent – if its inscriptions are barely discernible, its paper-thin supports bent, crumbling, and tissued, its reference points destroyed – then we must turn to the informal and unofficial as means to elucidate those pasts. To the anecdote, to the private collection of photographs and ephemera foxing in a spare room, to the personal recommendation to contact another participant, and another, and another, retracing the spindly lines of informal contacts past that may, somehow, maintain in the present. Such informalities are both the bane and the blessing of the historian, opening up new approaches to these exhibitions while unsettling the structure of our methods and the firmness of their foundations. Yet they may be ideal fodder for exhibition practitioners, for their lacunae demand creative responses, referential but not reverential, as the best means to engage the dual axes of the South with which I started this paper: the axes of trans-local necessity and historical prospects. These lacunae, in other words, insist on *creative uncertainty* as a method for thinking about exhibitions past and present – a method that is trans-local rather than localised, questioning rather than stable, and thus open to the possibility of being a method more inventive and heterogeneous than even the concept of 'South' may offer in the first place. ●

18 Gerardo Mosquera, 'The Havana Biennial: A Concrete Utopia', in Elena Filipovic (et al.), *The Biennial Reader: An Anthology on Large-Scale Perennial Exhibitions of Contemporary Art*, Bergen: Bergen Kunsthall and Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010, p.205.

Biennial Exhibition Histories, Against the Grain: Juraci Dórea's *Projeto Terra* in São Paulo, Venice and Havana

Lucy Steeds

This essay tracks a single work of art through the archival traces of three biennials, and offers some speculative analysis. The artwork at issue is Juraci Dórea's *Projeto Terra*, from 1981, and the exhibitions took place in three successive years: the Bienal de São Paulo in 1987, the Venice Biennale in 1988 and the Bienal de La Habana in 1989. When I began writing, my intention was to examine these three events in turn and in equal detail. Moreover, I anticipated that, through supplementing the official documentation in each case – with recourse to the artwork's *own* archive (for instance as provided by the artist)[1] – my analysis would culminate in the last of the three. I thought that this work's presentation in the third edition of the Cuban Bienal would be exemplary, if only because this particular biennial has *itself* been hailed as exemplary – indicative, that is, of the shift among such events away from being international art showcases and toward constituting quasi-global exhibitions of contemporary art.[2] And certainly I found that, when in Havana, this work augured well for contemporary art, if contemporary art is to be understood as post-conceptual art.[3] Indeed the archive for this artwork, as assembled by the artist, sheds light on the Cuban exhibition, since no official installation shots (or plans) have yet come to light.

However, I found that reflecting on biennials less often subjected to historical analysis – and doing so through this particular work of art – produced some surprising results. In Venice in 1988, the artwork under study toed the line of a formalist modernist insistence on medium specificity, thereby losing out – in the competitive climate of the given international exhibition forum – to European-turned-US hegemony. This is actually *not* so surprising: the work acted as a fragment that neatly represents the 43rd Venice Biennale overall – just as neatly, in fact, as it may be seen to represent, in a different display mode, the very different priorities and possibilities in Havana the following year. Yet, studied in its *initial* biennial context, in São Paulo in 1987, this work appeared unruly – and my speculative comments here will respond to that perceived unruliness.

1 This essay is indebted to Juraci Dórea's assiduous archival work. I am extremely grateful for the artist's remarkable generosity in sharing his archives with me and in answering all my questions.

2 See Rachel Weiss et al., *Making Art Global (Part 1): The Third Havana Biennial 1989*, London: Afterall Books, 2011. Also Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, 'Biennials of the South on the Edges of the Global', *Third Text*, vol.27, no.4, 2013, pp.442–55.

3 I am taking my understanding of the post-conceptual here from Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or Not At All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art*, London: Verso, 2013.

Installation view of Juraci Dórea's *Projeto Terra* (1981-1988) in the Brazilian Pavilion for the 43rd Biennale di Venezia (1988)

Juraci Dórea's *Projeto Terra* (Project Earth or Earth Project) dates from 1981, when the artist started building wooden structures, covered with cattle hides, in the *sertão* of Bahia in Northeastern Brazil. These sculptures were constructed from local materials as art objects for the contemplation of those rural residents who happened to pass by, while also offering them shelter and – in some instances, as it turned out – a source of leather to be recycled for personal use, in sandals, or to form the seat of a stool. Described by the artist as 'linked to the very environment which was the source of inspiration',[4] these structures sometimes lasted for days, sometimes years. Dórea photographed them, also photographing himself – and impromptu visitors – together *with* them. He further recorded comments from those visiting – and occurrences such as the redeployment of the leather. All this documentary material became part of the work, as it would be displayed for the contemplation of its *secondary* audiences: specifically for visitors to exhibitions in the urban centres of, for example, São Paulo, Venice and Havana.[5]

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In the 43rd Venice Biennale of 1988, Dórea was presented as a sculptor.[6] Both inside and outside of the Brazilian pavilion, he built sculptures like those he had constructed in the *sertão*, and these command the camera in installation shots. In the words of Luis Camnitzer at the time: 'while documentation was [also] exhibited, it was reduced to a secondary role'.[7] By contributing *sculpture* to the Venetian international art showcase, a formal modernist tradition, resolutely anchored in Western Europe and the US, offered the immediate measure.

The image of *Projeto Terra* in Venice that is most readily available online is a press shot. It shows the artist, solo, in front of one of his outdoor sculptures – with the work's accompanying photographs visible in the gallery behind, in museological grid formation. It is tempting to read into Dórea's awkwardly placed hands and turned-in toes only an *uncomfortable* relationship with the vision of modernist artistic heroism arguably demanded by the context.

The 1988 edition of the Venice Biennale was dubbed 'the year of Jasper Johns'.[8]

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Returning to Luis Camnitzer for commentary, we read that in Havana the following year, for the third Cuban Bienal, *Projeto Terra* was 'solely represented by a large documentary panel'.[9] No other objects were involved; just a montaged

4 Dórea presented this text on the wall for exhibitions and has distributed it in publications. See, for instance, J. Dórea, 'Earth Project, 1981–88', *43a Bienal de Veneza: Brasile 1988* (exh. cat.), 1988, n.p.

5 The work was first shown, in what the artist describes as 'modest form' (email dated 19 August 2014), as part of a group exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art of Bahia in Salvador, Bahia. More recently it was presented as part of the 3ª Bienal da Bahia, 2014.

6 Dórea represented Brazil alongside José Resende. The title of the curatorial essay for the Brazilian pavilion was 'Two Sculptors' – see Lélia Coelho Frota, *43a Bienal de Veneza: Brasile 1988* (exh. cat.), 1988, n.p. In the overall Biennale catalogue, the artist's contributed works are titled as sculptures: *Scultura per i Giardini di Venezia I* and *II*. Indeed, we might note that the director of the Biennale that year was an Italian art historian specialized in sculpture, Giovanni Carandente. In terms of formal training, Dórea studied architecture.

7 Luis Camnitzer, 'The Third Biennial of Havana', *Third Text*, vol.4, no.10, Spring 1990, p.88.

8 Enzo Di Martino, *The History of the Venice Biennale, 1895–2005: Visual Arts, Architecture, Cinema, Dance, Music, Theatre*, Venice: Papiro Arte, 2005, p.74.

panel, bringing together photographs, texts and maps.[10]

Unprecedented in printed or online documentation of the 1989 Bienal, Dórea's installation shots show the relation between certain artworks in the main Havana exhibition, and give some indication of the traction of the overall theme of 'Tradition and Contemporaneity' in counter-hegemonic art. I wish to suggest that, more readily than the works shown adjacent to it,[11] *Projeto Terra* may be understood within a regime of contemporary art that supersedes modernism and, further, which claims as definitive the anti-aestheticism of conceptual art.

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As I have indicated, although this is not noted by Camnitzer, the *initial* biennial outing for *Projeto Terra* came two years earlier, in São Paulo in 1987 – and it is here that I would like to linger.

For the 19th Bienal de São Paulo, countries around the world were asked to send the work of artists addressing the idea of 'Utopia versus Reality'.[12] Sheila Leirner, the chief curator, presided over those invited,[13] and the work of some four hundred in total ultimately came together in the Pavilhão Ciccillo Matarazzo. As noted in the Bienal's regulations for that edition, and reiterated by Leirner in her catalogue text, the work on display was 'grouped under the criterion of language analogy [that is: on the basis of visual or conceptual affinity] rather than by national representations'.[14] This marked an ongoing break with the nationally-located displays famous in Venice[15] – a break first instituted in São Paulo in 1981.[16]

In her catalogue text for the Bienal in 1987, Leirner describes a particularly *active* approach to increasing the number of countries participating[17] – and here again this might be intended to draw distinction with Venice, where there were greater physical restrictions.[18] What seems to have been important at the time was the total number of countries represented, rather than a notion of maximal geopolitical diversity. Accordingly, São Paulo proudly accommodated 54 countries,[19] ten more than in Venice the following year.[20] In fact, there were marginally more European nations represented in São Paulo than there were in Venice, and indeed more European countries than Latin and South American. Broadly, the geopolitical make-up of São Paulo mirrored the Eurocentrism of Venice.[21]

The explicit way in which the curator of the 19th Bienal de São Paulo sought to distinguish this event from other biennials was through endeavouring to offer overall conceptual coherence – indeed, a concerted critical articulation. The expression 'Utopia versus Reality' is therefore extended, in Leirner's curatorial

9 Luis Camnitzer, *op. cit.*

10 This panel was designed by a collaborative partner, Washington Falcão.

11 To the left was work by Martin José López Reyes, and to the right were paintings by Shail Choyal and photographs by Francisco Mata Rosas.

12 Sheila Leirner, 'Introduction', and anonymous, 'Regulations', *19ª Bienal Internacional de São Paulo, 1987: Catálogo Geral* (exh. cat.), São Paulo: Fundação Bienal, 1987, pp.21-2 and 30

13 As noted by Leirner (email dated 18 November 2014), she led the team that selected the 22 Brazilian artists. Moreover, 'almost all the artists brought by international commissioners (most of whom were influenced by my requests) had our consent.' On specific artist pages, the catalogue notes the following as having been invited directly, rather than nationally nominated: Donald Baechler, Michael Buthe, Luciano Castelli, Brian Eno, Alfredo Jaar and Anna Mariani.

14 Sheila Leirner, 'Introduction', and anonymous, 'Regulations', *ibid.*, pp.22 and 30.

15 The catalogues for São Paulo in 1987 and Venice in 1988 reflect a related distinction, with the artists' pages in the latter grouped and ordered according to the country that selected them to participate, while in the former they are entered alphabetically as individuals. We might also note that the Biennale di Venezia had itself attempted to at least supplement its exhibition model of national representation by adding a curated show, the 'Aperto', first in 1980.

16 I am grateful to Lisette Lagnado for pointing out that the key expression 'analogias de linguagem' is Walter Zanini's, in connection with his Bienal of 1981.

17 Sheila Leirner, 'Introduction', *op. cit*., p.22.

18 It is only since 1995 that nations that are willing to present their artists in a temporary pavilion in an off-site location (of their choosing and

financing) within the city of Venice have been officially welcomed by the organisation.

19 53 are given in the list of countries in the catalogue (*op. cit.*, p.32), although Surinam is missing from this list. Leiner proudly notes the increase, by seven countries, from the preceding Bienal in a footnote to her text, S. Leirner, 'Introduction,' *op. cit.*, p.24.

20 The numbers were significantly boosted in Venice through the Instituto Italo-Latino Americano providing a platform for seven nations: Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and the Dominican Republic. In the Giardini pavilions were specifically devoted to Brazil, Cuba, Venezuela and Uruguay. Contrast the *Aperto* exhibition, where there were no Latin American artists included.

21 African and Asian countries were only minimally present in each biennial context. Categorisation is fraught, of course, but considered maximally, Angola, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Israel, Japan, Morocco, Mozambique and South Korea were represented in São Paulo; and Egypt, Japan, Iraq, Israel, South Korea and the USSR in Venice.

22 See reviews of the exhibition, for instance, José Maria López Prieto, available at: <http://entretenimento.uol.com.br/arte/bienal/1987> (last accessed on 16 October 2014) and Marlise Simons, *The New York Times*, 9 December 1987.

23 The title picked up on Leirner's conceptualisation for the Bienal the year before, the *Great Canvas*.

text, to cover the curated projects that were positioned in amongst and alongside the main exhibition – and the idea of Utopia is ultimately pegged to a polarity between the notion of art merging with life, on the one hand, and of art being for the sake of art, or being *about* art, on the other. However, I believe there are more productive terms of reference to be found, if we focus on Dórea's *Projeto Terra*.

This was *not* among the most conspicuous works in the show. Perhaps the most immediately striking was Tunga's: two tons of steel threads jetting some fifteen metres through the centre of the pavilion's swirling signature ramps. And it was a work less immediately visible that – according to disparate critics – claimed the biennial laurels that year: Anselm Kiefer's colossal hovering sculpture on the top floor, heralding a suite of vast paintings in a room behind.[22]

Both Kiefer's and Tunga's work were included in the principal section of the main exhibition in the Bienal, specifically the section titled the 'Great Collection', [23] which was vertically organised throughout the building and is described in Leirner's curatorial text at some length. By contrast, Dórea's work was to be found in a secondary section of the show – in an untitled zone given comparatively few words in the catalogue.

The 'Great Collection' gave a museological name to the standard biennial brief – that is, to the showcasing of recent art. More particularly, Leirner writes:

> The 'Great Collection' is proposed as a space analogous to *postmodernity*. The stage of a baroque passion. [...] The 'Great Collection' is a reprocessed form which lodges reprocessed forms with a kind of post-modern 'palimpsest esthetics' [with a footnote to Christine Buci-Glucksmann]...

The two key terms here, for me, are *the post-modern* and *the baroque*. They resound throughout the curatorial description and, I want to suggest, a particular notion of the baroque might, in fact, come *to stand in for* the postmodern.

Here is another quote from Leirner on the subject of the 'Great Collection':

> Our museum is dynamic, grand, theatrical, hierarchical. It lifts itself up from 'earth to heaven' in a magical spiraled cylinder – an art cylinder. [...] here we stand before *a baroque* rather than a modernist notion of total art. Here we stand before illusion, before the stage scenery of light, colour and movement, for the staging of a great emotional play.

Installation view of Juraci Dórea's *Projeto Terra* (1981–1989) in the 3rd Bienal de La Habana (1989).

Suspect Western hegemonic claims upon postmodernism were already being discussed at this time,[24] and Leirner's reach towards postmodernity is initially somewhat ambivalent.[25] So the baroque, given its strong Brazilian tradition (even though this national tradition is conspicuously *not* invoked), may be seen to proffer a counterbalancing wager, specifically that the notion of postmodernism might, like the baroque centuries before, be brought into its own in São Paulo. Although this is *my* reading and not the curatorial intention,[26] I feel the ambition for the Bienal, vis-à-vis Venice, here becomes eloquent – to the extent that the São Paulo initiative stands strong as the postmodern, *qua* Brazilian *neo-baroque* successor to the Venice Biennale's aging modernism.

An official photograph of the 1987 Bienal, which is freely available online and privileges Tunga's work, is equally and consonantly eloquent, since the installation piece placed centre-stage channels a Brazilian, baroque heritage with triumphant style. To quote Leirner once again: 'dynamic, grand, theatrical, hierarchical. It lifts itself up from "earth to heaven".' Yet, at the same time, this shot, with hindsight, confirms the Eurocentric risks of promulgating postmodernism, however it is reconceptualised, since it was West German work – Kiefer's – scarcely visible in the wings that swooped from on high, flexing their hierarchical claims, to grab critical acclaim.

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The archive for *Projeto Terra*, as assembled by the artist, includes some striking installation shots, and – together with those photographs officially archived by the Bienal – they enable distinct responses to the show overall. As we might expect from the work's placement outside of the so-called 'Great Collection', *Projeto Terra* proves remote from concerns with the *baroque* and *postmodern*. Simply by insisting on the rural and humble over the urban and grandiose – further, by aspiring to transparent simplicity over heightened drama – it was a poor fit for the baroque as a style.

Indeed each transitory sculpture photographed in its rural setting offered a pre-modern parody of the monumental work of Oscar Niemeyer's pavilion in the landscape of Ibirapuera Park, rather than a baroque ornament for the building. Moreover, as socially-engaged Land Art and as documentation of this, Dórea's work troubles the applicability of the postmodern by better exemplifying the postconceptual.

The flipside of these statements is also true: *Projeto Terra* is reasonably *well* described by those few words given by Leirner to the untitled section of the main exhibition:

24 See, for instance, Nelly Richard's paper for the 3rd Bienal de Trujillo, November 1987: 'Postmodernism and Periphery', *Third Text*, vol.1, no.2, Winter 1987–88, pp.5–12.

25 She first uses the concept within scare quotes ('our present, the so-called "post-modernity"'), S. Leirner, 'Introduction', *op. cit.*, p.22.

26 Leirner confirms (in an email dated 18 November 2014) that there was no curatorial intention to tether the postmodernism invoked to a specifically Brazilian notion of the baroque.

> These artists, in one way or another... intervene in the multidimensional space of Culture and of cultures. This is the case for works related to architectural, theatrical, social, ethnic, ritualistic and anthropological spaces.[27]

Here the terms 'architectural' and 'theatrical' might as well describe works in the 'Great Collection', or, indeed, much installation art as prevalent in the 1980s, yet the ensuing list of adjectives moves into new terrain by expressing concern with the 'social, ethnic, ritualistic and anthropological'. The artists with work gathered *outside of* the 'Great Collection' broach an expanded field, beyond the confines of art as narrowly understood – we are told that they 'intervene in the multidimensional space of Culture and of cultures.'[28] Here *Culture*, with a capital 'C' – implying a hegemonic norm, as historically imposed by colonial Europe – is crossed with *cultures*, with a lowercase 'c' and in the plural, implying instead perhaps the living diversity of Latin America. The Bienal catalogue tells us that this secondary section of the exhibition was situated on the middle floor.[29] It is overshadowed in the curatorial essay by the 'Great Collection', yet *Projeto Terra* operates to disrupt any quasi-museological claim that the main section might seem to make upon unity and entirety.

Projeto Terra amplifies the challenge leveled against the unity and entirety of *quasi* museological collections by defying the unity and entirety of the art object itself. As displayed in the Bienal de São Paulo, *Projeto Terra* is a work of art that refuses resolved form; it involves fragmentary documentation of an art project, rather than presenting a finished art object. For example, the display of photographs suggested, if anything, the layout of a magazine feature, not the museological hang we might expect of, say, Land Art photography or social-documentary work by artists. The pictures on the walls were related to text panels and maps, and all this was further related to raw materials like those used *in situ* in the *sertão*.[30] Stretches of cattle hide and lashed poles of wood were *not* given sculptural form, as in Venice the following year, but instead presented in what we might call demonstration mode. The job of communicating the project from the gallery walls was then taken up by video footage that was screened simultaneously, as well as by three booklets, each with a text by a different author, which were provided free to be taken away.

In São Paulo in 1987, Dórea's work echoed the suggestion of *Projeto Terra* in its primary context, the *sertão* – by which I mean: it amplified a rallying cry of the late 1960s against the insufficiency of the art-object as such.[31] Resolutely within the exhibition space, it questioned the formal demands of presentation

27 Sheila Leirner, 'Introduction', *op. cit.*, p.23.

28 *Ibid.*

29 *Ibid.*

30 Juraci Dórea credits the curating of *Projeto Terra* to Ivo Mesquita, one of the Assistant Curators for the Bienal in 1987 (email dated 19 August 2014). In the exhibition catalogue the photographs displayed are credited to Ana Rosário and José Carlos Teixeira, beyond Dórea himself.

31 Hélio Oiticica rails against 'the unsufficiency of the art-object as such' in 'The Senses Pointing Towards a New Transformation', text sent to *Studio International* 22 December 1969 but not published. Available at <http://www.itaucultural.org.br/aplicexternas/enciclopedia/ho/index.cfm?fuseaction=documentos&cod=625&tipo=2> (last accessed on 16 October 2014).

in such a space – and questioned the limits, the insufficiencies, of art objects there defined.

In offering such an articulation, *Projeto Terra* draws not only on the radical art experiments of the 1960s – as united in Europe and North America, for artistic practices within this region, in the name of Conceptual Art; and as advanced elsewhere often in distinct terms – it draws equally on the indigenous crafts and aesthetics of its rural home locality. The constructions that form the starting point for the work – the improvised architectonic sculptures – emerge in part from local practice and operate in relationship with that practice. The work then takes shape as these structures become the basis for conversation – about art, values and meaning – and as they become the basis for impromptu action, in response to their utility.

In these ways *Projeto Terra* may be seen to develop the political idea of *no-objetualismo*, as announced by Juan Acha in the early 1970s and pluralised across Latin America in the early 1980s, for instance by Aracy Amaral in Brazil.[32] Acha was inspired by the counter-cultural protests and collective artistic productions of the Mexican 'grupos', as well as by his experience of Peruvian artistic experimentation,[33] and, simultaneously, by popular art and design rooted in much older, pre-capitalist production traditions. He promulgated *no-objetualismo* in order to question the modern and colonial project of Western art history, from a Latin American standpoint.[34] Seen in this light, the structures built by Dórea in the *sertão*, and the conversations and interventions they prompted, allow for critical reflection on the complex historical experience and living legacy of imposed, adopted and adapted modernisation. They do this by asking: what is the meaning of international art, in the absence of international exhibition trappings, in rural Brazil in the 1980s? And what is the implication of this for art in São Paulo?

The question then arises as to how other works in the 1987 Bienal might have mustered to the cause of *Projeto Terra*, such as I have presented it – or resonated with related causes. I am still working on this, but a summary of my findings so far would highlight the adjacent works by Ricardo Brey and José Bedia,[35] who each put the hallowed Western art object, and its equally hallowed conceptual dematerialisation, into question by incorporating active religious elements drawn from specific Cuban traditions.[36] Whereas Dórea presented reportage of his rural experiments upon the art object, Brey and Bedia effected their experimentation within the gallery space.[37] In contrast we might consider further adjacent works such as the installation by Marta Palau, *Recinto de Sha-*

32 See, for example, the colloquium proceedings for the IV Art Biennale, Medellín, in 1981: Alberto Sierra Maya (ed.), *Memorias del Primer Coloquio Latinoamericano sobre Arte No-Objetual y Arte Urbano*, Museo de Antioquia and Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín, 2010. In the present context it must be noted that Acha's contribution to these proceedings ('Teoría y Práctica No-Objetualista en América Latina') ties 'no-objetualismo' to a notion of postmodernism, one understood in terms of a liberation from humanism. Aracy Amaral's contribution to proceedings focused on 'Aspectos del no-objetualismo en el Brasil'.

33 See Miguel A. López, 'Back to *No-Objetualismo*: Returns of Peruvian Artistic Experimentalism (1960s/70s)', *Manifesta Journal: Around Cultural Practices,* no.13 (special issue, 'The Fungus in the Contemporary', guest edited by Cuauhtémoc Medina), pp.21–25.

34 See Miguel A. López, 'Switching the Biennial's Agenda: Attempts for Cultural Independence in Latin America in the Late 1970s', conference paper for 'The Future Curatorial What Not and Study What? Conundrum', Centre for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, 6–8 November 2014 – publication forthcoming.

35 The Cuban artists were selected by Alejandro G. Alonso, Orlando Hernández and Gerardo Mosquera, the last of these being a key figure in curating the early editions of the Bienal de La Habana.

36 Amélia Pélaez, the third Cuban artist represented in São Paulo in 1987, is also an interesting case in the present context: shown alongside *Projeto Terra* were her works on canvas and paper, whereas her broader practice, involving murals and ceramics, might well be revisited in light of 'no-objetualismo'.

37 José Bedia presented *La commission India y la commission Africana contra el mundo material* (*The Indian Commission and The African Commission against the Material World*, 1987). Brey's contribution was not, as suggested by

the catalogue, *The Structure of Myths*, but a new work that was assembled in his absence as he was unable to travel to São Paulo to install (email from Isabel Brey, 20 October 2014).

38 19th *Bienal de São Paulo, 1987*, *op. cit*., p.38.

39 See José Amálio Pinheiro, 'Notas sobre conhecimento e mestiçagem na América Latina', *REPERTÓRIO: Teatro & Dança*, vol.13, no.14, 2010, pp.9–12; and *América Latina: Barroco, Cidade, Jornal*, São Paulo: Intermeios, 2014. I am grateful to Pablo Lafuente for highlighting Pinheiro's work.

40 See authors such as Alejo Carpentier, José Lezama Lima, Nicolás Guillén and Severo Sarduy from Cuba, Carlos Fuentes and Octavio Paz from Mexico.

41 See Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Toward a New Common Sense: Law, Science and Politics in the Paradigmatic Transition*, New York: Routledge, 1995. I am grateful to María Iñigo Clavo for highlighting the work of Sousa Santos.

42 See Jorge Luis Marzo, *La memoria administrada: El barroco y lo hispano,* Madrid and Buenos Aires: Katz, 2010. I am grateful to Yaiza Hernández for highlighting the work of Marzo.

manes [Shamanic Place] (1987) and César Brandão's contribution, described in the catalogue as 'rudimentary… [involving] natural elements, suggesting ritualistic work, archaic ways and mythical spaces'.[38] These works are easily relatable to the terms 'ethnic' and 'ritualistic', as attributed by Sheila Leirner to this particular zone of the Bienal, but it is harder to see references in them to the complex historical experience and critical legacy of colonial modernisation, which I take to characterise *Projeto Terra* in the São Paulo exhibition. The installations created by Brandão and Palau perhaps suggest, instead, the development of formalist modernism by premodern forms and processes – which risks pointing us back towards an *exoticising* postmodernism.

This exoticisation is the underbelly, if not dark heart, of the postmodernism I have claimed in the name of a triumphant Brazilian neo baroque for the 'Great Collection'. Yet, instead of a theorisation of international 1980s art in terms of the postmodern-turned-baroque – which ultimately risks implosion under sustained Western claims upon hierarchical privilege – might the real coup of the 19th Bienal de São Paulo be those works at its very core that acknowledge the history of a Western colonial cultural presence in Latin America, while *breaking* with precisely this?

I am interested in the possibility, raised by José Amálio Pinheiro, that a distinct concept of the baroque might potentially play a role: one Latin American rather than Brazilian, indeed essentially untied from any particular nation state; one that conceptualises miscegenation, with interconnection more significant than any individual parts.[39] We would need to set this thinking in relation to the Latin American baroque articulated in the 1960s and 70s, from Cuba and Mexico in particular,[40] further to navigate the baroque of the South posited by Boaventura de Sousa Santos in the 1990s (in relation to postmodern subjectivity)[41] and to address the critique of the Hispanic baroque posed by Jorge Luis Marzo.[42]

But my current contribution remains tied to the archive of *Projeto Terra*. For Venice in 1988 this archive, as I have presented it, reveals a work that echoes the art-historical modernism of this primal Biennial Forum, but we might now ask what happens in the Bienal de la Habana, given our new reading of São Paulo. The Cuban biennial of 1989 was avowedly committed to challenging European and North American claims to authority over the production of contemporary art. As such, it encouraged the reading of *Projeto Terra* that I have now suggested we find in São Paulo. Yet, in light of the work's display in São Paulo, I remain somewhat troubled by the form the work took in Havana. Once

turned into a single and unified work for exhibition, *Projeto Terra* gains what we might term a wieldiness – by which I mean: it offers itself all too easily to Western audiences seeking diversification of their model of contemporary art as postconceptual art. The very *un*wieldiness of *Projeto Terra* in São Paulo in 1987 might be the basis of our rethinking it today. I take this unweildiness to be productive: a prompt for reconsideration of the insufficiency of the art object as such, and an incentive to think again about *no-objetualismo*, perhaps in light of a concerted and contemporary Latin American baroque. ●

Censorship, Resistance and Reenactment: Bienal da Bahia, 46 Years Later

Fernando Oliva

> It is necessary to break free from the 'ties', not simply to throw away the past and all its history: what is needed is to consider the past as a historical present, it is still alive, it is a present that helps avoid the various traps ... in face of it, our task is to forge another, a 'real' present, and this requires not the deep knowledge of an expert, but the capacity of historically understanding the past, to know how to distinguish what will work for new situations that today present themselves to you, and all this is not only learned in books. In practice, there is no past. What still exists today and has not died is the historical present. What you have to save – in fact, not save, preserve – are certain typical characteristics of a time that still belongs to humanity.[1]
>
> – Lina Bo Bardi

The experience that most impacted me since I arrived in Salvador, in early 2013, to work on the 3rd Bienal da Bahia was, inevitably, a popular festival. Only, unlike other similar events in Brazil, such as Carnival and *São João*, this one was unique, and celebrated the unofficial independence of Bahia. Known as Dois de Julho, it relives the time when combatants from the then Province of Bahia defeated the Portuguese and emancipated themselves from their coloniser. This happened ten months after the official Independence Day of the rest of Brazil, which is 7 September 1822. Its symbol and hero is a man of mixed race, called *caboclo* – completely different from the image of the white European Prince Dom Pedro I raising a sword on the banks of a stream in São Paulo. Of strong social identification, in the form of a statue which is carried by the people, the *caboclo* represents those who fought for the independence of Brazil and Bahia, and are never remembered: Indians using primitive weapons, black slaves and freedmen, *sertanejos*[2] and people who organised themselves voluntarily, a whole variety of ragged soldiers who actually constituted the largest contingent of troops.[3]

It was during that celebration in the form of processions that crossed the city, from Lapinha to Campo Grande, where I was personally guided by the art-

1 Excerpt from a conference given by Lina Bo Bardi to the students at Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade de São Paulo (FAU-USP) and transcribed in the text 'Uma aula de arquitetura', *Revista Projeto*, São Paulo, no.133, 1990, pp.103-108.

2 *Sertanejos* are the people who live at the Sertão, ('outback' or 'backcountry') one of the four sub-regions of the northeast of Brazil. It also refers to the backlands away from the Atlantic coastal regions where the Portuguese first settled in South America in the early sixteenth century.

3 On the theme of the Independence of Bahia see Wlamyra Ribeiro de Albuquerque, *Algazarra nas ruas: comemorações da Independência na Bahia (1889-1923)*, Campinas: Editora da Unicamp, 1999; Socorro Targino Martinez, *2 de Julho: a festa é história*, Salvador: Selo Editorial da Fundação Gregório de Mattos, 2000; Luis Henrique Dias Tavares, *Independência do Brasil na Bahia*, Salvador: EDUFBA, 2005.

ist Arthur Scovino who, unknowingly, brought me closer to one of the most salient features of this place: the celebration of doubt and ambiguity. I saw organised groups composed of military men and public school students parading next to other popular and self-managed groups, many carrying banners and protest signs against the situation in public transport, and other complaints at local and national levels. The street and marching bands were outstanding and, as such traditional block parties, they played with the veiled boundaries of their own situation, with live performances from hymns and marches to successes of pop singers like Lady Gaga and Beyonce (an emblematic case is that of Glamu-Rosamente, whose members, adorned with pink feathers, proved to be proficient baton twirling choreographers, for the delight of the public at Largo do Rosário). A strange combination – perhaps only for foreign eyes, like mine – of state parade and an out of season Carnival. It was clear to me I was witnessing something very special, a place where the boundaries between official and unofficial, permitted and forbidden, spontaneous and rational became deliberately fuzzy without giving up the obvious social tensions of class and race, all of this contaminated by self-irony and the traditional symbols of Brazil and Brazilianness.

However, in those early months, a year and a half from the opening, when the project was still gaining musculature to face the tempests that would certainly come, another issue was presented as decisive and unavoidable: how to deal with the trauma of censorship and military repression of civil society and particularly of the cultural spheres of Brazil and Bahia in the 1960s and 70s. The most dramatic consequence of the situation in Bahia was the closing of an exhibition with 270 artists and approximately one thousand works, the 2nd Bienal da Bahia in 1968, as well as the imprisonment of its curators (the artists Juarez Paraíso and Riolan Coutinho), marking the interruption of a process that started pointing towards the rearrangement of power in the country, turning its attention to Bahia and the Northeast, generally marginalized regions, and shifting to the opposite direction of the monopoly of São Paulo and the Southeast of Brazil. Even today, after 46 years, one has the impression that the Brazilian cultural sphere did not realise that the prohibition of the 2nd Bienal da Bahia was one of the largest cases of censorship in our history – certainly the biggest in the field of visual arts, and which caused the most lasting damage to a region and its system.[4] It should be remembered that this case of censorship to hundreds of works goes in the opposite direction of the idea that, in Brazil, the visual arts were a field of relative freedom for their isolation and little re-

4 The escalation of repression and censorship that began in 1964 would be clearly noticed as of the 9th Bienal de São Paulo (1967), with removal of works from the exhibition, and would reach its peak in 1969, a year after the Institutional Act No. 5 (AI-5). This 10th edition of the event would be known as 'Bienal of the boycott' due to the public refusal to participate by dozens of artists and delegations in Brazil and abroad. Despite the differences between the military regime and the Bienal having become more evident in the 'Bienal of the boycott' they started earlier, in 1965 (8th Bienal), worsening significantly in the next edition (9th Bienal), with censorship and removal of works by the federal police. In 1969, the Associação Brasileira de Críticos de Arte (ABCA), in Rio de Janeiro, chaired by Mario Pedrosa, votes on a manifest of rejection to any limitation on the 'creation of the artwork and the free exercise of art criticism' referring to the incidents, including the cancellation of the exhibition of Brazilian artists selected for the Biennale des Jeunes, Paris, which was held at the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio, and the abrupt closure of the 2nd Bienal da Bahia in 1968. For more on the censorship of visual arts in Brazil, see: Claudia Calirman, *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship - Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio, and Cildo Meireles*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012; Caroline Saut Schroeder, 'X Bienal de São Paulo: sob os efeitos da contestação', unpublished master's thesis, São Paulo: Escola de Comunicações e Artes da Universidade de São Paulo, 2011 (<http://www.teses.usp.br/index.php?option=com_jumi&fileid=17&Itemid=160&id=77A709E3D267&lang=pt-br>); Renata Cristina de Oliveira Maia Zago, *O boicote à Bienal de São Paulo de 1969*, paper delivered at the XXX Colóquio do Comitê Brasileiro de História da Arte, Rio de Janeiro, 2010.

verberation in the public sphere, unlike cinema, theatre and popular music, whose prohibitions usually caused a big fuss in the media.

The first edition of the Bienal da Bahia in 1966, led by two young local artists, Juarez Paraíso and Riolan Coutinho, brought together about 800 works by 280 artists from virtually every region of the country, and was held at Convento do Carmo, which was restored especially for the event. Its second edition, in 1968, was even bigger and more ambitious, but already under the shadow of the hardening of the military regime and the enactment of the Institutional Act nº5 (AI-5), the decree that partially removed individual freedoms and radicalised State repression. On the opening night, the Governor of Bahia, Luiz Vianna Filho, delivered a scathing speech in the name of freedom of expression, when he would have said phrases like 'all young art must be revolutionary' and 'freedom characterises art', which were said to have irritated the military with the Bienal. There were neither recordings nor records of this speech, which survives as one of the legends told by those present that night.

The fact is, the next morning, the place was shut down by the military, who claimed that there were subversive works in the exhibition. Juarez and Riolan, who refused to withdraw the works, were arrested. This is still an unclear episode that was little studied, filled with conflicting versions and accusations from both sides – tensions that were revived by the actions of the 3rd Bienal da Bahia, particularly with the reenactment of the previous editions at Mosteiro de São Bento, of which I will talk about later.

Bahia becomes an official part of Northeastern Brazil in 1959, with the emergence of the Superintendency for the Development of the Northeast (Sudene) – an autarchy based on research by economist Celso Furtado with economic and political consequences to the region. Its driving motives were the great drought of the previous year and the increase in migrant population during the government of Juscelino Kubitschek. As noted Marcelo Rezende, chief curator of the 3rd edition of the Bienal, this 'is also the moment when the Brazilian state is seen in the position to define what the Northeast is or is not'. And when there is a growth in imagery and symbolic constructions of what would be, to the South and Southeast, the man and culture of the Northeast.[5]

With regard to the themes of memory, or its deletion, today, almost five decades after those first biennials of Bahia in the 1960s, it seems strange, but also symptomatic, that they are not part of the official historiography being constituted in Brazil and in the world around the most important exhibitions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (the so-called 'exhibitions histories').

5 For more information on the matter, see the project for the 3rd Bienal da Bahia at <http://bienaldabahia2014.com.br/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Projeto-Curatorial-ok.pdf>. As well as the book by Celso Furtado, *Uma política de desenvolvimento econômico para o Nordeste*, 1959. On the idea of symbolic construction in the region, I recommend the book by the historian from Paraíba Durval Muniz Albuquerque, *A invenção do Nordeste e outras artes*, 1999. I also recommend *Avant-Garde na Bahia*, 1995, by the author from Bahia Antonio Riserio, which analyses the rich cultural moment during the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 60s in Salvador, part of which would later become Bossa Nova, Cinema Novo and Tropicália.

In Brazil, in the few studies that deal with censorship in cultural spheres, the Bienal da Bahia usually appears in the form of brief statements, or footnotes.

One hypothesis for this eloquent oblivion, in my view, is linked to the fact that, in the second half of the 1960s, the biennials of Bahia symbolised a real possibility of decentralising the system of arts in Brazil, concerning the aspects of its production as well as circulation and reception. Shifting it from the Southeast to Bahia, the physical and symbolic gateway of the Northeast.

Without assuming this 'dictatorship liability', but rather looking at it and trying to understand it, the Bienal da Bahia, in its return, decided to name itself the 'third' edition, rather than restarting the count, as initially suggested by the State. On a side note, the Government revisited this idea by means of a decree (No. 11.899, of 17 December 2009), established by the Secretary of Culture Marcio Meirelles and the director of the Museu de Arte Moderna da Bahia from 2007-2010, Solange Farkas. The Bienal replaced the old Salão da Bahia, which lasted, with interruptions, from 1989 to 2008. The third edition was held with public funds, had a total budget of 7 million Brazilian reals and held, during a 100-day period between June and September 2014, thirty spaces in the city of Salvador and twenty in suburban towns, reaching an approximate audience of 90,000 people. The curatorial team included Marcelo Rezende, Ana Pato, Ayrson Heráclito, Alejandra Muñoz and the author of this text.

According to the project of the 3rd Bienal da Bahia, the aim was to question the constituent processes of cultural and historical experience of the Northeast from the perspective of Bahia as well as its dialogue with Brazil and the universal experience, 'discussing the permanence or failure of concepts such as regionalism, determinism and the physical and mental occupation of territories'. Another central intention was to bring to memory its own past and, most importantly, enable new audiences to recognise themselves in this past and also in its present return – especially non-specialised audiences (still pejoratively called 'lay public').

One of the unavoidable questions of the curatorship has always been: which narrative can the Northeast, and a Northeastern biennial, offer about themselves from the Northeastern experience and that of Bahia? The need to work *with* the particularities of places, and not *about* them, without being patronising, has always been stressed.

Often the best answers were given by the local public, as in the opening of the exhibition around the conceptual art of the 1960s and 70s in the Casarão do Museu de Arte Moderna da Bahia (MAM-BA), in which visitors

began to suggest dance moves, 'naturally', some in the style of *capoeiristas*, around the well known chalk circle by conceptual artist Ian Wilson. In Bahia the notions of staging and theatricality are characteristic elements of urban social life and of the personality of its people, including the spectators of the Bienal. Another emblematic example from the day to day of the exhibition: for the project of reenactment of the biennials we needed a work from the series Bichos, by Lygia Clark, practically impossible to achieve in our conditions, both for the high value of insurance and for the museological requirements (we were in an eighteenth-century monastery without air conditioning or permanent security). So we decided to ask the artist Ayrson Heráclito, also part of the curatorship, to make a replica, in cardboard, which was later replaced by a miniature in plastic acquired at the Clark Art Center store for about 200 Brazilian reals. With that, of course, assuming as a provocation that the piece was not an original, the educational programme was able to work with the public on both Lygia Clark's artwork and her presence in Bahia at the first Bienal in 1966 (when she won the Jury Prize, held by Mario Pedrosa), and on the difficulties of exhibiting big names of Brazilian art in the Northeast today.

The proposed resumption of the biennials of Bahia contaminated all the spaces and the duration of the event. However, it had its own headquarters in Salvador: a Benedictine monastery from the sixteenth century, which materialised with more willingness and clarity. Arisen from a chapel built by the Jesuits in the sixteenth century, home of the Benedictines since they arrived in 1582, the Mosteiro de São Bento is intertwined with the history of Bahia. At the beginning of the seventeenth century it was burned down by the Dutch and played a key role in the resistance. During the Brazilian military dictatorship it was led by one of the most progressive religious thinkers of our history, Abbot Dom Timóteo Amoroso Anastácio (1910–1994), who publicly criticised the regime and torture, sheltering students persecuted by the police.

During the preparatory moments for what would become the project *A reencenação* [The Reenactment], it seemed clear that the path could not be that of a remake - through 'memorabilia-works', indexical items of the period – neither could the exhibitions of 1966 and 1968 be merely seen as objects to be recovered. Either because most of these relics had been lost or due to the short time available for conducting a research capable of locating them throughout Brazil. But beyond that, we also believe this would be the most unfair solution, to the point of being nearly illegitimate.

As said by the thinker who systematised the philosophical notions surrounding repetition and its variants, Søren Kierkegaard:

> repetition and recollection are the same movement, except in opposite directions, for what is recollected has been, is repeated backward, whereas genuine repetition is recollected forward.[6]

In this sense the Bienal wanted to look forward, in the direction of a repetition, and not of a recollection, a mere memory of what happened, and much less of a nostalgia.

So one of the most consistent responses to the political and cultural context in which the Bienal da Bahia was created was just going through the realisation that some of the forces and historical battles that acted at that time did not remain confined to the past, but continued to operate, even if discreetly and silently. And the way they positioned themselves before society and the artistic sphere seemed strangely familiar – limited to a polarisation that in a way still characterises the Brazilian *modus operandi* in politics and culture, opposing left and right, youth and veterans, concept and form, repression and resistance, depression and euphoria, reason and unreason.

Among the episodes that contributed to the destabilisation of that second attempt at producing a biennial in Bahia – besides, of course, the presence of military power little accustomed to freedom of expression through art – was the public resignation of Mario Cravo Jr., an influential artist who occupied a position of trust in the State Council of Culture. He said he was 'radically against' the exhibition. His arguments, published in the newspaper *A Tarde* on 5 October 1968, provide a useful measure to reflect, yesterday and today, about the nature of these tensions:

> Alien and alienating mannerisms of groups of countries, through mass information, controlled and related to immediate interests even in a certain colonisation of its own taste and character, are in vogue among us for many years, Mr. Governor, and personal interests call this 'industry' of universalising art practice. [...] Do not see, Mr. Governor and friend, in my attitude the smallest hint of hostility towards your government or personal dislike. Therefore, for wickedness not engaged in such high-level matters, I take the liberty of making this letter public.

6 The idea of reenactment initially came up in the fields of philosophy (with Søren Kierkegaard's *Repetition: Studying a Phenomenon*, 1843) and history (with R.G. Collingwood's, in *The Idea of History*, 1946). Only recently, starting in the 1990s, was it incorporated more evidently to the visual arts, initially with the artistic proposals of Marina Abramović of repeating her performance pieces of the 1970s. The notion of 'historical reenactment' is attributed to Collingwood, for he argued that the basic task of the historian is to 'rethink' the past. He said, 'For the historian, the actions whose history he studies are not spectacles to be seen, but experiences to be lived within one's own spirit'. It is important to remember that the notion and the very practice of repetition always existed in the context of visual arts, representation and its historiography. What began changing is the perception into the past and its retake in the historical present, as well as the way the public and the system of the arts (especially critique) relates to the possibility of returning to something that already happened, be it a form or an idea. In 2008 I was the curator of a project around this subject called *Cover=Reencenação+Repetição*, at the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo. In 2012, Felipe Chaimovich and I put together the exhibition *O retorno da Coleção Tamagni: Até as estrelas por caminhos difíceis* at the same museum.

The response from the Bienal, written by one of the monitors of the educational service, Renato da Silveira, now retired professor of the Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA), was published in the same newspaper a few days later:

> We believe that Mr. Mário Cravo's attitude is not an isolated one, but that there are other artists who share his same opinion, although they fought to establish themselves for many years in the cultural scene of Bahia and Brazil and also created and encouraged events similar to the Bienal and open fairs, they currently place themselves in a different position, or rather, 'radically' against young people who repeat their same struggle and that instead of having them as guides and points of support, find them cloistered in their towers of prestige and self-promotion as declared enemies of all forms of art that are not their already worn out and academic formulas.

Both the letter of Mario Cravo and of Professor Renato were part of the project called *A reencenação* [The Reenactment] – so called for referring also to the operation of reenacting, today, in Bahia. After the editions at the Convents of Carmo and Lapa, the resumption of the first biennials were held in the Monastery of São Bento. The site was chosen, above all, to be associated with the notion of resistance: first, of the Dutch invasion then of the dictatorial regime, in this case the person of Abbot Dom Timóteo Amoroso Anastácio. But also for its furniture, art collection (until the 1990s there was a museum of religious art in activity) and other parts of its collection that could be incorporated into the exhibition, in trying to establish anachronistic and diachronic conversations between objects of different historical eras, from an eighteenth-century painting to a contemporary work created especially for the exhibition.

We were also particularly interested in the theatrical and performative aspects present in the culture of the monastic life and its representations, which include architecture, internal sound, the clothing of monks and other material and symbolic elements. And certainly includes its maximum moment of theatricality, the Mass, which enacts and reenacts, each time, a return (death and resurrection). The public, educators, artists, curators and other professionals lived daily with these celebrations, as well as with the Gregorian chant during the service, which produced sounds and music that contaminated each work that was present in the exhibition and, above all, the viewer's relationship to them.

In this place in which the context and the expography were offered to us, we chose not to include false walls that could create divisions and artificial

solutions. Part of the work was therefore to establish some dialogue, bearing in mind one of the stories we were told by Brother Anselmo Rodrigues. Our intermediary with the universe of the Monastery said that when the museum of religious art was still operating, it was common for supposed visitors to behave as believers, blessing themselves, kneeling and even paying promises, going around the exhibition space on their knees to the image of St. Peter that was displayed, and under which they would deposit keys to apartments and newly purchased cars.

In the choir area, a large central space overlooking the nave of the church, we promote a situation of friction, formal and symbolic, between the winding and lush aspects of the baroque, on the one hand, and the rationality of design and thought, on the other. Works by local Almandrade and the Lebanese Charbel-Joseph H. Boutros resisted the space and its objects – a mixture of solemnity and delirium that could be part of a Glauber Rocha film with a soundtrack by Walter Smetak. Over the entire set, an abstract-geometric tapestry of the modernist Genaro de Carvalho hovered like an ethereal spirit.

Besides Almandrade, which can be considered a pioneer and continuous producer since the 1960s, *A reencenação* included the decisive presence of a whole new generation of artists who live and work in Bahia: Ana Verana, Arthur Scovino, Daniel Lisboa, Lia Cunha, Pedro Marighella, Tuti Minervino, Zé da Rocha and Gaio. The very legitimacy of these names in this context was one of the central parts of the project.

In the research process and recovery of the memory of those first biennials of Bahia, in large part worked in the *A reencenação*, twenty-two hours of interviews were recorded with artists, curators and people connected to the event at the time. We personally visited dozens of professionals who worked directly in its conception and creation, including Professor Renato, who in the 1970s was one of the artists arrested and confined by the military in army barracks in Salvador. The following also had their testimonials recorded in film: Juarez Paraíso, Francisco and Alba Liberato, Lia Robatto, Pasqualino Magnavita, Juca Ferreira, Leonardo Alencar, Luís Henrique Dias Tavares, Glei Melo, J. Cunha and Nair de Carvalho, among others. If some of them kept vivid memories of the period, others recalled little or nothing (including facts involving them directly). These and other records about the history of the exhibition are part of the material that was donated to the public archives of the state of Bahia and in the future will be made available to researchers.[7] Facing all kinds of difficulties to access documents and images from the past of the Bienal da Bahia, another

7 In September 2014 the Archive building, Solar da Quinta do Tanque, dating back to the eighteenth century, was closed for roof renovations because it was in danger of collapse, reopening in January 2015. Available at <http://www.fpc.ba.gov.br/arquivo-publico-da-bahia/>.

solution was to locate personal files of artists and other professionals from the art circles of Bahia in 1960s and 70s – and, of course, through oral history, which was determining in this case.

If, hypothetically, the Brazilian military regime had not interrupted the process of the biennials of Bahia, in 2014 we would have put on not its third, but its 25th edition. It would not only be one of the oldest in world oldest in activity, but most likely responsible for a closer look at the characteristics of this place, and introduce a necessary din in a cultural system firmly planted in the South-east of Brazil. It is, of course, an exercise in probabilities, in part fictional, since the exhibition project of Bahia was censored.

In any case, the intimate problems that the 3rd Bienal da Bahia faced in relation to its own past began and ended with the same question: how to revisit an idea that transcended time without leaving visible traces, but as a rumor, a suppressed object which only went back to emitting signs of life nearly fifty years later? If the Bienal da Bahia is not interrupted again, this time for lack of organisation or interest of the State and of our cultural sphere, it is issues of this order, now renewed, that curators of future editions will have to deal with: how tell a story that exists only as a ghost of itself, a trauma about which little or nothing is spoken of in Bahia and Brazil, and that survived for decades only in the memories of older generations. ●

Geographies

Currencies of the Contemporary: Biennials and the International in Southeast Asia

David Teh

1983 / 1991

The phrase 'No More Imagined Communities' invokes a masterwork of the study of nationalism that is also a masterwork of Southeast Asian studies.[1] And though prompted to look beyond it, the student of contemporary art in that region is apt to have a hard time doing so, without also looking at or through it. So let me begin by revisiting it – alas, too briefly to do it justice, but attentively, at least, to the long shadow it still casts, and the considerable light it still sheds, on the subject before us: the 'contemporary' international survey exhibition. This is, no doubt, a genuflection of sorts, but also an invocation of a spirit, or of several spirits, that find voice in that text and which still have something to say to us.

Imagined Communities long ago became a touchstone of Southeast Asian studies, especially political and historical ones, and so it remains, albeit too often passing unquestioned as received wisdom for studies of art history and for much of the framing of art that has lately come to call itself 'curatorial'. It may be inevitable that seminal texts get simplified, but if Anderson's thesis has often escaped interrogation in cultural studies, its implications have been smuggled less critically still, and often unconsciously, into art writing. To start to correct this, we would need to re-read the book on its own terms, before addressing its intersection with our own terms – with the discourses of modern art. But although I cannot effect such a deconstruction here, for our more immediate purposes it will help to begin by asking: What are the book's terms? And where might we locate this intersection?

Imagined Communities is above all a book about the discursive production of the nation form, and even in this crude, summary dimension one sees a place for modern art – in most of Southeast Asia an early, if not constitutive, component of that national 'assembly'. At the same time, though, this story of production – haunted by Marxism's reckonings with industrialization, especially Walter Benjamin's – is also a story of the *reproduction* of that form, a nar-

1 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* [1983], London and New York: Verso, 1991.

rative that both demands and complicates a post-colonial analytic. We will see in a moment that the complexities of *re*production precipitated a telling revision of the book. *Imagined Communities* is equally a book about media and mediation – a media theory – concerning a programme (in Vilém Flusser's sense of this word), a socio-technical assemblage by which words and ideas come to be circulated and composed so as to produce that national form. That assemblage Anderson calls 'print capitalism', a phrase that summons the very modernity that would come to pass under the sign of Nation, yet encompasses at the same time a good many other modernities: at least, that of the printed word, and the multifaceted modernity of capitalism (of the market economy and capitalist exchange relations; of disenchantment and the emergence of secular powers; of emancipation, class struggle, and representational governance…); but also that of the technologies of reproduction more broadly, of print and later broadcast and electronic media; along with the modernity of language itself, in its more or less timely evolution to reflect and also to produce (or perhaps as often, to retard) the modernity of a society. So many incomplete and mongrel modernities, then – 'mottled', Anderson would say – that came to be peppered across the cities, jungles, river plains and archipelagoes of Southeast Asia. How have these mottled modernities furnished the modernity of art? And not just its modernity, a modernity that's still with us, but also its historicity?

Anderson's thesis is as crystalline, as impregnable now as it was thirty years ago. There's much in it that remains to be unpacked, not least the importance of the nation form's origination here in Latin America; and its passage across the Pacific, via the colonial nexus of the Philippines and the circumstantial vector of the Spanish language, a line of flight sketching a newly complete world picture – modern, orbital or 'global', as we now say – one that may be a suggestive precedent for our contemporary art's 'global' self-image. But Anderson was concerned with another encompassment: that which took the imprint of the Nation, not of a world. His 'media theory' of print media and national language concerned the media that grounded the historicity and modernity of the imagined community. But this may be a limitation, for while indeed the glue that bound together heterogeneous communities with a common imaginary, these media could never do so comprehensively, nor were their concomitant modernities ever complete. Literacy might become ubiquitous in a given country, say, but would never do so to the exclusion of oral transmission.

In Southeast Asia, far from it. When print did kill off other media (e.g., pre-modern ones, or contemporary local languages), it moreover created the

kinds of displacement, loss and alienation that retard the cohesive advance of the nation form – hence the modern nation's elaborate rituals of encompassment.[2] Print media's incomplete coverage of national communities may be contrasted with their sheer penetrability by electronic media, for both social and spiritual intercourse, now the key platforms of many national conversations. (Two conspicuous examples being mobile phones in the Philippines and Facebook in Indonesia.) So if there is a caveat on Anderson's study, it's that it tells too well the tale of media in national formation – a complex reduced in academic and bureaucratic parlance to 'nation-building' – thus ensuring the containment of that narrative within the frame of that national modernity. This formation *was* the basis of a certain internationalism, following what Anderson called the Nation's 'serial' logic.[3] Yet it did not provide for the reproduction or sharing of much Utopian promise – that of the Bandung Conference, say – but rather, of a modernity more pragmatic and concrete, more opportunistic, as an early multilateralism gave way to the *realpolitik* of Southeast Asia's Cold War. With the consolidation of the region's middle classes and dilation of its public spheres since the 1980s, the ground of national modernity has proved solid, but print media, however powerful, have been unable even fully to encompass most nations, and unable to mediate national conversations about what might follow that modernity.

Anderson himself confirmed the limitation with the addition of a new chapter to *Imagined Communities* second edition in 1991, in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse. In what he calls a 'discrete appendix', he admits he accounted too brusquely for the transference of colonial to post-colonial forms of administration. 'Census, Map [and] Museum', for instance – the title of the new chapter – were all material and discursive forms of colonial-then-national power, effective, enunciatory and performative. And they are salutary forms for the media theorist, for they also describe a certain shift from the word to the image: the census paints an ethnographic picture, 'a new demographic topography', he says; the map becomes a popular-national 'logo'; while the Museum (all the capitals of Southeast Asia have them) staged the often fraught picturing of a national biography, and even enabled critical re-imaginings of the national community and its past.[4] Anderson attributes the late nineteenth century emergence of the colonial museum, on which national museums would be modeled, to the shift from the commercial-colonial regimes of the East India companies towards the properly bureaucratic regimes of what he calls the 'true *modern* colony'.[5] He identifies a veritable 'antiquities race' amongst the

2 Encompassment has long been an impulse for innovation in the region's official cultures, and the absorption of new media has inspired some of the most imaginative inventions of 'tradition'. E.g. the Siamese elite's propagation of that country's first printed constitution in the 1930s; Suharto's inauguration of the developing world's first satellite (1976) with a ceremonial *keris* (dagger); or the distributed electronic séance, *Ugnayan (music for 20 radio stations)* (1974), engineered by José Maceda for the Marcos regime in the Philippines.

3 Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World*, London and New York: Verso, 1998.

4 *Imagined Communities*, p.169.

5 Emphasis mine. Researchers and artists working with the NUS Museum in Singapore have explored this transition through the lens of the colonial museums of Malaya's Straits Settlements at that time. See e.g., Erika Tan (ed.), *Come Cannibalise Us, Why Don't You? (*exh. cat.), Singapore: NUS Museum, 2014.

British, French and Dutch colonizers, with uncolonized Siam limping along some 25 years behind. (And one can assume that delegates at a World Biennal Forum are mindful of the importance of this very period in the internationalisation of art exhibition.)

Indeed, this Antipodean activity – while certainly not then a vector for modern art – made culture visible in a whole new way, and a more powerful ideological tool; no longer an object of curiosity, its collection and display no longer simply the window-dressing of colonial plunder. For it also unearthed staggering artistic achievements that flew in the face of all racist-primitivist narratives, attesting to a cultural depth that called for the creation of 'alternative legitimacies' and a new, more elaborate order of domestication, in part through a prolific *visual* surveying, 'a kind of necrological census'.[6] These addresses of the past were plotted on maps for the colonial public, often appearing as little logos, half a century before the consolidated 'logo-maps' of the nationalists who inherited this archaeo-colonial *dispositif*. Monuments functioned as images, as signs, ripe for the reproduction and seriality of print capitalism. But I wish to add two observations that Anderson doesn't make. First, he doesn't refer to these images *as media*; what's important to him is that they render proto-national furniture as reproducible sign, but they supplement, rather than displace, the 'images' rendered by the reproducible word of print in national vernacular; and whereas the latter permitted a crucial encompassment, a circumscription that was also an isolation, the *exhibitionary* media of museum and art – while no less useful at home – would have much greater amplitude beyond the national community. Nor, secondly, does Anderson mention that these monuments were themselves 'media' – vast installations made up of thousands of images, pictures not just of a community or state, but of a whole *world*. In fact, of two worlds: earthly and celestial, whose junction they marked and explained by way of elaborate narratives and designs which enlivened the sacred. 'The temple is the body', writes the art historian, 'on which these distinct yet connected "worlds" are inscribed'.[7] A structure like the Borobudur in Central Java, for example, was no less worldly in its pretensions and design than any contemporary kunsthalle or biennial. Every square inch of this tourist magnet is stuffed with art. Census, map and museum in one, it not only marked the centre of a political and spiritual 'sphere of influence' or *mandala*, but was itself a recursive diagram of that cosmos of which it was the centre.

This, then, is the re-reading of *Imagined Communities* that I would suggest, after Anderson's revision: Census, Map and Museum were media – the

6 *Imagined Communities*, pp.180-182.

7 T. K. Sabapathy, *Road to Nowhere: the Quick Rise and the Long Fall of Art History in Singapore*, Singapore: Art Gallery at the National Institute of Education, 2010, p.24.

nation itself was a medium – for the consolidation of an imagined community as cohesive, 'discrete and bounded', but also for its efficient *extension* and its (exhibitionary) reorganisation, according to an iconological seriality, as an image that facilitates the imaging of a world. Could we not likewise expand the parameters of modern art's history, beyond the straightjacket of national iconography? For however belated their emergence as authors of 'modern art', Southeast Asians were over many centuries plugged into world pictures by way of certain evolving exhibitionary norms, from their own, sacred, pre-modern worldings, through late feudal and colonial worldviews, to the no less coercive globalism whose bandstand is the biennial. The often shallow internationalism cultivated by the modern post-colonial state is just one step in this larger sequence.

1955

None was more mindful of the political capital that could be cultivated by spectacular, exhibitionary internationalism than Indonesia's first president, Sukarno, host of the watershed 1955 Bandung Conference that assembled a new, post-colonial world and helped precipitate the non-aligned movement. But however much our better, anti-hegemonic instincts may be aroused by the spirit of Bandung, this 'non-alignment' must be taken with a grain of salt. For the conference was a pragmatically inclusive survey of emergent nationalisms, most of them unstable compounds, and some very much 'aligned' (those of China, Thailand and the Philippines for example). That alignment was to prove corrosive indeed.

Eight years later, Sukarno's adventitious Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) – set up in response to Indonesia's suspension from the International Olympic Committee for excluding Israel and Taiwan from its Asian Games one year before – were by comparison neither so idealistic, nor so universalist in tenor. The international outlook to which GANEFO gave expression was a fundamentally pragmatic one, like the NASAKOM doctrine, Sukarno's synthesis of nationalism, religion and communism, which underpinned his 'guided democracy'. There was apparently an exhibition that accompanied the conference in Bandung, as if such a spectacle required further imaging. It spawned a museum too. But to look at this historic convergence of nations and images in a properly art historical light will require a better art historian than me. Instead, I will draw a snapshot of this encounter from two external, literary, and quite personal viewpoints.

The first is a report on the conference by the leftist African-American writer Richard Wright, published in 1956 as *The Color Curtain*. The second is a glancing recollection in a 2009 lecture by Southeast Asia's lonely, pioneering art historian T.K. Sabapathy, entitled *Road to Nowhere: The Quick Rise and the Long Fall of Art History in Singapore*.[8] Both men of colour; both descendants of colonialism's massive global redistribution of labour; both post-colonial voyagers in the other direction. Both made lifelong commitments to art, and to the art of subalterns in particular. Yet there was much to distinguish them at the moment their orbits nearly crossed in 1955.

Wright, already in his 40s, after a decade as an expatriate in Paris and with nine books under his belt, was a man wholly given to the struggle for equality and freedom under liberal democracy, and while no stranger to its abuses in the McCarthy era, he had been quite assured of his US nationality – sure enough to have conscientiously renounced it (he became a French citizen in 1947) and yet never shirking its somewhat dubious distinction in the midst of the mostly non-aligned nationals gathered in Bandung. The first edition of *The Color Curtain* that I read bore the stamp of the University of Malaya, an institution that no longer exists, a national institution of a nation that no longer exists, but whose resources were subsumed into what is now the no less National University of Singapore, where I work. This University of Malaya was the site of the birth – the still-birth – of a regional art history inaugurated that very year, 1955, with the appointment of the Sinologist Michael Sullivan who started the university collection and offered Singapore's first ever art history classes. Sabapathy, seventeen at the time, remembers himself as an enthusiastic debutant of the newly arrived discipline. At this point of origin, though, Southeast Asia *had* no art history to speak of. Sullivan saw its heritage in China and India, a heritage obvious in the faces of the colony then, and now, but less so in its material culture, which accordingly had to be sourced from those far-off places. Neither museum nor syllabus would survive Malaya's partition and Singapore's accidental national becoming. Both had fizzled out by 1973.

Sabapathy's recollections are vivid but ambivalent. He recalls his first inklings of a newly representational world and new, worldly representations; the first frisson of post-colonialism; and how Bandung crystallised the stakes of decolonisation and the emergent Cold War. The university was 'not isolated' from these events, but he doesn't dwell on their effects on art. The infant museum was somewhat insulated, he says, although Sullivan's lectures led him to see 'pictures, sculptures, temples [...] as formations of world-views'. He 'gleaned

8 Published in 2010, *op. cit*.

the faintest of insights into [...] representation; representation of the world as imagined and as pictured', a perspective then unknown to him, but 'glimpsed, faintly'.[9] Twice, faintly. A slow awakening, then, to a world of representation, and to representations of a world, dividing.

Now from which side of the divide he would come to see this world was a matter settled in the ensuing years as he set off to professionalise in the US, then the UK.[10] But we detect in this tentative awakening to a world picture, to art's potential to picture a world – and to picture its world, otherwise – the caution and modesty of a young man lacking purchase on that world, a man at home yet somehow out of place. For in contrast with Wright, the internationalist so at home in the world, young Sabapathy was *a man without nation*. He identified with a place: Singapore. He may have felt 'Malayan', however Malaya was not a nation but a colony of the British crown, then in the throes of anti-colonial struggle, and therefore not represented at Bandung. It would be two more years before its independent Federation and ten more before the colonial *entrepôt* of Singapore had been cast out and had reluctantly become a nation of its own, in 1965, by which time our young art historian was well on his way, studying at Berkeley.

Wright's account of Bandung begins with a journalistic plebiscite of worldly Asians he met on the way there, followed by discussions with educated Indonesians once he had arrived. Even today we can feel their excitement and their pride, tempered though it was with some indignation, at having forged an internationalism of their own. This pride is an intoxicating thing, and a recent international turn in exhibition making, at and from the art world's global periphery, suggests that it endures still. Does not the international biennial, in its own decolonising turns, express just such an excitement? Again, a more thorough art historical treatment will have to wait. But these formal conflations – of the imagined community as assembly, the conference as exhibition, the nation as medium – might at least serve to slow and complicate the assimilations going on under the banner of a putatively 'global' and 'contemporary' art. If we are to historicise the biennial in Southeast Asia and the worldly aspirations it expresses, we first need to situate it squarely on this backdrop of ideological 'alignment', as a manifestation of the same somewhat liberatory, often indignant and proud, but above all *national* consciousness, with all its anxieties, limitations and pragmatism.

9 *Road to Nowhere*, p.9.

10 Sabapathy traveled to California by sea, via Hong Kong, Japan and Hawai'i. So commenced an eighteen-year odyssey of which each step seemed to take him further from his object – a great tradition of Southeast Asian art. After classical studies at Berkeley and London's School of Oriental and African Studies, he spent a productive but somewhat isolated decade teaching on the Malaysian island of Penang, a period which sealed his commitment to the art of his own time.

2013

In the time remaining, I will offer a sketch of three of Southeast Asia's international platforms, by way of a fairly speculative conclusion. My contention is that the history of a global contemporary art is going to require a genealogy of worldliness, since the internationalisation it describes in its own domain depends upon much larger and older processes of picturing the world and representing oneself in it, by means of exhibition. An internationalism thus qualified may have to proceed from national contingencies, yet it could also offer ways out of the *cul de sac* of national art history, by not just putting parochial internationalism in its place, but allowing for a skeptical, comparative exhibition history in which the 'global' projections of contemporary art too may be grounded in the material and discursive situations that determine them.[11] Each international survey show is a kind of mapping – this much is not controversial – but that mapping always frames a national self-portrait. This perhaps underrates the authorial agency of biennial curators and the autonomy (sometimes hard-won) of the organisations that hire them. But just how independent of state imperatives are these agents? Just how immune are curatorial teams to local fantasies of worldliness? The evidence from Southeast Asia makes the limitations on curatorial autonomy all too clear.

Rather than assimilate the art of diverse sites of production in the name of the contemporary, we should historicise the biennial format itself, *before* acceding to any global typology, in a local genealogy of 'worldly' exhibitionism whose horizons are national and whose primary author has in fact been the state itself. Looking then beyond that horizon, it may be that the best guide to a post-national landscape lies in pre-national ones. For pre-modern Southeast Asia was already, in the words of Oliver Wolters, a geography of 'many centres' – centres, not nations.[12] We should in any case look past a UN-style pluralism and ASEAN's fanciful 'democracy' of non-interference, to that dynamic, pre-modern geography, a fluctuating field of obligations rather than universal rights; of uneven development and asymmetries of power; of temporary balance and unavoidable imbalance (i.e., rather more like what we see today around the South China Sea).

Regionalism comes with its own pitfalls, of course. 'Southeast Asia' is after all a colonial-imperial construct, and the imposition is as much epistemological as political: not just in the type of administration but in the fact of administration. And it's not just the kind of geography, but the fact of the geographic

11 This kind of contextualisation is a strength of the Exhibition Histories series published by Afterall Books.

12 Oliver Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1982.

itself, as an enactment: a picturing and a writing of place with concrete strategic and legal ramifications. This kind of emplacement is decidedly not native to Southeast Asia.[13] Yet post-colonial frameworks have tended to naturalise and reinforce it, drawing lines, fixing boundaries, inscribing people and places for the purposes of administration. However we may wish to discard this frame, a more realistic goal would be to make it reflexive: a regionalism that interrogates and contests its own premises may just be enough to disrupt the unconscious cartographies of contemporary art.

Certainly, that regional window is more revealing than a deep view of any particular Southeast Asian biennial, especially if we mean to historicise the international survey-making where the currencies of our contemporary are generated and laundered. The challenge is to connect this most recent phase, inaugurated by decisive entry into 'the global', with an older, mid-century internationalism whose more salient visual expressions far exceeded the scope of the institution of fine art.

In 2013, three biennials were held concurrently in Southeast Asia: Jakarta's fifteenth, curated by the collective ruangrupa; Yogyakarta's twelfth (the second of its 'equatorial' stations), curated by Agung Hujatnikajennong with Sarah Rifky; and Singapore's fourth, curated, allegedly, by a motley crew of some 27 Southeast Asians under the aegis of the Singapore Art Museum. Three competing visions of artistic regionalism, all of more or less local inspiration and design. The cartographic instinct was all too obvious in their isotropic branding devices. But what about the national portraits?

Let us start with Singapore where, perhaps more than anywhere, the biennial's worldly aspirations are as transparent as its national-instrumentalist calling. Contemporary art there is more an economic than an intellectual vanguard, an instrument of gentrification though almost entirely government funded. After the economic miracle of the 1980s and 90s, a 'Renaissance City' master plan was adopted, to cosmopolitanise a place seen as a financial powerhouse but a cultural backwater. Its biennial was thus always already international in scope. The first edition, directed by Fumio Nanjo (assisted by a Singaporean, a Sri Lankan educated in the UK, and an Anglo-Japanese based in Tokyo), accompanied the 2006 World Bank / IMF meeting. Nanjo was also in charge of the second, assisted by a Filipina and a local, artist Matthew Ngui, who went on to direct the third in 2011, assisted by an Australian and a US American. Across all three shows, the selection formula was fairly stable, the geography concentric: with a large local contingent; a spread of regional neigh-

13 Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994.

bours shipped in cheap; beyond that, the dim outline of a greater 'Asia' and a wider 'international'.

Amongst this biennial's few charms, we could count an unselfconscious sense of discovery, of a region upon whose wealth Singapore has always depended, a region it sits in the middle of, was shaped by, but never dreamed it might actually be part of. One may be tempted to see Singapore's regional survey-mania – enshrined as it is in state policy – as a kind of neo-colonialism, yet what it produces is a succession of fraught, naïve self-portraits. This was no less the case for 2013's pointedly *regionalist* edition with its sprawling curatorial committee. For Singapore is more Southeast Asian than it gives itself credit for: you can find this bureaucratic regionalism in most of the region's capitals, especially now, as the ASEAN 'community' readies itself for greater economic convergence.[14] Yet there may be another kind of internationalism lurking here, for however neoliberal its national posture, Singapore's art economy is still essentially socialist. Artists are dependent on the state; the curator, more empowered by the dark arts of administration than by authorship, is even more of a functionary.

The biennial's seldom-discussed prototype was the locally curated *SENI Singapore 2004: Art and the Contemporary*, which emphasised the region's strong collective activity, and established a foothold for non-traditional media in the local exhibitionary landscape.[15] Its main exhibition was a 'tentative mapping' curated by Ahmad Mashadi and entitled *Home Fronts*; it reasserted Nation as the primary frame and referent for understanding contemporary art but, to its credit, held that this relation need not be primarily representational.[16] There was no attempt to posit universal or essential values on which disparate groups might insist or agree; particularities were stressed over commonalities. But it already expressed – albeit modestly – the regionalism that would emerge as the biennial's bureaucratic destiny in 2013, revealing the key anxiety that structures the art-worldliness of this migrant society: a fixation on the notion of *home*. All of Singapore's regional and international mappings may be read as homing signals.[17]

By contrast, Indonesia seems more sure of its place in the world, though in 2013, both of its biennials also mapped 'locally-thought', regional internationalisms. Both, in their ways, sketched a contemporary, non-aligned geography; but they arrived there by quite different means. The exhibition in Yogyakarta (Jogja) was the more aspirational, in its commitment to the authored biennial as token of the international contemporary. It occupied public and

14 Conspicuous recent examples include the Southeast Asia-centric SEA + Triennale held at the National Gallery in Jakarta, and *Concept Context Contestation: Art and the Collective in Southeast Asia* at the Bangkok Art and Culture Center, both opened in late 2013.

15 The central exhibition, *Home Fronts*, brought together ten Asian collectives, seven of them from Southeast Asia. SENI's organisers deliberately sought to counter the 'absence of regular, high profile opportunities to showcase' art works in non-traditional media. Chua Beng Huat, 'Introduction' to *SENI Singapore 2004: Art and the Contemporary* (exh. cat.), Singapore: National Arts Council and National Heritage Board, 2004, p.11.

16 Ahmad Mashadi, 'Home Fronts' in *SENI Singapore 2004*, p.18.

17 See also *Open House (3rd Singapore Biennale)* and *Negotiating Home, History and Nation*, mounted alongside it in 2011 and curated by Iola Lenzi *et al*. This 'homing' is part and parcel of Singapore's cultural disposition, based on a conviction as prevalent amongst shopkeepers and taxi drivers as it is amongst policy-makers: that Singapore itself 'has no cultural tradition' and that those of neighbouring countries might therefore be appropriated as national heritage. This is born of the island's enduring unhomeliness for its ethnic-Chinese majority. Older Singaporeans of any race, though, who grew up before independence, exhibit no such anxiety.

private institutional real estate. Each edition held under its 'equator' rubric sees Indonesian contemporary art paired with that of a given counterpart from an equatorial zone to be mapped out over ten years.[18] An accompanying 'Equator Symposium' deliberately invokes the internationalism of 1955. The Jakarta show, meanwhile, was held in the car park of the public arts complex, Taman Ismail Marzuki, and various non-art public spaces. Under the thematic banner 'Siasat' – an Arabic-derived word for 'tactics' – it proceeded by way of a more lateral, artist-to-artist, perhaps more organic and sustained kind of networking that would rather re-fashion the biennial form, hack it and localize it for the purposes of a specific community (though this approach must be put down to ruangrupa, not to the biennial organisation *per se*).

The roots of these platforms run parallel. Though they aspire now to international and 'contemporary' norms, both began in the authoritarian era as domestic painting surveys with juried prizes – Jakarta in 1974, Jogja in 1983. We would be hard-pressed to characterise much of the traffic in their early years as anything other than modernism, contemporary in only the chronological sense, until the mid-1990s. Neither show was internationalised until the twenty-first century. Both would eventually institute independent, non-profit foundations, and both receive significant funding from their respective city governments. But those cities are very different indeed.[19]

Jakarta is the modern national capital, seat of state and military power, and of the market. The associated concentration of wealth has yielded competitors for the biennial, public and private, like the now defunct CP Biennale and the more recent SEA + Triennale. Meanwhile, the smaller, provincial rather than national capital, Jogja, with its claims to Javanese heritage and proximity to important archaeological sites, has long been a centre of learning. It boasts the nation's ranking art school and a large population of students, artists and artisans. Official patronage here has been relatively steady – thanks to the republic's only surviving pre-independence monarchy – and not as susceptible to the unpredictable mood-swings of national politics. Jogja was also home to Indonesia's first discernibly 'contemporary' art space, Cemeti Art House, founded in 1988 and still going strong. Market forces are palpable, but stronger and more enduring are the networks of local artists and autonomous collectives. This biennial has thus been institutionalised and internationalised in a more deliberate and artist-led way.

In broad terms, the last two decades have seen the mantle of both patronage and artistic creation in Indonesia pass from the crony networks of the Su-

18 The first equator edition explored India; the second addressed the Middle East.

19 For a brief history of the Jogja Biennale, see Grace Samboh, 'Biennale Jogja Time After Time' archived online at <http://www.biennalejogja.org/>. See also Alia Swastika's remarks in 'Asia Pacific – Part A', in Ute Meta Bauer and Hou Hanru (eds.), *Shifting Gravity: World Biennial Forum No. 1*, Gwangju and Ostfildern: Gwangju Biennale Foundation and Hatje Cantz, 2013, pp.61-63.

harto era to a younger, more mobile and outward-looking generation that came of age with the political reforms of the late 1990s. It is curious indeed to see what world this new generation pictures for itself. What kind of 'international' do you get when you put Indonesia's two biennial-worlds together? It is nothing like Singapore's received, Cold War map, and yet its contours may be just as revealing of a national self-imagining, and just as unconsciously derived.

This other Southeast Asia is archipelagic, and feels no special duty to include the mainland states, nor much affinity with East Asia; despite thirty years of hard and soft sponsorship of Suharto's 'New Order', the US does not appear on this horizon at all. But it does reach out to encompass much of a once promised, non-aligned *ecumene*. For the sake of argument, we might juxtapose this worldly map of the two biennials with an older, pragmatic-Nationalist world picture – that of Bandung and GANEFO, for example. It would be hard to overlook the resemblance, a resemblance sure to be strengthened as Jogja's equatorial platform reaches further afield in coming years.[20] A certain internationalism is surely essential to contemporary art's contemporaneity, but its currency may be more, or less, than meets the eye. ●

20 Jogja artist Wok The Rock is curating the next edition (2015) with artists from Indonesia and Nigeria. The following show will focus on a South American country, with the 'equatorial' mission set to conclude back in Southeast Asia in 2019.

What's Love Got To Do With It?

Manuela Moscoso

Powerful neurological condition, affection, care, passion, intimacy, sublime experience or theological virtue. Love is certainly difficult to define and to reflect upon its nature; it has been a historical constant throughout different disciplines both scientific and social. So enigmatic is the power of love, that it has been for centuries a strong generator of cultural production. Who has not been moved while listening to 'Chega de Saudade' [No More Blues] by Tom Jobim and Vinicius de Morais, or 'As Rosas Não Falam' [Roses Don't Speak] by Cartola or how many did not leave the cinema with watery eyes after watching *Titanic*? How powerful is one who is capable of universally articulating love? For its intimate, passionate, engaging character, love is, indeed, one of the most powerful interpersonal emotions. Therefore, I ask myself, what relationship can love have with biennials in Latin America? Or, to quote Tina Turner, 'What's love got to do with it?'.

The impetus of this text initially arises from an interest in posing a reflection on the curatorial work in Latin American biennials, distanced from the tired premises that emphasize the context of insecurity and/or institutional instability which often include the 'heroic' work of the curator. This impulse and the invitation to this forum luckily coincide with my reading of Peio Aguirre's article: 'El amor como producción: una pequeña teoría de la economía del Arte' [Love as Production: a Short Theory of the Economics of Art] (2012). In this text, Aguirre asks, 'Can love become a metaphor for understanding production? What could be a theory of love as production? What would be the form used, the channel or way to address it?'. To which I ask myself: How can this small theory on love by Aguirre help me in thinking about biennials in the region? This text represents my first attempt at thinking about the duo love + biennial, and borrows some ideas from Aguirre's article to propose a framework for the analysis of love as production and biennials in the region of Latin America, based on my experience in the region and as part of the curatorial team of the 12th Bienal de Cuenca in Ecuador that took place in 2014.

The text begins by proposing love as something that is neither content,

nor argument or thematisation. For Aguirre, this strategy can neutralise the potential of what he wants to problematise, inviting us, instead, to focus on the mobilizing intensity and on the power of change or transformation that love carries. He invites us to understand it as a method for studying forms of organization, analyzing the use of resources and the forms of productive procedures for exchange – in other words, he proposes love as an economy.

Operating from both the visible and from the intangible, love as production would then be an element within a system (in this case, art) that works under certain conditions, and is characterised by the ability to act both in the private and public spheres. Aguirre encourages us to rethink love as production, and I quote, 'a transformative force that is strategically allied with the theory of eroticism between bodies and erotisation of relations in a system such as art'.[1] In other words, love acts as a producer of effects of attachment, such as: affinity, unity, joy, desire and above all action, between people and things; that its strength can transform an agglomeration into a community, unite, through the live experimentation thereof.

The love triangle

This mobilizing force or power of change can be complicated: what if someone loves two people without the possibility of synthesising them into one? That is, confronting the complications of love triangles. Aguirre recalls the famous love story between Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. The young lovers made a pact (or contract) of free love, which allowed them each to have romances with whoever they wanted, while being open about everything. The relationship lasted fifty years, of which only two they lived together. Without inquiring into the moral effects of this story, what interests me here is what the notion of 'loves' and 'contingent loves', that Aguirre develops in his text, can tell us in relation to love as production of biennials.

If a 'necessary love' could be defined as a commitment to a relationship that is built over time, based on a crucial respect toward one another, an emotional stability is established that the changing circumstances of the moment do not influence. The 'contingent love', on the other hand, is a love that does not exist by itself, which is generally characterised by being a passionate love, of indefinite temporality, which is raised by the circumstances of a particular moment and has no long-term commitment. The betrayal of love based on lies is ruled out in this latter scenario, where both sides know of the exist-

1 Peio Aguirre. *El Amor Como Producción: Una Pequeña Teoría del Arte*. Revista Pipa 1. 2002, pp.41-45. Impresso

ence of other lovers. This requires making other arrangements, agreements, or contracts, between the different sides to keep the love triangle in operation. Imagine, then, the love triangle as a kind of assembly, which, in turn, each player is an individual assembly (i.e., each player may belong to other love triangles). This makes love triangles an assembly with a high entropy level, and whose order and continuity require a certain amount of energy and work to maintain the existence of this assembly throughout the course of time. Now let us imagine biennials under the lens of these triangular structures: Who would be the protagonists of this love triangle? Who is the one that 'loves', who is the 'contingent love' and who is the 'necessary love'?

Let's go by parts. To consider the analytical framework of assembly, I intend to first do the following exercise: put 'the production of a biennial' as equivalent to a love triangle whose protagonists are, on the one hand, the context, which includes the geographical, physical, institutional, historical, social fabric, socioeconomic status, political, professional context of art, and cultural fabric. The second protagonist, on the other hand, would be the curator, the professional that organizes, produces, researches, creates relationships, focuses on artistic production and the relationship with the discourse, the theoretical, the everyday, the world, etc. And finally, the third protagonist would be the exhibition itself, which includes the artworks and artists, the relationships established, the experience of the public, the relationship that the exhibition establishes with the city, etc. That is, each would be an assembly, and together would form the biennial production.

Love + biennial

The Bienal da Bahia, Bienal de São Paulo, Bienal do Mercosur, Bienal de Curitiba, Bienal de Montevideo, Bienal de Cuenca, Bienal de Cartagena, Bienal de Arte Paiz, Bienal de La Habana, Ghetto Biennale, Trienal Poligráfica de San Juan, Bienal de las Fronteras, are some of the biennials extending throughout the region and generalising them would be a daring tactic. However, based on my experience and personal history linked to different countries in the region, I venture to think that the evidence of its protagonists confirm that these biennials share similar experiences. We share, for example, a feeling of uncertainty, leading to certain affective impulses of irony and sarcasm, constituting themselves as part of our sense of humor. Similarly, certain discourses converge such as the representation inherited from colonialism and the dynamics of

young democracies in similar socioeconomic processes. If we refer specifically to the art system, there are also occurrences that repeat themselves in institutions, such as an ongoing challenge to keep budgets on track and the continuous operation of research programmes, the difficulty in maintaining public collections while private collections emerge (all we have to do is look at the emergence and establishment of art fairs throughout the continent), there is also little government or private support for cultural production which, despite the emerging professionalisation of the sector, requires self-management and for administrators to assume multiple roles within the art system to ensure the existence of artistic processes.

All these recurring themes have not yet established or generated structures sufficiently autonomous and stable so that to imagine an interpretation where each 'love protagonist' is placed in their designated corner of the triangle in an obvious, clear or stable manner, as the assembly I propose here. Rather, these somewhat shifting and unstable contexts seem to require a theory of love as a production system which offers each of our protagonists a mobile connection with contingent notions of 'necessary love', using the 12th Bienal de Cuenca as a case study.

The Bienal de Cuenca

Cuenca is located in the Andean mountain range in Northern Ecuador, a relatively small city of 300,000 inhabitants. The Bienal de Cuenca began in 1987 as a biennial of paintings. In institutional terms within the Ecuadorian context, the Bienal is an institution that survived the crisis in the late 1990s, which resulted in the closing of almost all galleries and spaces dedicated to the visual arts across the country. The Bienal also resisted political instability for over thirteen years, during which Ecuador underwent seven presidencies, making it perhaps the only stable and permanent event dedicated to the visual arts in Ecuador for years. The Fundación Bienal de Cuenca depends on the mayorship of the city and has been responsible for producing this event since its inception. Up until the 2009 edition, it is organized through national representations. From that point on a change is made, when curator José Manuel Noceda requests a list of artists from each participating country from which he generates the final selection. In the 2011 edition there is another change with Arnaldo Farías, Fernando Castro Flores and Katya Cazar who are each invited to do a separate project. The format does not work and the Fundación Bienal de

Cuenca undergoes a period of self-reflection based on the demonstrations that take place and the vision is reconstituted for the love of transformation. As a result, the Fundación Bienal makes changes to the statutes and legal regulations for the 2014 edition, and Jacopo Crivelli Visconti and I are invited as chief curator and associate curator, respectively.

The Fundación Bienal de Cuenca, the representative of local interests, established a conversation with the guest curators where *almost* everything was shared – there are always secrets. In it, we reviewed and shared expectations, desires, passions and ambitions, and we reached an agreement on the project, promising that the relationship would not be strained even if expectations changed.

This conversation is established and based on mutual respect, in what we have defined from Aguirre's work as 'necessary love', which allows interpersonal relationships to be updated, as contingents appear and affect the relationship. The 'contingent love', however, would emerge during the relationship, as a figure where multiple changes converge: the established form of financing cannot be sustained and falls; political changes and institutional duties are suddenly presented. The unfitting demands of artists and of the context are also added to the unrealistic demands of the curators and the Fundación. Once we have established that which we have defined as 'necessary love', the agreement between a particular context and a particular curator, the curators must begin working.

Returning to our metaphor, the curators have in turn other 'necessary' and 'contingent' loves. To make public certain artistic practices, in this case art exhibitions, necessarily implies certain ways of loving art, the work of artists, artworks, and of reflecting upon the production of these... Therefore, curators want a contribution, a transformative exhibition experience: they have endless 'contingent loves'. This situation forces a delimitation to generate negotiations and contract reviews, and other elements, such as being honest with all those involved, i.e., a kind of love both open and insane. So this 'necessary love' toward the exhibition calls for strong and sensible decisions – for example, to establish lines of research. At the 12th Bienal de Cuenca we focused on four nuclei: world-system, appropriation, size, and the reconsideration of history that we felt resonated with processes of the context. The first strong decision: an exhibition that would have a maximum of fifty artists to ensure that the allocated budget did not disappear and in order for us to make sure that all artists had the best working conditions. Second one: we decided that the 12th Bienal de

Cuenca should converse with its neighboring countries, Colombia and Peru, as exchanges between us seldom occur. To do this, we had to talk to our other love: the Fundación Bienal de Cuenca, to request that part of the budget be spent on travel, both domestically and internationally, to Lima and Bogotá, something never done before.

Now, during the research and selection process, with or without travel, curators must be open to everything that surrounds them, porous if you will, and take seriously the stimuli coming from outside, thus allowing the 'necessary love' that one has with art to be contaminated by 'contingent loves', lending oneself to surprise. Without loves that madden, the exhibition becomes a stagnant figure that could fall into the repetition of strategies that block the transformative potential of what we want to translate. For example, while exploring for the 12th Bienal de Cuenca, we successively ran into artists that worked around the co-production of works with non-humans. We were captivated, passionate, which ultimately resulted in two new productions for the biennial and in one of the locations dedicated to these questionings. This is how such tactics show that curatorial practice requires personal relationships with artists, both local and international, not to go out on a whim but for a 'necessary love' that contributes to the exhibition.

The exhibition, in turn, must ally itself to love as producer of experience and thought. Whilst it is the curator who generates the exhibition, the exhibition itself is an autonomous being, with its own agency. The 'necessary love' is the covenant established in the encounter between an engaged public and the artworks and their relations. In a context where art institutions are scarce, as is that of Ecuador, pedagogical strategies by curators do not necessarily translate to being instructive. Rather, to knowing what intensity of guidance should be produced so that the works and their relations occur within the narrative framework that is established and for the public to generate interpretations from tools, knowledge or experiences. Just as the transformative potential of the context in an exhibition should not be underestimated, there will be works of art whose aspects are amplified and others are reduced depending on the context in which they are displayed.

At the 12th Bienal de Cuenca, as in many other biennials, some negotiations were more difficult than others. One example was negotiating to guarantee attendance on weekends. We were surprised when discovering that the premises of the exhibition of the 12th Bienal de Cuenca were only open to the public Monday through Friday during normal business hours, as were all gov-

ernment institutions. This topic, which may have seemed easy to resolve because it is financed by the city which should not restrict opening hours, took over six months of negotiations. In the end, they managed to open all locations on Saturday mornings and once a month for the whole day on Saturday. Unfortunately, this clear example of what we have called a 'contingent love' in the Latin American context was ignored: the needs were not taken into account and did not become part of a system that would give it permanence, no commitment was signed for future biennials; love was despised. There were times when the needs of a protagonist were taken into account: for example, we had to negotiate so that artists who produced new work received fees. This required the Fundación to bring together the board of directors to make the necessary changes in the rules of how the budgets were allocated. Curators that find themselves in these contexts of construction have a mission to identify the niches that require transformations that are essential in order to make radical and enduring changes for future productions of biennials.

What's love got to do with it

In a volatile environment, that is unstable or under construction, as might be the Latin American, where cultural policies are still emerging – if they even exist – and where culture is not yet fully embraced by the market or by private interests, the biennials are an expository format that, given its temporality, the contingency of the context and the intense accumulation of crazy and necessary desire, continue to be rich and fundamental platforms – if we start from love.

'Necessary love' is built from an essential mutual respect for one another, it generates an emotional stability that allows one to accomplish all their work and meet objectives, in addition to responding to the changes that occur so that they do not come in the way of the goal of the opening date of a biennial. In this sense, it is 'contingent love' that obliges us not to settle in fixed, known positions, that are, of course, boring.

To assume love as a production, as a system that allows us to think about biennials, implies an exhibition device that has a transformative potential, that operates in the public and private spheres, and that affects bodies like systems. The idea of a love triangle helps us to ask ourselves if a biennial should be seen as a synthesis, a unit, or rather an assembly of complex and intelligent lovers. What's love got to do with it? More than what is lacking, what does not exist, is love, that which makes the biennial a revelation. ●

An Institution Already First Time Around

Anne Szefer Karlsen

For the generation I belong to, a biennial – no matter if it is the first, second or eighth edition – comes across as an institution, and like any other art institution it has owners (be they public or private), expectations, ambitions, problems and potentials. The biennial field is traversed by many interests: those of business and urban development, politicians, gallerists, curators, artists and audiences.

Biennials are, for most curators, formats that must be engaged with, and they need to be imagined, formulated, produced and communicated at the intersection of all those interests. The same goes for all the others invested in these recurring events. How their engagements are manifested reveals biennials' possibilities and limitations, and curators often provide answers to very particular remits and conditions. As a curator, you are frequently asked to bring the world as represented through art and artists to a place, and to be able to see the place in question in a way that is valuable both to the local art scene and audience as well as to their international equivalents.

Looking back at two biennials I was recently involved in, it becomes apparent to me that biennials have much in common with the rest of the institutional art landscape, but also that it is a restless format suffering from wanderlust and homesickness at the same time. These were the Biennale Bénin 2012 – a multi-urban biennial in the south of Benin – where I worked as associate curator for Research and Encounters invited by the artistic director, and Lofoten International Art Festival (LIAF) 2013 – an archipelago biennial off the coast of Northern Norway – where I was one of three curators in a team invited by the board of the biennial.[1]

The biennial as institution is resolved and unresolved at the same time, as the ambition to activate a place often ends up with a re-activation of known models in new places. And it is possibly through this tension between 'institution' and 'model' that we can catch a glimpse of a bifurcation ahead of us.

Biennials today have much in common with the disciplines of the humanities: just as the humanities grew out of the need to legitimise the na-

1 The artistic director for Biennale Bénin 2012 was Abdellah Karroum, Didier Houénoudé was Associate Curator for Special Projects, and Anne Szefer Karlsen, Olivier Marboeuf and Claire Tancons were Associate Curators for the Encounters and Research Programme. LIAF 2013-curators were Anne Szefer Karlsen, Bassam El Baroni and Eva Gónzalez-Sancho.

tion state, biennials have thrived while legitimising globalisation through art. While the humanities are trying to define new tasks for themselves today, now that their original goal no longer exists, biennial culture is still in the midst of a moment of being historicised. Biennials are nevertheless at a crossroads, as their traditional task of maintaining globalisation is actively questioned. However, the questions that are being asked are formulated with a handicap that we very seldom discuss: the fact that ideas of the nation and the global are based on the same ideological ground. With this as a backdrop, it is interesting to further inspect the paradoxical format of the biennial, simultaneously homeless and chained as it is.

Discussing particular biennials in a nuanced way requires enormous amounts of information, or focus on certain details only. Here I will only provide a specific type of detail: similarities. Both this presentation and the discussion of the format in general – *the biennial* – thus become victims of the same homogenisation that they promote.

What binds these two examples together is that they could hardly be presented as mega-events, which is how biennials in general have been portrayed in the attempted historicisation of the biennial format. The exhibition in Benin showed fewer than thirty artworks, while the exhibition in Lofoten featured 25. However, both projects had a much higher number of professionals related to the exhibition, involved in side-projects or discursive activities. Twelve artist initiatives and groups were invited to create projects integrated in the biennial project in Benin, and three seminars/workshops were organised by each of the associate curators. In Lofoten, a theory seminar was created for the opening weekend with visiting and local art student and specialised audiences in mind. Thus, both biennials were able to create formal and informal forums for professional exchange between artists, art students, art historians and institution professionals. The budgets were of similar size – theoretically. However, the inner workings of the administration of the biennials were different. Both biennials were physically located outside of institutional art architecture, utilising domestic, commercial and public spaces. The biennial exhibition in Cotonou, the financial centre of Benin, was housed in a building that had once been a supermarket, while LIAF 2013 inhabited several locations, including a residential house, a fish factory, the local Am-Car club, the cinema and library and many other places in the village centres of Kabelvåg and Svolvær. Another similarity is the way that both teams of curators responded to the places in question, and particularly their socio-economic situation. To that end, the biennials' respec-

tive titles give us some indication: LIAF 2013 was entitled *Just What Is It that Makes Today so Familiar, so Uneasy?*, and Biennale Bénin 2012 was entitled *Inventing the World: The Artist as Citizen*. Both curatorial teams had an outspoken emphasis on 'the public', with programmes created by art historians and art educators – and, in the case of LIAF 2013, by local inhabitants coming from backgrounds other than art – to create meetings and discussions about the role of art in society today. As visitors – like biennial curators so often are – we as curators took our relations with our hosts seriously, because the public is also our host, as we must not forget. Yet another aspect that binds these two examples together is that those in charge of creating the curatorial teams insisted that they be made up of curators from different geographical backgrounds.

Art professionals and others investing in the field of biennials often project onto and portray the biennial as an experimental and dynamic format serving art and its audiences. Thus, experimentation is a trait that is emphasised in the historicisation of biennials. Looking at the total number of biennials in comparison to the number of biennials that are commended for experimenting or opening up new avenues in exhibition-making and contextualisation of the art it commissions and displays does not necessarily confirm this allegation. Rather, if we follow David Harvey's elaboration in the essay *The Art of Rent: Globalization, Monopoly and the Commodification of Culture*, this particular field of culture is in such fierce competition internally that a certain ideological monopoly has emerged. According to Harvey: 'The fiercer the competition the faster the trend towards oligopoly if not monopoly.'[2]

Apart from the few biennials – like those in Berlin, Gwangju, São Paulo and Venice – most biennials are homeless, which separates them from one of the tropes of globalisation: extreme mobility, since being homeless is not a detached position. The homeless belong somewhere, and their individual history is key to verifying their no-fixed-abode status. Not having a home does not mean being nomadic. Rather, it locks one to a place – a chained situation not altogether negative if we think of the biennial, as it can very well create fertile ground for both dreams and hopes. As far as biennials go, some of course directly underpin the connection to globalisation through their mobility. Manifesta – the so-called 'roving biennial', invited to a new location in Europe for each edition – is an example. Further confirmation of the link between the biennial format and aspects of globalisation can be found in the next Documenta – the 'too big to fail' perennial – which in 2017 is establishing a franchise in Athens, thus exploring the biennial format with one of the most established business

2 Available at <http://www.generation-online.org> (last accessed 31 January 2015).

models refined through the age of globalisation. Together with the biennials with permanent homes, they are both privileged 'citizens' of biennial culture.

At the moment, the productive parameters we need to discuss the biennial do not seem to be clearly formulated, which entrenches the discussion in a trivial set of antagonisms, like local vs. non-local, and in a polarised position to other institutions. If we are to consider biennials as complex social forms – which is one of the established ways of defining an institution – they ought to be discussed and treated as such, rather than as models that are duplicated, or even copied, mechanically.

During the biennial boom of the 1990s and early 2000s, their curators became caretakers of immaterial globalisation processes, just as museum curators once were set to care for material, often nationally oriented, collections. Looking back at writings in different art periodicals from that decade, it is possible to perceive that the 'conflict' instigated by the 'visitor' (the curator) was much discussed then. However, this discussion appears to have died down – or, at the very least, it seems that the art press grew tired of repeating the same kind of 'criticism'. If we want to take the institutionalisation of the biennial seriously, it might be worth re-orienting this and many other debates, because there are certain overarching challenges apart from the obvious questions that globalisation has brought that ought to be addressed.

Looking at the two examples previously mentioned – and making a generalisation based on them as I have done here – it is obvious that biennials today are duplicating pre-existing models and that in some instances curators are appropriated and even instrumentalised to do so. Curators are still – and maybe more so now than before – expected to process or digest the world on behalf of the site of the biennial, as if doing that would create stand-ins for the commons we seem to so desperately need. Those who had the privilege of taking part in defining the roles and models duplicated today were open-minded and inventive. They might even have had the privilege of a larger context in which to develop their intellectual autonomy than is offered today. My generation has taken many of these curators as its role models, and it might be worth finding ways to collaborate across generations to investigate how to address the biennial model in times to come with an institutional awareness. With an interest in this historic opportunity of collaboration, we can through practice challenge a scenario of retrospection that is described so wonderfully in the novel *Stoner* by John Williams, in which the protagonist, the English professor William Stoner, introduces his course on medieval literature with the following words:

'Very well', Stoner said. 'I shall continue. As I said at the beginning of this hour, one purpose of this course is to study certain works of the period roughly between twelve and fifteen hundred. Certain accidents of history will stand in our way; there will be linguistic difficulties as well as philosophical, social as well as religious, theoretical as well as practical. Indeed, all of our past education will in some ways hinder us; for our habits of thinking about the nature of experience have determined our own expectations as radically as the habits of medieval man determined his. As a preliminary, let us examine some of those habits of mind under which medieval man lived and thought and wrote...'[3] ●

3 John Williams, *Stoner* [1965], London: Vintage Books, 2012, p.231.

Between Local and Global, *Minor* as Possible Resistance

Moacir dos Anjos

Much has been said about the relationship between what has been stipulated as local and global, including its implications for contemporary art and culture, entwined in opposite movement – though articulated – of homogenisation and affirmation of differences. This persistence indicates that this is a topic that congregates unsurmountable issues to the understanding of ways of life generated in a world that is shared by more and more people. Despite being well known and exposed, these are issues that do not seem to be resolved or no one seems to have a complete agreement upon what they really mean.[1]

We do not intend to resolve unfinished disputes, especially because mollifying the conflicts that surround the subject would only be possible if the very reasons for such divergence ceased, which is something that has not been placed in the historical horizon of a world that is traversed by great inequalities. We revisit the subject with two other purposes. The first one is to highlight the artistic procedures involved in the increasingly frequent and intense relationships between different – and previously distant – places, pointing out the urgency of a *minor* art as subordinate expression of a symbolic combat for the affirmation of diverging narratives. The second is to suggest, from the field of curatorial practice, how one can act critically within this very space of manifestation of differences, turning the *minor* curatorship into another strategy of potential resistance.

Between the fracture and homogeneous, a *minor* art

It is worth remembering from the start-up that the processes to which we allude hereby occur in the middle of a series of transformations – economic, political, technological and cultural – usually summarised by the term *globalisation*.[2] And one of the main consequences of the acceleration of this complex changing set is the establishment of a territory of approximation and exchange between regions and countries with characteristics that had not existed before. A territory whose temporality seems to be *immediate* and location seems to be,

1 Bibliography on the matter is extensive and expanding. Among many available publications, here are some of various origins: T. J. Demos, *Return to the Postcolony: Specters of Colonialism in Contemporary Art*, Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013; Hans Belting; Andrea Buddensieg and Peter Weibel (orgs.), *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds*, Karlsruhe: ZKM / Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2013 and Gerardo Mosquera, *Caminar con el Diablo. Textos sobre arte, internacionalización y culturas*, Madrid: Exit Publicaciones, 2010.

2 This section summarises the reasoning developed in the text 'O tempo do sul' by me and presented to the roundtable '30 anos: Memórias e Atualizações', part of the 18th Festival de Arte Contemporânea SESC_Videobrasil, in 1 February 2014, Sesc Pompeia, São Paulo.

according to what is indicated by daily experience, *anywhere*. A territory, therefore, made by 'contact zones' between various places in the world which communicate all the time[3].

The confluence of a *now*, which supposedly does not cease, and a *here*, which does not seem to have definite boarders, would demarcate – using a simplistic narrative – the decline of values and understandings that would have singularised the twentieth century. Simultaneously, it would mark the appearance of a distinct era in which old conflicts would finally be overcome. It is not by chance that within this context theories about the end of history are formulated and made popular; soon rendered obsolete.[4] Events would teach us, after all, that the perception of an existing absolute fluidity of time and space in the world underestimates and conceals asymmetric relationships of power that propagate and live among regions and countries. Supporting it would require disregarding the conflictive nature of the contemporary world.

Contrary to the expected or stated, the fact is that the intensification of flows associated to globalisation – material, financial, symbolic, bodily – does not occur in a pacific environment of exchange nor does it contribute to its gradual establishment. There is no casual association, as has been suggested many times, between the increasing world globalisation and the alleged access by different peoples to rights already enjoyed by others. The intensification of these flows, on the contrary, constitute the dynamics marked by truncated interactions and by updated relationships of a violent power that would have allowed – for many centuries – the colonisation of many countries by other few. It is exactly something that is particular to the present time – the vertiginous installation of a close contact environment between different regions – which makes it possible, therefore, to update old ways of unequal appropriation of material gains engendered by such interactions. Relationships created in the globalised 'contact zones' occur in a hierarchical manner, constantly (re)producing disparities and damages. Within this environment, local and global do not form a pair of mutually excluding concepts; they build up and mutually sustain each other as expressions of a world that is simultaneously integrated and split.[5]

To this dominance opposes, however, incessant speeches and critical gestures formulated from subordinated spaces and positions within the arrangement of powers that move the world. They are counter-hegemonic voices and movements that update the notion that the local is also the place that might originate some reinvention of ways of life fractured by the subordination to that which is inflicted to the subaltern as expression of a world that is supposedly

3 For the conceptualisation of 'contact zones', refer to Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London: Routledge, 1992.

4 Francis Fukuyama, *O fim da história e o último homem*, Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1992.

5 About constituting unequal relationships of power of the globalised world, see Nelly Richards in *Postmodern Decentrednesses and Cultural Periphery: The Disalignments and Realignments of Cultural Power,* in Gerardo Mosquera (ed.), *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America,* London: Institute of International Visual Arts, 1995.

homogeneous; at the limit, creating a crisis in that relationship of power. These strategies of resistance are not to be confused, however, with strict identity affirmations, which are inconsistent in a world increasingly made up of 'contact zones'. Instead, they are strategies that produce a sense of belonging which is hybrid, unstable and in open and conflictive negotiation with the other: with the one who wishes to impose *specific* ways of understanding and inhabiting the world as if they were *universal*, whereas, in fact, they are only *dominant*.

In the particular field of artistic production, this approach generates constant reconstruction of the criteria and values defined by those who are hegemonic. They are forms and gestures of resistance against the symbolic homogenisation of the world, which may be regarded as founders of a *minority* becoming of the so-called global art; or, put in another way, as founders of a *minor* global art conceived from many different places. This conceptual suggestion expands, to the field of visual art production, the understanding of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari about what 'minor' literature would be. For the French philosophers, literature is *minor* when it invents and affirms itself in the critical relation that writers establish with the *major* language, from a subordinate position. The *major* language, in its turn, is defined as the one which imposes and preserves hegemonic norms for the literary practice at a certain time and place. In a minority relationship, the writers would impose inflexion upon the dominant language that had not existed before, transforming it from the unique position of subordination[6].

If we consider this said global art as one that is regulated by criteria and values which are established at hegemonic levels of global consecration (the most influential museums, biennials, art fairs, auctions, magazines and academic courses), we may say that *minor* art is the one that dislocates *major* art from its convictions, making it increasingly impure and hesitant. It is one that responds and resists the dominating intentions of a part of the world, confirming the 'right to narrate' for various and subordinate places[7]. *Minor* art does not produce its minority character, however, from a relationship of outwardness with global or *major* art, whose main feature is to continuously want to ratify their supposedly universal character. Neither does it create a symbolic narrative of the world which is totally opposite to the one disseminated by dominant regions and countries. Instead, *minor* art instils a process of continuous 'de-territorialisation' of an expressive language which wants to be affirmed as hegemonic, thus corrupting the intended integrity of an artistic grammar and vocabulary imposed as templates to be followed.

6 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1975.

7 Homi Bhabha, 'The Right to Narrate'. Available at <http//:www.uchicago.edu/docs/millenium/bhabha/>, (last accessed on 15 March 2015).

Minor art is, therefore, comprised of a heterogeneous set of creative strategies that confront a status of subordination existent in various fields of life. Strategies which are no longer anchored to the supposed singularity of places, ideas or subjects in order to affirm differences. In a globalised world, what differentiates art made in one place from art made in other places is no longer the stagnant confrontation between them, but the ways in which knowledge and legacies produced everywhere – and widely available to nearly everyone – are received, rejected and recombined by artists from minority positions.

These articulations among various codes allow the so-called global language of art to be spoken with specific *accents* in each situation of unequal symbolic exchange. Accents which reveal not only *who* is speaking, but also *from what part of the world* they are speaking, depending on how close or distant they are to the dominant standards of language enunciation that the allegedly global art wishes to teach us.[8] These are accents that confront ambitions of an art that wishes to pass as global when actually it is just hegemonic. They are accents that bend the rules of the global language of art and affirm an art that simply belongs to the *world*[9].

The various accents spoken by *minor* art are artistic expressions that, whilst subordinated to hegemonic standards, resist them and reinvent them, creating ways of representation which are appropriate to their position in the world. These ways of representation take the form of paintings, installations, urban interventions, films, sculptures, photographs and drawings, among other ways of shaping experiences, suggesting symbolic territories which otherwise would not even have been known. Thus, the more these various *minor* artistic accents force themselves, urging to gain command of the global language of art, the larger the cacophony that is created, as a clear defiance of that dominance. Seeking to be heard in the many spaces in which the hegemony of representations of reality are disputed, *minor* art demands consideration of the subjects and ways of understanding facts which had not previously been taken into account in the field, as parts of a shared common.

Between 'Cara de Cavalo' and Baader-Meinhof, a *minor* curatorship

Large exhibitions and, in particular, the various art biennials that exist in the world fulfill a relevant role in the conflictive environment briefly described herein. It is well known both the importance and the limitations of curatorial projects such as the exhibition 'Magiciens de la Terre', in Paris, 1989, as well as

8 For a debate about the relationship between *minor* art and accent, see Moarcir dos Anjos, 'Arte menor, gambiarra e sotaque', in *Depois do Muro*, Recife: Editora Massangana, 2010.

9 The distinction between a *global* art and *worldly* art is suggested by Terry Smith, 'Contemporary Art: World Currents in Transition beyond Globalization', in Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg and Peter Weibel (eds.), *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds*, Karlsruhe, ZKM / Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2013.

the centrality of the biennials of Havana, São Paulo and a few other ones, besides specific editions of documenta in Kassel, in order to advance in this discussion conceptually and politically[10]. It is symptomatic that, during this period, the end of the so-called national representations in biennials occurred (with the exception of the Venice Biennale, the oldest one of all), at the same time that we witness the increasingly strong and powerful presence of artists originating from countries which had never participated in an international exhibition before, permuting an official geopolitics –imposed from hegemonic regions and countries – to another that reflects the current conflicts in the world.

Without any intention to address – in a way that is minimally comprehensive – a subject which already accumulates deep reflection, what we are trying to do is to highlight that curatorial practice may also have a minority feature whilst facing the symbolic conflicts that mark the contemporary globalised space. This possibility is presented here by means of an expository fragment of the 29th Bienal de São Paulo (2010), in which the author of this text, as chief-curator alongside Agnaldo Farias, had the clear and general intention of discussing the relationship between art and politics. The intention was to consider this relationship not only in its strict sense, but also in the most comprehensive way, in which art is taken as something (an image, an object, a gesture) capable of challenging the consensus whereby life is organized and reproduced, whether or not it deals explicitly with topics that are considered political.[11]

However, the ambition of the curatorship in this edition of the Bienal de São Paulo went beyond affirming the transforming potential of art. They also sought to make the exhibition, as an apparatus which allows one to see, politically organised. They wanted it to be understood and presented as a device that critically portrays – by means of artistic production – the current world, questioning all hegemonic forms of its operation. At the limit, questioning itself. Moreover, an exhibition that would clarify the *time* and *place* from which it was conceived: in Brazil and at a time of quick geopolitical reorganisation of the world.[12]

One of the main curatorial strategies adopted to achieve these goals was based on the approximation between consecrated works of artists inserted in the European and North American tradition (tradition of global or *major* art) and works of artists who did not directly belong to this tradition. Through this approach in the expository space, one tried to produce new meanings about varied sets of works, understanding some through the others. Among several possible examples that, anchored in this strategy, were part of this Bienal de

10 See Rachel Weiss et al., *Making Art Global (Part 1): The Third Havana Biennial 1989*, London: Afterall Books, 2011; Lucy Steed (org.), *Making Art Global (Part 2): 'Magiciens de la Terre' 1989*, London, Afterall Books, 2013; Lisette Lagnado and Pablo Lafuente (eds.), *Cultural Anthropophagy, The 24th Bienal de São Paulo 1998*, London: Afterall Books, 2015; Okwui Enwezor, *Documenta11_Platform5: The Catalog*, Cologne: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2002.

11 Jacques Rancière, 'Paradoxos da arte política', in *O espectador emancipado* [The emancipated spectator], São Paulo: WMF Martins Fontes, 2012.

12 Moacir dos Anjos and Agnaldo Farias, 'Há sempre um copo de mar para um homem navegar', in *29th Bienal de São Paulo*, (exh. cat.), São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2010.

13 Approximations between Nan Goldin and Miguel Rio Branco; between Gustav Metzger and Antonio Manuel; between Sue Tompkins, Mira Schendel and 'pixo'.

São Paulo edition[13], we should highlight the room that consisted of a more obvious exercise related to what we propose to call *minor* curating.

The motivator to organise this space was a reminder of a celebrated work of German painter Gerhard Richter. With the title *October 18, 1977*, the work is comprised of a series of fifteen paintings produced in 1988, which use as models photographs published in the press related to the capture, imprisonment, death and burial of members of the Red Army Faction, also known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang, a group of armed opposition against the German government in the end of 1960s. The high point of this process was the moment when some of the members of the organisation turned up dead, such as Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin, or agonising, like Jan-Carl Raspe, in their prison cells in Stammheim whilst under custody of the German State. The title given to the set of paintings is a reference to the day when the first two members were found lifeless and the third at the verge of death – the same fate as one of the leaders of the group, Ulrike Meinhof, who was found hanging in her cell in Stammhein a year before.

For many people, Baader-Meinhof was a revolutionary group; for others, a terrorist group. For many, they were murdered in prison by the German government; for others, they committed suicide because of the failure of their project. This ambiguity of meanings was reason enough to want to include the series of paintings in the 29th Bienal de São Paulo, especially since the author is an artist who travels with great ease between ultrarrealism and abstraction, dissolving any attachment to strict rules of style. Besides, it seemed very interesting to the curatorship the possibility of enhancing or twisting the possible meanings of these paintings, by placing them close to works such as the *Bólide Homenagem a Cara de Cavalo* [Bolid Tribute to Cara de Cavalo], by Hélio Oiticica, to honour a criminal killed with over a hundred bullets fired by policemen in Rio de Janeiro, in 1966. It is important to remember that 'Cara de Cavalo' was a friend of Hélio Oiticica's and a popular hero for many people in the *favela* where he lived; someone who would challenge the repressing and excluding laws of the Brazilian State. The tribute becomes even more meaningful if we consider that, at that point, one was experiencing the beginnings of the military dictatorship in Brazil. Equally, we considered the possibility of placing Gerhard Richter's paintings in dialogue with the work *Inserções em circuitos ideológicos – Projeto Cédula* by Cildo Meireles, launched in the beginning of the 1970s and unfolded during the following decades. Particularly, we would relate them to a specific example of this long series of critical interventions on banknotes in which the

artist stamped the inscription 'Who killed Herzog?', in 1975 – a reference, which was obvious to everyone at the time, to the fact that journalist Vladimir Herzog had been found dead at the police headquarters in São Paulo a day after being arrested, that same year, after being charged as a member of the Brazilian Communist Party. Although the military government in command at that time insisted that the journalist would have committed suicide in his cell, it was duly proven, years later, that Vladimir Herzog had died as a result of the torture he suffered in prison.

Since the paintings of Gerhard Richter belonged to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York since 1995, we made a formal loan request to the North American institution so that we could integrate them in the 29th Bienal de São Paulo. The request would pinpoint the connections we wanted to make between the paintings of the German artist and works by other creators, amplifying or modifying their potential meanings, making them – as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari would say – stutter, hesitate, open themselves to new opportunities of comprehension. A little over a month after the request, and following a new request to the MoMA to give us a position on that, the curatorship of the Bienal de São Paulo received a message saying the works of Gerhard Richter would not be available for exhibition.[14]

The message from the curators of the MoMA which pointed out the impossibility of the loan finalised it by expressing they were hoping that the Bienal de São Paulo could find works that would replace Gerhard Richters's in other institutions. In fact, due to the impossibility of counting on the collaboration of the North American museum, the curatorship decided to try another art institution, not to replace the works and thus compensate for their absence, but to find, in spite of the refusal, a solution for the loan and inclusion of the series of paintings that the German artist did about the death of the Baader-Meinhof members, which was regarded as of critical importance to the exhibition. The institution to which we decided to appeal to was called Museu de Arte Contemporáneo de Lima (LiMAC) and had been created in 2002 by Peruvian artist Sandra Gamarra.

LiMAC originated from the acknowledgement that Peru, like most Latin American countries, did not have enough resources to acquire significant collections of international artistic production, at least not in the public scope. Considering this unsurmountable restriction, Sandra Gamarra decided to create her own museum. The collection of LiMAC was composed of paintings by the artist herself of works – regardless of origin, support and price – that she would like to see in

14 The e-mail was sent by the MoMA on 18 December 2009 in response to the official request made by the curatorship of the 29th Bienal de São Paulo and, also by e-mail, on 12 November of the same year.

the museum of her city, but could never be purchased by them. The paintings were then executed from photographical reproductions of these works, which were part of exhibitions or collections catalogues, and they are distinguished by white bars above, below or on their sides, invoking the graphical insertion of these photographs on the pages of publications where they were found.[15]

LiMAC is, therefore, an imaginary museum; or, paraphrasing the poet João Cabral de Melo Neto, a 'museum of everything'.[16] And it was to Sandra Gamarra's LiMAC that, under said circumstances, the Bienal de São Paulo formally requested a loan of the works by Gerhard Richter, that were so desired for its 29th edition. Since LiMAC still did not 'possess' the series *October 18, 1977* within their collection, Sandra Gamarra immediately purchased the detailed catalogue with photographical reproductions of the paintings published by the MoMA,[17] and remade each one of the fifteen original works, respecting their dimensions. Part of this set was exhibited in the 29th Bienal de São Paulo, raising one more issue to the series of works eventually displayed, since, similarly to the paintings of Sandra Gamarra, Gerhard Richter's works were made from photographs and were, whilst in a superficial sense, also copies. This was the context in which the room highlighted here could finally be organised.[18]

Besides the paintings of Gerhard Richter reproduced by Sandra Gamarra, the room also included, as planned, examples from *Inserções em circuitos ideológicos – Projeto Cédula* [Insertions into Ideological Circuits – Banknote Project], by Cildo Meireles, with special emphasis on the stamped banknote with the sentence 'Quem matou Herzog?' ['Who killed Herzog?']. Equally, the *Bólide Homenagem a Cara de Cavalo*, by Hélio Oiticica, could be found, composing the nucleus originally thought as capable of dislodging the meanings set by the works of the German artist. During the research process for the exhibition, other works were identified as pertinent to the idea and added to the gallery space. One of them by Artur Barrio, which was composed by texts, drawings and photographs and dealt specifically with the death of the Baader-Meinhof members and the alleged relationship between democratic Germany and Latin American dictatorships. The work was called *Uma semana de outubro: 1977* [A week in October: 1977] and had been produced that same year.

There was also a display case at the centre of the exhibition space. Featured in it, was the catalogue published by MoMA about Gerhard Richter's paintings, as well as a text explaining in general terms the reasons why those works were not in the exhibition and were represented, so to speak, by the paintings of Sandra Gamarra. The display also included a photograph of Vladimir Herzog

15 Available at <http://li-mac.org>.

16 João Cabral de Melo Neto, 'O museu de tudo', in *Museu de tudo*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora José Olympio, 1975.

17 Robert Storr (ed.), *Gerhard Richter, 18th of October 1977*, New York: MoMA, 2000.

18 The series of paintings by Sandra Gamarra received the title *Catálogo October 18, 1977*.

dead in a prison cell, published by the dictatorship as alleged evidence that he had hung himself. The photograph, as was later elucidated, had been forged as a part of crude farce. Alongside the image of the journalist, one could see the photograph of Gudrun Ensslin, a Baader Meinhof member, also hung in her cell as she had allegedly been found by German authorities. There was a photograph of deceased 'Cara de Cavalo' published by a newspaper in Rio de Janeiro, the same one that Hélio Oiticica used for his tribute to his friend. Finally, the display would also include a photographic record – published in the press like the one mentioned above – of the body of Alcir Figueira da Silva, another criminal who, whilst being chased by the Police of Rio de Janeiro, decided to commit suicide to avoid his arrest. Hélio Oiticica took the image to conceive one of his best known works, the flag displaying the caption *Seja marginal, seja herói* [Be an outlaw, be a hero] also displayed in the room.

From a curatorial point of view, the point of greatest interest in this articulation and approximation of works is actually that, by being related in this way, they allow us to recreate, with new grounds, the relationship between categories that are apparently separated, such as terrorist and revolutionary, outlaw and hero, dictatorship and democracy, the legitimate exercise of power and authoritative abuse of force and even copy and original. This reflection has become possible due to the *minority* position it took, whilst selecting a set of works stuck in various contexts, summoned to suggest – in a relation of friction with Gerhard Richter's paintings (through Sandra Gamarra's paintings) – different ways of understanding what is considered given knowledge.

It is important, however, to clarify that, despite all this, this arrangement would question the belief in the political power of art, suspending and contradicting the central proposition of the curatorship of the 29th Bienal de São Paulo and, by extension, what it proposed as a specific application of that wider argument. The paradox was exposed with the aid of writer Clarice Lispector, present in a segment from the only interview she had ever given to a broadcasting station (TV Cultura of São Paulo), interestingly, in 1977, months before she died. The interview segment was shown on a screen next to the flag of Hélio Oiticica, which boasts the motto *Seja marginal, seja herói*. When asked for which of her texts she had the most affection, Clarice Lispector mentions, other than the short story 'O ovo e a galinha', a chronicle written for the occasion of the death of 'Mineirinho', an outlaw murdered by the Police in Rio de Janeiro in similar circumstances to the death of 'Cara de Cavalo', hit by thirteen shots of a revolver.[19] A man with so few choices in life, such as Alcir Figueira da Silva, the one who renounced his

19 Clarice Lispector, 'Mineirinho', in *Para não esquecer*, Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1999.

existence to avoid imprisonment. For the writer, the death of 'Mineirinho' was embedded by a violence of such dimension and nature that it reached everyone, to the extent of saying that the thirteenth bullet had hit her. She had become 'Mineirinho'. Considering this, the interviewer asks her to what extent, and in particular in relation to such a barbarous act, her texts changed the state of things. To which she readily responds: 'It does not change anything'.[20]

Even if we could put the definitive and disappointed tone of this negative assertion into perspective, Clarice Lispector's statement is important because it reminds us that, even when you rely on the emancipating power of art and exhibitions, you must nurture the doubt of this power, always putting it to the test; testing it in many different ways. Questioning, contradictorily, could become an effective way of acting in the field of the continuous and inconclusive conflict, by the affirmation of different standpoints and accents in a globalised and unequal world such as the existing one. An ambiguous form of exercising the right to narrate life that may be particular to one who is (but does not wish to be) subordinate to someone else. A distinct and critical way – therefore, *minor* – of taking a stand in relation to the other, within the time and space each one happens to live; in which there is no room for exactitudes and complete certainties. ●

Note: This text was originally published in Priscila Arantes (ed.), *Arte em Deslocamento: trânsitos geopoéticos*, [Displacing Art: Geopoetic Transit] *Seminário Internacional do Paço das Artes*, São Paulo: Paço das Artes, 2015.

20 Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohHP1l2EVnU>.

Sierra_Oscar_Uniform_Tango_Hotel

Marina Fokidis

First time in São Paulo, and my joy is unbelievable, as is my ignorance about the place, the real place with its inhabitants, that is. The reason I am 'here' is an international conference on contemporary biennials that is happening within the context of a biennial within the framework of the city, the country, the continent, the geographical coordinates and so on. The task is to discuss contemporary 'periodic exhibitions' and 'place', and I am supposed to give an account on Biennials in the Southern or Mediterranean regions and the way they bear traits of their wider location…

Trying to define these locational traits without inventing a series of forced endemic and acquired characteristics seemed a difficult, almost impossible endeavor. For weeks prior to arriving I had been brushing up on colonisation processes and histories, while also compulsively reading newspapers from all over the world. These seemed like good places to pick out the methodology for defining common trajectories and features/oddities attributed to wider regions according to their past, their present and even, in some cases, their future.

What is place and time… again? What is south… again? How can an exhibition such as a biennial be made in relation to place and time, amid the endlessly repeated and unprecedentedly rapid changes of non-stop turbulences that now start and go like fires in the same neighborhood – i.e., the global terrain?

My worries were interrupted and put on hold, momentarily, when I met a group of friends of various origins, with whom I get together occasionally for this kind of ritual. Lots of news from our fragmented realities, in addition to the pleasure of reuniting, superseded the agony of defining a cause and opened up space for dialogue, debate and, possibly, new scenarios with which to face the future. This, indeed, was important, perhaps the most important thing of all: the gathering together.

'Every practice brings a territory into existence… one that superimposes

its own geography over the state cartography, scrambling and blurring it: it produces its own secession,' argues the Invisible Committee in the book *The Coming Insurrection*. They continue,

> Current history might be about false communities and calculated absences; however, 'art' as a kind of magic operation always offers an exodus from the rigid reality to a more 'invented' one. Often it not only captures an actual time and place, but also predicts and even influences the future. In a world where most of people oscillate between despair, lack of resources, uncertainty, turbulence, anomie, disbelief, corruption, and chaos, adopting an imaginative distance from daily events can sometimes, perhaps, be more effective than any other gestural form of destruction.

Art professionals of any and all kinds can act as constructive agents of historical change on a microcosmic level and for at least a brief time space, creating a parallel reality, an alternative history that nevertheless does not feel out of time and place – maybe this should be the task of any biennial or meeting as such. Yet, it might be possible only through the appreciation of such a context as a 'radical illusion' of this world, rather than as its reflection.

Biennials and other such mega exhibitions are undoubtedly among the most important platforms in which current art production circulates. Through their size, budget, attendance, visibility, etc. (relative to each location in which they take place), they manage (obviously) to help artists produce new works and to mobilize audiences to ponder contemporary art, in a way that is often much more successful than with any other form of cultural institution, at least in the realm of visual culture. Yet, within the rapid socio-economic and technological transformation of our times, the patterns of their formation must be constantly re-discussed.

How can we define the space that a mega exhibition like a biennial occupies? Can geographical and territorial distinctions still be accurate to describe this space? Or do distinctions like these merely function as pure allegory?

The discussions were heating up in the hallways of the hotel. Together, the curiosity of experiencing what for some of us was a new city was building up. Time was, however, somewhat limited. Perhaps commuting from one place to another would provide the chance to explore the actual location. Meanwhile, an incident on the bus from the hotel to the conference site made me think twice, and divert from my initial plan of presenting two specific biennials from

Greece while trying to prove their ties to the region in which they take place. While stuck in a dark windowed vehicle (with no view of what was going on outside) in São Paulo's heavy traffic, we completely lost our sense of place. Two Lebanese friends who had just found out, through Facebook, that a well-known singer had died in Beirut few hours before, were playing her songs on their iPhones, to pay homage to her. Emotions were welling up and the wonderful music was shaping images, forms and familiar memories – in a sense, familiar to all of us, despite our respective individual cultural identities. We were part of a strong community. But, wait a minute – where were we?

Rather than articulating a series of presupposed fixations on cultural and historical traits, further questioning of the issues of time and place as they are being shaped anew seemed to be, all of a sudden, a more appropriate contribution to a conference that seeks paths to new commonalities. Not that this question is not complicated enough as it is, but it seemed even more so on that occasion: how can the meaning of the local and the worldwide be translated in the era of digital mediation and social media? For the moment, I imagined the bus as a contemporary biennial, an empty vessel – both in transit and stationary at the same time – that aspires to bridge the following: the local and the world, experience and object, architecture and the immaterial, inside and outside, the present and the past, and many more binary conditions that could fill pages upon pages if listed. But how necessary is it to speak exclusively in terms of geography, particularly if we want to define a destiny that claims real freedom, or at least an attempt at it.

In a recent lecture in Athens, Giorgio Agamben argued:

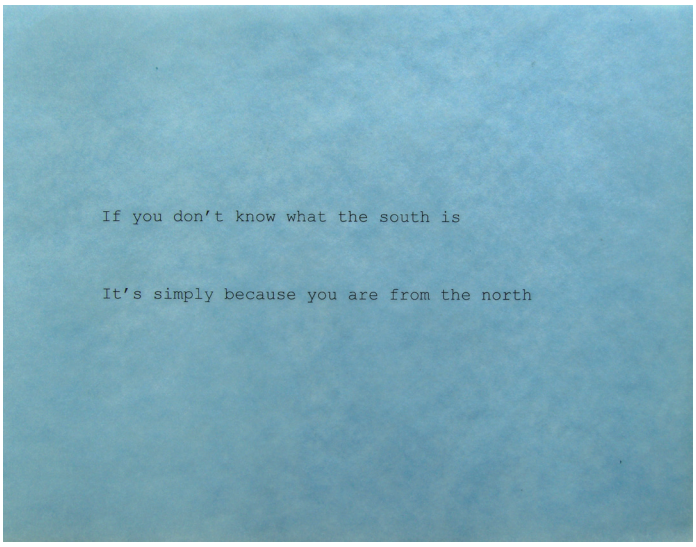
> The new identity is an identity without the person, as it were, in which the space of politics and ethics loses its sense and must be thought again from the ground up. While the Greek citizen was defined through the opposition between the private and the public – the *oikos*, which is the place of reproductive life, and the *polis*, place of political action – the modern citizen seems rather to move in a zone of indifference between the private and the public, or, to quote Hobbes' terms, the physical and the political body.

Where is our point of departure, if we want to open up a possibility for a discursive change to occur? Whose experiences are being narrated here, and why? Who defines what we (be it artists, audiences, people in general) are and

where we are at this very moment? And if we were to describe the conditions of the so-called 'global south' attached to an operation such as a biennial, which 'south' would we be speaking about? Can we still keep defining and redefining geographical and cultural regions in our effort to basically defeat the fear of our real journey/transit between two magnetic poles of another kind: life and death?

In terms of the best of the worse, the daily routine is no longer the daily routine we once knew; the city is no longer the city we once knew; politics are no longer the politics we recognise; our belongings no longer belong to us; neither does public space belong to us, and even private space is negotiable, if indeed it still exists. We are an entity in transfer, in which nothing is familiar anymore. We are living through a rupture. As we are experiencing this inevitable change, where everything is in flux, space loses its shape and turns into nothingness, into a utopian place: the space for the impossible and for 'everything that is possible'. But this is not an easy operation. Navigating the time and space that lie between two poles of any kind involves a precarious route that, paradoxically, might lead to a productive outcome full of possibility and hope. With hindsight, it could be a dynamic transition. In his book, *Temps de Crises* [Times of Crises], Michel Serres describes this place as following: When a brave swimmer swims across a wild river or rough passage in the sea, his/her route contains three passages. As long as he/she maintains contact with the point of departure or when he/she glimpses the point of arrival from afar, he/she inhabits, in the first case, the space of origin, while in the second he/she is transferred in the space-object of his/her desire. However, somewhere in the middle of his/her course, he/she is undergoing a very decisive and at the same time very painful experience. Far from both shores, he/she is going through a neutral and grey territory, a time of transition in which he/she is not yet in one place or the other, but rather in both of them at once. Trying to find balance within his/her movement, he/she discovers an undiscovered place, one that does not exist on any map and that no traveler has described before.

Re-creating 'familiar' patterns has definitely been aiding the entrenchment against social, political and economical injustices. Yet, at the same time these new patterns have also been reproducing a certain kind of colonisation method – even if colonisation is what they aim to defeat. It may be time to accept the nature of transition per se – the 'and' instead of the 'or' – and find the possibility of a series of all-inclusive spaces to which the keys of entry are not cut beforehand, but are, rather, being discovered endlessly in the process, through mere interaction. What is the notion of 'common post-colonial herit-



Runo Lagomarsino
If You Don't Know What the South Is, It's Simply Because You Are From the North
Posters version
2009

age' in an age of thriving neo-colonialism, triggered by the global economy?

South as a geographical notion is indeed an ambivalent concept. Over the past decade, at least, it has become a major discursive platform, attracting the interest of historians, activists, theorists, cultural practitioners and scientists, to name a few. Within the realm of contemporary art, theory and political sciences, the notion of the 'global south' has been regarded as a defensive 'get together' against the hegemony of the North. 'The Mediterranean', on the other hand, might be a well-defined geographical region, as it evolves around a specific sea, yet it will serve as a forge to define a series of common 'cultural traits' or a 'common heritage' that is shared within the region. 'Mediterranean' involves east and west, north and south, the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, as well as a horrible war with thousands of casualties, taking place as we speak, on one shore of the sea, and an economical battle, for the time being with fewer fatalities, on the other. So which characteristics can apply where, and how can they escape the subjective viewpoint of the 'author' that brings them together?

Sometimes, it is possible for the efforts to create a counter discourse to hegemony to become hegemonic themselves. The act of adopting and applying models to defined inclusions and exclusions, even if it has been necessary in many instances, can easily defeat the purpose. In a text entitled 'Southern Comforts: Tropical Baroque, Pirate Thinking', Octavio Zaya argues:

> The conflict of this space cannot be fully identified with the interaction between the cultural reality of the homogenizing 'centre' and those of the ancestral Native Americans, Africans and Asians with primitive components. [...] Its hybrid configuration – decentralized and destabilizing – marks my southern comfort. Fusion becomes a rich mythological flow, regardless of time and of historic times... Its 'identity' is subjected, then, to specificities that stem from its rooting in an ecumenical spirit, even aggregated into a product that accounts for culture as a synthesis of the particular and the universal. Its process of masking, and progressive development of the cliché, the stereotype, and the ridiculous is so radical that it has been necessary to disassemble an operation similar to so-called meta-meta-language.[1]

'Home-coming' and 'permanent exile' can no longer be the two major options to the above debates. Perhaps a set of new connectivities between 'worries', as well as a fresh unity under the notion of 'lack' as it is reappearing, could

1 Available at <http://southasastateofmind.com/issue/summer-fall-2012-first-issue/>.

be more appropriate as well as more inclusive. The constant re-definition of 'south' can also be 'a deliberate act of rapprochement, a path that both "swerves away from the influence of predecessors" and heads towards a "third space"', in the words of cultural theorist Nikos Papastergiadis. 'This relational energy that connects personal and historical claims not only curves away from the compulsive trajectories that head north, but also draws force from the swirling gestures of rapport with other like-minded "southerners".'

Speaking from my part of the world – Greece – the 'forced' tension and polarization between north and south within the European Union is a clear symptom of the economic crisis, the crisis of capitalism in its current state. Two-and-a-half years ago we began a magazine called *South as a State of Mind*, and found ourselves in a similar discussion. Soft and slippery ground seems to create a need for territorial quests. In our case, the magazine was a quest for imaginary territories. We never thought of the notion of 'south' in purely geographical terms. For us, it was merely a parable upon which we built a romantic manifesto.

We came up with the idea of creating our narrative from among the very clichés (attributed to us as Southerns) that were and are being constantly reproduced in the media at present, in order to start constructive dialogue. 'Possessed by a spirit of absurd authority', as is described in our manifesto, 'we will try to contaminate the prevailing culture with ideas that derive from southern mythologies such as the "perfect climate", "easy living", "chaos" and the "dramatic temperament", among others.' We wanted to see the world from a different perspective and symbolically divert every 'southern stereotype' with a negative connotation within the popular imaginary into a 'universal' virtue. Of course this was a metaphor and a side critique to western ideology based in assumptions about the rest of the world being governing the global attitudes and mannerisms, apparently not with great success as has once again been recently proven. But metaphor in Greek also means transit. The idea was to renegotiate the southern attitude (as formed in the global imagination) partly to re-define it and partly to re-invent it. Opening up an unexpected dialogue among neighborhoods, cities, regions, associations and approaches, *South as a State of Mind* is both a publication and a meeting point for shared intensities.

The south is not a place in the world; it is a space where people meet to imagine the possibility of other ways of being in the world. It is a 'little public sphere', argues Nikos Papastergiadis. Perhaps, at present, 'the notion of public space', be it a symbolic pole, a biennial, a journal or a conference, is revealing

itself as a crucial meeting point for cultural and artistic debate, a place 'between places', a correlation of space, form and politics. The purpose is to find ways of becoming the advocates of a new era of political life (political after *polis*) that has yet to be seen – an era that offers a genuine possibility for a democracy that includes the citizen and the cityless cosmopolitan, the local and the immigrant, the expat and the refugee, through new associations that are being defined horizontally and not from the bottom up or the top down. ●

Effects

How to Escape Formal Representations with Artists-Activists

Fabio Cypriano

Biennials are more and more concerned with artistic proposals that question the very field of art. These are artists who not only seek to reflect upon the present time but also to act on it beyond art institutions.

Because of this, it does not seem strange to me that, especially in recent years, biennials and the institutions that organise them have been the subject of intense criticism by exhibiting artists who end up promoting a debate about the very nature of these exhibitions.

These discussions involve, for the most part, issues of ethical background that question the financing of these exhibitions, such as what happened recently at the Biennale of Sydney; or the public policies of the host country, as in the recent Manifesta at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg and, finally, regarding the use of logos that constrain participants, as in the 31st Bienal de São Paulo.

In all these cases, the artists put the organising institutions in check and led curators to position themselves, sometimes in favour of artists, and others, in favour of institutions. In this context, I would like to point out a phrase by Brazilian art critic Mario Pedrosa, who stated that 'in times of crisis, it is always necessary to stand by the artists', as curator Paulo Herkenhoff reminded us in a recent lecture at the Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR).

Looking at the history of the Bienal de São Paulo, boycotts are nothing new. In 1969, a few months after the promulgation of Institutional Act Number Five (AI-5), on 13 December 1968, which suspended several constitutional guarantees leading to a more rigid dictatorship in Brazil, a manifesto led by art critic Pierre Restany urged a boycott of the Bienal and the adherence was a success. About 80% of Brazilian guest artists did not attend the exhibition[1] and even countries that supported the military regime, like the United States, did not send their national representations – at the time, one of the selected participants had been Gordon Matta-Clark. Countries such as Sweden, the Netherlands, Argentina, France and the Soviet Union also did not participate. The boycott, reinforced by the imposition of censorship in the country, would be maintained until the beginning of democratisation in the early 1980s.

1 Agnaldo Farias (ed.), *Bienal 50 anos*, São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2001, p.147.

This case, however, reflects a very different moment in Brazil than in recent decades, when there were also other forms of protests and boycotts. In a polarised time such as the one lived during a dictatorship, I believe these sorts of actions to be more conceivable. In more complex times, such positioning becomes naturally more complex.

One such case occurred in 2006, at the 27th Bienal de São Paulo – *How to Live Together*, when Cildo Meireles left the exhibition after learning that Edemar Cid Ferreira, former president of the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation and arrested at that time on charges of concealing assets from the government, was re-elected as a member of the board. Thanks to the positioning of Meireles, the Foundation backtracked on its decision and removed Cid Ferreira from its board at the end of July 2006.[2] Still, Meireles did not return to the exhibition due to a veto from the President at the time, Pires da Costa. The Bienal also has an honorary council of past presidents from which Cid Ferreira was never removed. When Meireles attended the 29th Bienal de São Paulo in 2010, Cid Ferreira was part of this Council of the Bienal, which is not elective.

How to Live Together, which also included curators Adriano Pedrosa, Cristina Freire, Rosa Martínez and José Roca, well represents, in fact, such conflicts generated from biennials that seek to address contemporary issues, bringing together artists-activists. This very edition of the Bienal experienced three other controversies. The first one that I will address is the censorship imposed on the Danish group Superflex and its *Guaraná Power* project.

The *Guaraná Power* project was initiated by the members of Superflex – Bjornstjerne Christiansen, Jakob Fenger e Rasmus Nielsen – in 2003, in collaboration with farmers from the city of Maués, in the Brazilian Amazon, and presented at the Venice Biennale that same year, at the 'Utopia Station' exhibition.

The proposal came from an economic study of this community affected by the reduction in seed prices as a result of market control by the soft drink industries. The artists then proposed to turn one of the leading *guaraná* brands into a 'primary product', adapting its features to create their own drink with the farmers.

Analogous to the distribution of free software, the initiative of Superflex appropriated itself of the identity of the drink derived from the Amazonian plant in order to provide direct gains to farmers. While the collective set the value to 15 Brazilian reals per kilo of seeds, the industries paid 7 Brazilian reals.

This project selected by the curators of the 27th Bienal de São Paulo was vetoed by the legal sector of the institution as 'not in accordance with Brazilian

2 According to the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo*, on 27 July 2006.

law', according to the president of the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation in 2006, Manoel Francisco Pires da Costa, at the Bienal's opening press conference.[3] Also according to the president, 'we know that the group undergoes several legal actions abroad and here would not be the appropriate stage in which they could discuss issues about legality'.

The reason for the controversy is somewhat absurd and even surreal: because the word *guaraná* was registered by the Ambev beverage company, any product that uses the name is banned in Brazil. At the time, it was said that the veto of the work occurred because the president of the Bienal de São Paulo had links with Ambev, but this was never proven.

However, despite the institutional veto of this project, the curators took the censorship as an element of the work, which was incorporated into the Bienal de São Paulo Guide, as can be seen in the picture, where the two pages dedicated to the project are marked in order to clarify the censorship.

Here there is an evident confrontation between the institution and the curatorship, who negotiated with the artists and kept them in the exhibition. It was because of this veto that Superflex created animated dolls with banners against the registering of natural products as brands, thus protesting against copyright policies, an act that was included in the 27th Bienal de São Paulo.

At the time, although vetoed at the Bienal, *Guaraná Power* was sold in other places around the city, including at Galeria Vermelho, which represented the artists, and at Pinacoteca do Estado, where a Cildo Meireles exhibition was taking place. In these locations, and at the Bienal itself, Superflex distributed a document entitled 'The Work of Art that Brazilians Will not Be Allowed to See at the Bienal' in which the presidency of the institution was highly criticised and the curatorship was spared. 'The censorship of [redacted] is the censorship against the economic and social reality in which we all live. Even presidents need to see the reality,' read the text.

If on the one hand curatorship gave support to Superflex, as preached Mario Pedrosa, on the other, relations with the presidency of the institution were strained. Not coincidentally, the president at the time broke the tradition of keeping the curator of the Bienal de São Paulo to also choose the Brazilian representation in the following year's Venice Biennale, as was also stipulated in the curator's contract. Instead of Lisette Lagnado, Jacopo Crivelli Visconti, then the Bienal de São Paulo producer, was to choose the Brazilian artists in Venice.

It is hard not to compare this case to the recent corrosion of the relationship between the curators of the 31st Bienal de São Paulo and the current presi-

3 According to the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo*, on 5 October 2006.

dency of the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation. Again, despite being stipulated in the contract with the curators of the Bienal that they would be responsible for the Brazilian representation in Venice, the presidency, unilaterally and without consulting the curators, pointed Luis Camillo Osorio and Cauê Alves as curators of the exhibition in Venice. The chair of the Bienal does not assume that the reason is the uneasiness developed after the contestation of the use of the Israeli embassy logo by the majority of artists selected for the 31st Bienal de São Paulo, but it is hard not to see the attitude of the Foundation's board as a way of punishing the curators for their support to artists.

Returning now to the 27th Bienal de São Paulo, I would also like to present two other strategies in relation to artists-activists, the first one with Brazilian artist Marcelo Cidade. In the exhibition, Cidade appeared with four projects: *Direito de imagem*, spreading false security cameras around the pavilion; *Escada parasita*, a sculpture in the form of a non functional ladder installed at the exterior part of the pavilion; *Intramuros*, pieces of broken glass spread on top of the exhibition walls, resembling the walls of the city of São Paulo; and *Fogo amigo*, the most radical one, which intended to impede the use of telephones in the Bienal's pavilion by installing mobile phone jammers throughout the whole building.

This project was also vetoed by the institution, on the grounds that the telephony of the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation worked in the frequency of mobile phones, so it would also be incommunicable, which in fact did not seem feasible. Therefore, only one mobile phone jammer was installed in the building, on a pedestal, as if it were a sculpture.

What I find relevant to point out here is the way the artist and the curators decided to put this project into place. Without notifying the institution, and in agreement with the curators, the artist recruited friends to walk around with jammers in their backpacks at the premiere, so as to put into practice, at least during the opening for guests of the Bienal, the project as it was proposed.

What Cidade did not foresee, however, is that the blockers produced a lot of heat and no one could circulate with them for long. But what I want to emphasise here is, again, the position of the curatorship in favour of the artist's project, also supporting alternative ways for their effective realisation.

Finally, I will comment on the case I find most relevant in this relationship between artists-activists and the Bienal de São Paulo, which was the way Jardim Miriam Arte Clube (JAMAC) was incorporated into the 2006 exhibition.

JAMAC was created in 2003 by a group that included artists, landscapers and university students along with residents of Jardim Miriam, but the leading

figure of this project was Mônica Nador, an artist who moved to the region and is the only member from the original group that remains in the project. Today, JAMAC is also a Culture Spot under the Ministry of Culture.

In the 1980s, Mônica Nador was one of the protagonists in Brazil of the 'return to painting' movement, participating in important exhibitions of that period, such as the 17th Bienal de São Paulo, in 1983, and the iconic *Como vai você geração 80?*, at Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro, 1984.

However, in the 1990s, Nador modified her procedures based on the following statement: 'I think too much paint is already spent inside the museum', as she affirmed at the Pinacoteca do Estado on 24 April 2004. Her turning point was *Projeto Parede*, at the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, occupied by the artist as if it were a mural. While painting this wall, the artist realised that she could also paint the walls of people's homes and, as a result, stopped producing in the studio in 1996. Since then, she left the protected white cube to colour the walls of modest houses on the outskirts of São Paulo and several other places around the world, from the United States, on the border of Tijuana and San Diego, all the way to Japan.

It is not patronising. Nador teaches the residents of the homes she visits ways to use techniques such as stencil (paper masks that allow serial painting), to create simple themes, from kitchen objects to animals or plants, usually chosen by the residents themselves.

This proposal gained greater consistency when implemented at JAMAC, by making explicit the political and social character of its action. In its statute, in article 2: 'JAMAC aims to combat social exclusion; develop critical awareness and work on the notion of citizenship of the residents of Jardim Miriam; to establish itself as a centre for working with social art where interested artists can develop this activity to take visual art out of the "protected circuit" of the arts, effectively exploiting its transformative potential.' While in article 3, one of the objectives is 'to create a center for generating artistic actions to improve the quality of life of the neighbourhood, offering a choice of leisure and culture for the community and capacitating its residents in their artistic skills.'

Here, therefore, we see the radical character of JAMAC and its ambition for social transformation. However, as stated by Miguel Chaia, 'it is not a collective in political activism that is pragmatic, partisan or ideological, but rather an aesthetic vision held in order to oppose the split art community. It is a reaction to art that wants to be immune to the surrounding reality.'[4]

The question, then, is how a collective with this objective takes part in an

4 Miguel Chaia, 'JAMAC – a arte entre autonomia e a instrumentalização', in Mônica Nador (ed.), *Jamac: Jardim Miriam Arte Clube*, São Paulo: Centro Cultural da Espanha, 2007, available at <http://www.pucsp.br/neamp/artigos/artigo_81.html>. (last accessed on 10 February 2015).

exhibition. In 2001, Nador participated in the Panorama da Arte Brasileira of the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM-SP), curated by Paulo Reis, Ricardo Basbaum and Ricardo Resende, in the conventional way: with documentary photographs of the artist's action on the outskirts of the city. At that time, I remember, JAMAC still did not exist.[5]

At the 27th Bienal de São Paulo, which was inspired by the proposals of Hélio Oiticica, yet without presenting the artist's works, choosing to display JAMAC's photographs would contradict its very essence. Therefore, it was decided that it would not be represented in the pavilion of the Bienal at Ibirapuera Park. There was, nevertheless, buses available twice a week, which would carry visitors who desired to experience the project at the outskirts of town. Only there, where the buses departed, was a wall painted by the members of JAMAC as a means of signaling. Furthermore, there was a special programme in JAMAC which included debates and film screenings as a way to show that it was an experience beyond silent participation and which, in fact, demanded effective participation from its visitors.[6]

During the three months of the exhibition, 22 visits were scheduled, which in JAMAC lasted about two hours. The programme was open to the community and among other activities there were: workshops with the collective Eloisa Cartoneira, film screenings on display at the Bienal itself and a party organised by Jarbas Lopes – one of the artists of the Bienal.

In this way, it is clear, that what was prevented was the institutionalisation of a project that functions within and for the periphery, enabling, however, for the experience of this very project to be shared at the Bienal.

I think there is an option in this strategy that is often lacking in big exhibitions like the biennials, which is to allow a distinctive experience. In a pavilion with 30 thousand square metres, it is especially stressful to compel visitors to see all the works homogeneously. The displacement from the park to the periphery arises as a possibility to respect the character of projects that are suspicious of traditional artistic spaces, also avoiding the massification which is inherent to the experience in the Pavilion of the Bienal.

Confronting the dilemmas and contradictions between institutions and artistic proposals which question such spaces are essential to the circuit's oxygenation. Now, at the 31st Bienal de São Paulo, I see the work of Alejandra Riera and the UEINZZ group as the same attempt to meet this challenge: isolating the artwork from the big crowd is the best way to enable the transformation. ●

5 *Panorama da Arte Brasileira* (exh. cat.), São Paulo: Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, 2001.

6 Lisette Lagnado and Adriano Pedrosa, *27th Bienal de São Paulo – How to Live Together* (exh. cat. and guide), 7 October-17 December, 2006.

For Whom Are Biennials Organised?

Elvira Dyangani Ose

When Princess Marilyn Douala-Bell and Didier Schaub arrived in Cameroun in the late 1980s, they made an agreement: they would have their third child. Princess Marilyn, the second generation of a long dynasty of a prominent family, grew up always knowing that she was part of the local intelligentsia. At the end of the day, she was the daughter of King Bell and granddaughter of Rudolph Douala Manga Bell, key figure in the local struggles for independence, who was hanged in 1914 for opposing German colonial rule. Princess Marilyn studied in Europe, in Paris to be precise, for many years. It was there that she trained as social scientist and met her husband, Didier, a French art historian, critic and curator. Like in any other beautiful story, they fell in love, got married and decided to move to Douala – Marilyn's homeland.

In 1991, their third child was born. She showed a little bit of both parents. Like her mother, she inherited a strong sense of commitment to the community. The aim of any initiative she embarked upon was to reach and involve as many people, and from as many cultural backgrounds, as possible. Her purpose was 'to intervene in people's every day experience, questioning the urban environment we all live with,' as she declared when she became more mature. Like her father, she would soon develop a deep appreciation for all arts, particularly those striving for a new understanding of the collective and the social. She was immediately allured by artistic experimentation, politically engaged practices and cultural forms questioning the public sphere.

There she was, little Doual'art. The heiress of the political legacy of the Douala Manga Bell, but also fabulous whizz-kid, in her own right, open to all kinds of new relational poetics. (And just to clarify, I refer here to artistic practices involved in what Édouard Glissant defines as 'poetics of relation', which recognise the other in ourselves and include the inscription of both the individual and the collective, in one sole social dimension – just to summarise very briefly…).

Here is when the story turns into reality… so you have to imagine, like in the movies, images fading to black… the cartoons turning into real people, and the fictional narrative moving into documentary mode.

The earlier years of Doual'art were marked by the absence of a proper venue. In trying to define its own identity, the organisation staged various actions in the city using mainly the language of visual arts, with occasional incursions into the realm of live and performing arts. Lacking a permanent space, and using that lack as its organising principle, the association worked together with established international venues, local cultural entrepreneurs and artists, but Princess Marilyn and Didier also turned to the public space, engaging with various communities and urban landscapes to disseminate what from then onwards would constitute Doual'art's main *modus operandi*. That incursion in the public space, as well as in the public sphere, proved fundamental in shaping the character of this initiative, a pioneer in the African continent as the earliest experimental laboratory focusing on artistic practices engaging with new understandings and interpretations of *publicness*. Until then, no one else in the country had engaged in that sort of endeavour.

(Just as a side note: there are obvious precedents to Doual'art's spirit of publicness in the emergence of a trans-disciplinary aesthetics in urban Africa, as defined by artist collectives' initiatives and socio-political movements in modern Africa. This aesthetics is neither a depository of modern ideologies on national culture – as determined by the newly independent nation-states' cultural policies – nor does it pursue decolonising or identitarian prerogatives. It is rooted, rather, in a clear commitment to the notion of the social, of the collective, and in the belief that political revolution can eventually be effective in aesthetic terms and that art can bring about social justice.

This aesthetics began in the late 1970s, but only in the past two decades has it noticeably proliferated. Whereas recent scholarship acknowledges international events in the 1990s – such as DAK'ART, the Biennale de l'Art Africain Contemporain – as the source of a significant shift in contemporary African art and aesthetics, I would propose instead that it is in local initiatives led by artist collectives – against cultural narratives and policies proposed by national institutions – that one can find the genesis for change and experimentation within the arts. Fundamental to this equation as well are the cross-cultural conversations of a Pan-African and African diasporic character taking place throughout the twentieth century, but which took on a crucial significance since late 1960s in relation to major international festivals and professional encounters, such as the First World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Senegal (1966), the First Pan-African Cultural Festival, PANAF, in Algiers, Algeria (1969), and the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, FESTAC '77, in Lagos, Nigeria. A historical analysis of these events

might provide an alternative narration of history that can assist us not only in understanding the inherent role of art in politics, but also in reactivating our political relationship to the practice of art in the realm of global politics.)

By the mid-1990s, Doual'art had firmly established itself in the city, mainly thanks to the opening, in 1995, of its permanent venue, L'Espace Doual'art. With a programme of roughly a dozen exhibitions per year, the space soon became a hub for visual artists who from then onwards would have a steady opportunity to address diverse audiences with their latest productions. However, interaction with the public space did not cease. In 1996, as a result of a 30-month-long conversation between Doual'art, the neighbours and authorities of the Deido district and artist Joseph F. Sumegne, the monumental sculpture *La Nouvelle Liberté* was inaugurated. A formidable 12-metre-high figure that dominates one of the most transited roundabouts in the city, made of locally-sourced recycled material, the statue prompted a lively and far-reaching debate on the meaning of art and its role in the country's social and political fabric. Art, in that sense, proposed a new reality that interfered with the city-space and its everyday experience, but also with Douala's socio-historical process. Creativity and imagination were necessary faculties for knowledge and change – art that was made with and for its audience. Art was a social fact.

From that moment onwards, the quest for the formation and materialisation of these new urban imaginaries took shape in their support of ad hoc initiatives, such as the Bessengue City Project, led by late artist Goddy Leye, who, inspired by the project, in 2003 opened ArtBakery, a centre for contemporary art in Bonnendale, another district of Douala. ArtBakery's activities included, among other things, a residency programme for visual artists and a training programme in art and visual culture for all ages, as well as support for young artists, critics and curators, promoting the use of new technologies and establishing ongoing interaction with the community.

Other initiatives included international workshops such as Les Ateliers Urbains, in which twenty artists from Central Africa were invited to interact with the inhabitants of Bessengue for two weeks, resulting in a series of events involving various artistic expressions – painting, sculpture, poetry and music, among others. Later on, the workshops were transformed into two initiatives: a biennial meeting called Arts & Urbis, gathering together artists, curators, urbanists, architects and cultural and social workers, and the triennial Salon Urbain de Douala or SUD, which would constitute the culmination of their initial attempt at public dialogue provoked by *La Nouvelle Liberté*.

There have been four editions of Arts & Urbis, always taking place the year before the triennial, and three editions of SUD. I have had the good fortune to participate in two of them: the first one in 2010, in collaboration with artist Younès Rahmoun, and the second in 2013, when, in collaboration with Marilyn and Didier, I curated a series of ephemeral artistic interventions by artist collective The Trinity Sessions, and dancers and choreographers Nelisiwe Xaba and Faustin Linyekula.

Doual'art's projects and, particularly, its triennial, incorporate two new elements fundamental to that aesthetics I spoke about earlier: the significance of the space in which the art intervention is being produced and a clear reflection on the social relationships established in that space.

In his reading of the city of Johannesburg, urbanist Abdoumaliq Simone first coined the notion of *people as infrastructure*, with which he explored certain activities of the inhabitants of South Africa's main megalopolis, the resourcefulness of these residents' day-to-day experience and their incredible capacity to live multiple temporalities. Under that definition of infrastructure – normally interpreted in physical terms – Simone included primarily the generation of social compositions across a range of individual capacities and needs, and the 'economic collaboration among residents seemingly marginalised from and immiserated by urban life'. To Simone, the ability of the city's residents to overcome precariousness and 'engage complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices' far beyond the place and time that technocracy provided them with has defined the flexibility and open-ended character, not only of Johannesburg, but also of many other African cities, like Douala. I believe that Doual'art's projects resonate vividly with Simone's notion of *people as infrastructure*.

One could argue that the radical presence of that informality as a way of life and an increased social participation of the citizenry in the public sphere, against the constraints of regulatory systems, is indeed one of the main characteristics of this African city. Furthermore, I believe that this set of combinations functions in the here and now – whenever it might happen, as I said earlier, as residents operate in multiple spaces and temporalities – as much as it ultimately affects the potential social compositions or, to use Glissant's terms, *one-sole-social dimension*. That is to say, the effectiveness of those combinations is the condition of possibility of new social formations and imaginaries.

This is particularly prominent in the context of inner cities, and if you like, in the case of secondary cities in which central governments seem to have

less interest or power. It is not by chance that most of the initiatives of Doual'art have taken place in those interstitial spaces between the city centre and the rest, or far away from the centres of power, as in the case of the Rencontres Picha. Biennale de Lubumbashi, my second and last example. Believe or not, I have only spoken about my experience in Lubumbashi on two other occasions, and whenever I tried to theorise it – not that I have to, necessarily – I find that the rhetoric of my academic research does not do justice to what is indeed a once-in-a-lifetime experience in my career as a curator.

I was invited by artist Sammy Baloji and writer Patrick Mudekereza to continue a conversation that they started as founding directors of Picha Art Centre and the Lubumbashi Biennale, with international artists in 2008 and with curator Simon Njami in 2010.

The edition I curated was based on a notion of *Enthusiasm*, a review of Jean-François Lyotard's paradigms of audience and participation, in conversation with Simone's notion of *people as infrastructure*, mirroring practices, such as those of Doual'art, motivated by the possibility of reflecting on the event, on the experience itself, as institution.

The Biennale, an artist-run initiative, mirrors Picha's programme – that is to say, it is mainly devoted to three media: photography, video and literature. The way we imagined the project, as a project of projects, was translated into workshops exploring the interstitial spaces and blurred boundaries of those disciplines. Thus, *photography* related to a larger sense of visual cultural production and printmaking; *video* stood for moving-image projects; and *literature* reflected on wider nuances of the term text. A fourth workshop on the city of Lubumbashi also took place, assembling a group of architects, artists, geographers, writers, politicians and other professionals and members of local communities, led by Johan Lagae, who provided a walking tour and in turn a peculiar guide to the city.

Picha has proven over and over again the strong and long-term commitment to learning as a process in constructing audience and capacity, and as a strategy for developing the local artistic and cultural scene. In addition, many of its initiatives blur the boundaries between artistic practice and everyday experience. The workshops complemented an international group exhibition, spread through various venues in the city, using public spaces and venues as impromptu display galleries or cinemas. We held a two-day conference in collaboration with Gasworks and Triangle Arts Network, co-produced a film by Norwegian artist Bodil Furu, collaborated with Escola Maumaus in Lisbon for Angela Ferreira's public performance and organised a multidisciplinary gathering in which

professionals and the public would debate on formulas of participatory art and social practices.

If the two cases above were used to respond to the question 'For whom are biennials organised?', the answer would clearly be 'The public'. You could say that precariousness was, in some instances, the organising principle, that creativity and imagination were necessary tools for knowledge and change. Art was a social act, made with and for its audience. They were experiences that proposed an exercise in participation, abolishing narratives of author versus spectator, organisers versus participants, turning all of us, curators, organisers, members of the press, local authorities and audiences alike, undeniably, to once again use Glissant's words, into the protagonists of a 'poetics of relation', a one-sole-social composition. ●

Please Play? Politics of Public Intimacy (in Istanbul)

Övül Durmusoglu

This text is an attempt to consider a biennial through its mirror, that is, the public, and it is part of a wider research project that looks to find and analyse models in the frame of institutional imagination in response to the changing publics who confront state and police authority for their right to speculate on their own future and who form assemblies to make their own decisions when democracy, in collaboration with capitalism, fails them. To speak of the institutional does not mean to refer only to museums, kunsthalles or biennials, but also to art itself, which has become an institution. Publics happen at the moment they transform the physical space they are in. This essay, therefore, peruses a public space that is performative and immaterial – a space that happens in mutual transformation.

'Please Play?' alludes to the figure of the 'homo ludens' of *New Babylon*, a utopian anti-capitalist city designed in 1959–1974 by artist-architect Constant Nieuwenhuys, and proposes to configure biennials as a school and their relations with the public as a playground with unspoken rules as part of the game. It desires to see the 'local' beyond the mystic, folkloric, unidentified subject that needs to be interacted with, or as an audience that should be happily responding to propositions made by curators coming to work in their context. And it asks for communication models that are based on empathy and self-reflexivity. The horizon of curatorial desire and public expectation/projection can be symbolised in the figure of a four-headed Roman sphinx, each of the heads slightly different from the others, all belonging to the same body; a horizon that oversees different times and different spaces.

Throughout this discussion some threads or wishes will be brought up: the possibility of the biennial as a process, one that aims to create a momentum with its publics and that turns the exhibition into a lived experience not only for publics but also for the curators themselves, encountering and responding to how publics react and read their deeds; the possibility of public programming conceived not as a support structure secondary to the main exhibition but as a mirroring structure, a means of learning and unlearning the exhibition, expanding its discursive

and experiential field. Ian Wilson's 1967 *Circle on the Floor*, his last material piece before he started his *Dialogues*, can be read as equivalent to the ephemeral and changing temporalities and spatialities of publics; the dynamics of their formation, their speech, their inclusion/exclusion and their collaboration.

The Istanbul Biennial has been a biennial of urgency, a school for all in the country who have been curious about the broken discourses of contemporary art, at a time when no other institutional infrastructures existed. The Biennial became the engine of a fast-growing scene that went from having one non-profit contemporary art space in 2001 to having five privately-funded art institutions with different orientations, interested collectors who built up the first pool-funding action in Turkey in favour of international visibility for Turkish art, galleries and other foreign initiatives. The Biennial created by the cultural elite has become one of the major agents for questioning cultural hegemony produced by that elite.

To concretise the Biennial as a school, I want to start with a personal Istanbul Biennial timeline that also highlights different turning points for my own curatorial path. I come from the second generation that grew up seeing, volunteering and working at the Istanbul Biennial. *On Life, Beauty, Translations and Other Difficulties*, the 5th edition in 1997, curated by Rosa Martínez, was when I first encountered what is called contemporary art. It was my second year in Istanbul studying Translation Studies at Bogazici University. I already had a notebook in my hand when I went to see *EGOFUGAL: Fugue from Ego for the Next Emergence*, the 7th edition, curated by Yuko Hasegawa, in 2001. In 2003, I was an MA student in Visual Arts and Visual Communication Design at Sabanci University, and my responsibility for Dan Cameron's *Poetic Justice* was to be the assistant of Aernout Mik for his three-channel back-projection video installation. In 2007 I was invited, alongside four young colleagues, by Hou Hanru to prepare *Nightcomers*, a screening programme in collaboration with Bik Van der Pol, in the framework of *Not Only Possible, But Also Necessary: Optimism in the Age of Global War*. And I had the honour to work with Fulya Erdemci as part of her curatorial team for the 13th edition, *Mom, Am I Barbarian?*, in 2013.

As such, to discuss the ways of engaging with what I call politics around public intimacy in Istanbul, I will speak with different voices as a member of the public, as a student and as an insider working in the structure.

Why public intimacy? Because it is open and undisclosed at the same time. Its unspoken codes are expected to be understood without being said. It is a particular form of passion and close attention Istanbul publics require from the cu-

rators. It should be plural and cannot be unrequited. There is a certain feeling of adolescence reluctant to recognise rules and limits. Depending on the vantage point from which it is looked at, this love can be a means of freedom or a limiting burden. The subtle invitation to play is both dreamy and aggressive. Since Turkey's is a culture of cult father figures, a response of mischievous manliness can be advantageous. And since it is also a culture of strong women deconstructing societal norms, such an attitude is distantly respected. The play at work, no need to say, has to be public.

2005 is the start of my analysis because of three factors: the city's inhabitants had become much more aware of the Biennial's existence after eight editions. A potential young audience of artists was drawn to contemporary art activities. In parallel, the international art scene had become more curious about the Istanbul Biennial as one of the key non-Western biennials. And, finally, it appeared to be a turning point for the Biennial's history as the exhibition left the historic texture of the city behind (no curator has since returned) and generated a site where gazes projected onto the city and the city's own gaze on itself met. The curators Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun saw the city as a metaphor, an experienced reality, a prediction and an inspiration at the same time.

I want to reconsider Hospitality Zone, a model to be activated by guests and visitors, as tradition-breaking proposal for the city, a supplementary structure inside the biennial that aimed to map out the cultural production in the city with locally well-known but internationally invisible voices. Halil Altındere curated the exhibition *Freekick* and the artists' collective Hafriyat curated *Projeckt: Production Fault*. Both exhibitions aimed to articulate a 'minor' history writing through situations, lives and words that are on the surface of Turkey's recent history, but pushed aside for well-known reasons. Culture magazine *Roll* moved its office to the premises of the Hospitality Zone. Additionally, the art academies workshop Lost in Translation brought eighty students and lecturers from eleven international art schools. Revolver Publishing brought a collection of publications on contemporary art entitled *KIOSK*. Film screenings, talks and events took place in the same space throughout the Biennial. Planned as a meeting point in the city for social and artistic endeavours, this model attempted to demystify what is called 'local' and invited visitors to witness the modes of thinking and production of the city, while it invited those active on the scene to produce a dialogue that sought out different possibilities of interpreting 'minor' histories. In summary, the Biennial chose to speak and play with its audience closer to the city's common habitat.

The biennial's next curator, Hou Hanru, chose to invite a different part of the growing scene, through collaboration with a young generation of curators, whom he invited to devise a nightly programme to travel around the city with locations picked by Bik Van der Pol. Hanru read the Biennial as part of the modernisation project in Turkey, as a search for both internal cultural developments and a project of collective intelligence reflecting the structure and the function of the multitude. The young curators became the agents for the Biennial, and put together a two-part public screening programme. For Bik Van der Pol the collaboration was about immediacy, urgency and resistance, appearing in 59 phantom spots sinking back into the urban fabric after the screenings took place. The aim was to create an unexpected temporary community wherever there was a wall: inhabited, rundown or empty buildings, reconstruction areas, factories, car parks, fences in an uncertain state of repair, on the verge of new developments and not always without political conflict. As curators, we collectively decided on the locations selected by Bik Van der Pol and prepared a programme around our vision, considering the possibilities of dialogue with the temporary communities. We chose shorter videos, universal gestures that would be interpreted into the local discourse in diverse ways, and that would be simple and powerful.

Nightcomers worked as a night programme during the entire Biennial, and took the challenge of disappearing in invisible unfamiliar locations. It strove to go one step further away from designated cultural areas and to give its own answer to the top-down cultural experience shaped by swift modernisation in the country. Hanru sparked the anger of a cultural elite that also reacted negatively towards the story of Safiye Behar, Ataturk's secret Jewish feminist socialist lover, presented by Michael Blum at the 9th Biennial. At that point, Republicans were building into the polarisations the existing government gave origin to. There were rather intense racist reactions by journalists and columnists, rendering the artistic actions of the Biennial almost invisible. That was the year when the Koc family started to sponsor the Biennial, and institutions like Santral Istanbul, Istanbul Modern, Sabanci Museum and the Pera Museum appeared in the scene alongside the Biennial.

A number of factors led to an accumulated reaction to the next edition *What Keeps Mankind Alive*, curated by WHW collective: the city becoming a market, becoming part of the international scene, and its selection as the 2010 cultural capital. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund meetings that took place in Istanbul raised questions about the funding of the Biennial itself, which

posed a crucial Brechtian question: 'What Keeps Mankind Alive'. The press conference designed as a small cabaret piece in the historical Ses Theatre became an emblematic image of the collective. WHW was in very close conversation with the city during the preparation of the Biennial. They proposed *Red Thread*, an event and publication activity that aimed to produce a structure around the core ideas to the Biennial. It was the first time such a clear political question had been posed by the Biennial, pointing out the historical problem of socialist thinking in Turkey. Importantly, the reactions pointed out the gap between contemporary art thinkers and activists, all feeding from similar resources in different ways. As an exhibition with a strong political stance and agenda, it suffered the effects of a public relations campaign that brought Koc's sponsorship to the fore.

Looking back, I still have questions about what the situation would have been if it had been possible to create more open ground for conversation with the Turkish left on the nationalism and sexism it practices, as well as how this may have underlined the many red threads and kept the exhibition more alive. It was a crucial chance to bring such discussions into the Biennial itself. These events successively created the closure of a circuit that started in 2005, a decision-making process that resulted in the choice of a very different, sterile curatorial model for the following Biennial in 2011, *Untitled*, by Adriano Pedrosa and Jens Hoffmann.

Composed of group exhibitions *Untitled (Ross)*, *Untitled (History)*, *Untitled (Abstraction)*, *Untitled (Passport)* and *Untitled (Death by Gun)*, each taking as their point of departure a specific work by Félix González-Torres and with solo presentations around them, the 12th Istanbul Biennial happened as a closed and neatly installed narrative set up in two port warehouses. Coherent with an exhibition that refused to play with the city and its context, there was no public programme, except from a series of ateliers that took place over the course of four days by Nazım Hikmet, Richard Dikbaş, Cevdet Erek, Martha Rosler and Florin Tudor, carried out with DAAD [German Academic Exchange Service]. The Remembering Istanbul conference, similar to the one Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev devised on the history of Documenta, brought together curators and artists from the eleven previous editions. In Pedrosa's and Hoffmann's words:

> In the 24 years of its existence, the Istanbul Biennial has become one of the most prominent international biennials due to its consistently unique and experimental character. The curators who have organised its past editions – hailing from south to north, from east to west, from emerging to

established individuals to curatorial collectives – attest to the broad range of visions that the Biennial has attempted to encompass. All of the curators of the past eleven editions were invited to the two-day conference Remembering Istanbul. Each gave a presentation in which they remembered their experiences, offered afterthoughts, and reflected on the current state of the biennial exhibition format. Several artists from Turkey who had participated over the years were also invited; they responded to the curators' presentations and shared their own recollections. As close observers of the event's evolution, they had unique and invaluable perspectives.

Possibly in response to the uncommunicative stance of this edition, the Istanbul public's reaction showed little passion. The protests became more subtle – for example, the action of Public Art Laboratory, which distributed copies of the shiny monochrome Biennial invitation card, whose surface the public could scratch to find a reproduction of the letter by Koc to military coup d'etat general Kenan Evren. What's more, many affirmed the architectural design reminded them of art fair architecture, and interpreted the digestible exhibition format as a sign of fast art-market orientation.

A tightly formulated cross-disciplinary discursive public programme was planned by Fulya Erdemci and Andrea Phillips under the title *Public Alchemy* for 13th Istanbul Biennial, *Mom*, *Am I Barbarian*?, which pondered different interpretations of public and publics, models of co-habitation and resistance. The tension before the Gezi events was in the air, with people feeling uncomfortable and suppressed under the new control regime operated by the government. Protests were unable to stop the destruction of the Emek Theatre. A more transparent attitude was heavily demanded on the structural side by the protesters, and the Biennial's position ended up trapped between cultural bureaucrats and funders – a global question in its different local sensitive formats. After the Gezi uprisings and intense police violations in public spaces, Fulya Erdemci decided to focus on Biennial buildings and made the entrance to the exhibition free for the first time in its history. Responding to the reactions against Public Alchemy, the public programme became artist-oriented, intending to open participating artists' practices further.

In order to finish this partial history, I would like to use the image 'What Is Outside the Window?', the drawing that appears at the end of *The Savage Detectives* by Roberto Bolaño. In his novel, Bolaño proposes a speculative way of seeing the artist as a figure and the history she/he creates. Ulises Lima and

Arturo Belano appear as the 'visceral realist' poets, pot dealers, drifters and literary detectives in the different recollections of people who come across them in four continents over twenty years' time. No one knows what 'visceral realism' actually is in the story. Throughout the novel, we realise that the 'visceral realism' lies in the actions of Lima and Belano as bandits who make no distinction between poetry, politics and other human activities. The world of *The Savage Detectives* is kaleidoscopic and international, or post-national and anti-provincial – a world that is recognisably our own. It symbolically refers to a future mode of public intimacy that is not just about an inside and outside – it is itself a transforming window with imaginative blanks towards an open horizon. For such imaginative blanks to happen, and perhaps to continue and build on this history of the Istanbul Biennial, artists and publics should be a core part of the decision-making mechanisms, in order to truly transform large exhibition formats into more open spaces. ●

Education for Contemporary Art in the Context of the Bienal de São Paulo

Ana Gonçalves Magalhães

The title of the last roundtable at the World Biennial Forum nº2, held in the context of the 31st Bienal de São Paulo, seemed provocative enough considering the topic addressed: the issue of audience in exhibitions akin to biennials and the role played by their projects of educational action in *capturing* the audience for such exhibitions and their effective contribution to the *frequentation* of contemporary art.[1] Whilst talking about 'populism', forum organisers clearly questioned some vital aspects of the audience's relationship with contemporary art (and, one can say, with art in general) in the context of an international (large-sized and temporary) exhibition of contemporary art that are not resolved – especially considering the importance given to visitors by the organisers of such events. The discussions started in closed sessions for those enrolled in the forum before the public panel at the end of the day, and carried on from three questions brought up by the curators of the 31st Bienal de São Paulo. Firstly, who is the audience of such exhibitions and how do they relate to the institutions that organise them? In regard to the Bienal de São Paulo the curators called our attention to the fact that there was not a clear policy on the determination of a profile of the audience who uses the archives of the institution, as well as for conveying the connection between the archive with the exhibition – that is, the audience still evidently does not identify the institution behind a periodical exhibition. In respect to the institutions that originated these exhibitions (Venice Biennale, Bienal de São Paulo and Documenta in Kassel), their archives are essential sources of knowledge for the history of modern and contemporary art, although not necessarily active or involved in the exhibitions' programmes. Therefore, the audience is absolutely unaware of the role they played in this history. This led to a second question: how can an institution that deals with discontinuity – that is, which deals with an exhibition that only occurs every two years, without any other activity programme during this interval – maintain an audience? And, finally, considering this apparent contradiction, what does education mean within this framework?

1 I explain, at once, the two terms used in the first paragraph. The term *capturing* is very particular to the business world and is directly related to marketing and advertising. It has been used very often in proposals of support to cultural events – such as large exhibitions of contemporary art – and they seem to be more connected to quantitative aspects rather than qualitative, that is, it is more focused on increasing the number of visitors in a large exhibition, for instance, than on the quality of interaction between this audience and the event or the art. The idea of *customer loyalty* (another term used in the business) has also become very important in the last decade, although it does not effectively mean continuous formation of an audience for contemporary art, for instance. According to this kind of reasoning, the term *frequentation* goes in the exact opposite direction, as it implies attention to effective education of the audience in terms of contemporary art, seen as the permanent contact with it; the relationship of belonging with its propositions; and basic domain of fundamental issues regarding the history of art necessary to comprehension.

Discussions, therefore, were directed towards criticising the efficiency of a educational action programme during this kind of exhibition, which seems to mainly comply to marketing and communication targets instead of effectively building an audience for contemporary art – although there was an acknowledging of the role those biennial-like exhibitions have played and still play on this matter. In order to reflect upon this, experts Cayo Honorato (Brazil), Elvira Dyangani Ose (Spain/Equatorial Guinea/England) and Reem Fadda (Palestine/US) were invited to the panel. They took on specific case studies through which it was possible to observe their different stances. Honorato is an expert in cultural mediation and his academic research concerns education in cultural institutions and educational initiatives in those places. Elvira Dyangani Ose and Reem Fadda are curators, with strong activity internationally and participation in projects for art museums. Thus, the roundtable actually presented two voices: Honorato reflected upon the educational initiative in artistic institutions whereas Ose and Fadda reflected upon art and curatorial projects aimed at activating the audience and necessarily engaging with them to obtain full achievement. Honorato reviewed the educational initiatives of the last two editions of Bienal de São Paulo (2012 and 2014); Ose examined the possibilities of interaction with the public from the curatorial projects of the Triennial SUD - Salon Urbain de Douala (2010) and the Rencontres Picha Biennale in Lubumbashi (2013), to which she contributed; and Fadda focused her reflection, above all, on her curatorial experience with the project Liminal Spaces, between Palestine, Israel and Germany – also characterised by temporary proposals. The voices seemed to refer to the roles of the curator and the educator in an art exhibition, suggesting that the one did not exclude the other. On the contrary, the three experts clearly demonstrated that they must operate in the same key – ultimately, in art *frequentation*, in which the curatorship is already an inherent part of, as mediation between the art and its audience.[2]

Whilst questioning a project of educational initiative originating from open questions to be proposed during the mediation with the audience for the last two editions of Bienal de São Paulo, Honorato pointed out that such introduction to the world of art did not account for art's complexity. Namely, that mediation based on *translation* of language and of issues in art into sensuous experiences would give the audience the false perception that they could achieve an effective comprehension of art simply by following this procedure – whereas it requires an effective initiation, an ongoing experience and the construction of a repertoire that can enhance its actual understanding. Ose and

2 In this sense, they corroborated with the critical reflection that has been developed about the role of the independent curator of contemporary art in relevant literature since 2000. Note, for instance, Steven Rand's synthesis for the preface of the book *Cautionary Tales: Critical Curating*, New York: Apexart, 2007, pp.7-10.

Fadda discussed extensively about the curatorship's decision-making process and actions for conceiving exhibitions in which the mediation of the audience originated from the very artistic and curatorial projects proposed. They spoke less of an educational action and more about projects of interaction with the audience, which seemed to transform (at least temporarily) their local situation.

It is important to emphasise that even though the case studies addressed took place in very different territories and situations, they occurred in locations marked by a phenomenon that many experts deem common to all of them: the process of globalisation and the arrival of what Hans Belting and the research group of Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, Germany, have been calling *global art*. Belting identifies the beginning of the phenomenon of globalisation in the art field from a specific date in 1989, when the world watched the end of the Cold War and the rise of a neoliberal economy at a global scale.[3] This period also corresponds to an increasing dissemination of periodical art exhibitions,[4] from which the Western art market reorganised and expanded, incorporating new territories (previously considered peripheral) into the debate about Western art history.[5] Moreover, it is important to notice the fact that ZKM's research increasingly observes the strict relationship between art museums in general and the transformation through which they are going at the moment the local biennial is installed, and how the audience perceives these two spaces – the museum and the biennial – which are, in fact, increasingly seen as interchangeable by their visitors.[6]

However, Belting constantly calls our attention to the fact that art museums depend on their own local audience, unlike large contemporary art exhibitions that have their local audience as well but direct their events to a global audience, such as collectors, critics and gallery owners. The author also reminds us of the importance of *history* to the local community or to a nation, in this context:

> The temporality of museums, so distinct from the flux of everyday time, was for a long time tantamount to the history of their collection *or to a history that is manifested in their collection*. Today, they must rethink their mission when they are expected to represent the rapidly changing world in the mirror of single art works. *Their fate is still with their audience whose identity claims have become the main concern in cultural terms. They need the presence of history, to be sure, of history that matters for a local community or a nation. History, however, has to be represented or redis-*

3 As far as the Bienal de São Paulo is concerned, the phenomenon was discussed locally by Brazilian experts, when they were called to contribute to a special edition that *Revista USP* dedicated to the 50 years of the exhibition, in 2001. See *Revista USP. Cinquenta anos de Bienal Internacional de São Paulo*, February 2001-2002. Available at <http://www.usp.br/revistausp/52/SUMARIO-52.htm>.

4 On Ivo Mesquita's article for *Revista USP* (*op. cit.* pp.72-77), the author spoke of forty biennials throughout the world (p.74). In the research done by the production team of the 2008 edition of the Bienal de São Paulo curated by Mesquita, they estimated a number of 250 existing biennials around the world. That means that in less than a decade, the number of this kind of exhibition had multiplied by six, within a period when a crisis related to this kind of exhibition had been identified.

5 See web page of the Global Art Museum Project available at <http://www.globalart-museum.de>, which between the 27th of February and the 1st of March 2014 promoted the World Biennial Foundation together with an international conference about world biennials. Belting's analysis about global art can be read in two texts, published in the context of Global Art Museum Project: Hans Belting, 'Contemporary Art and the Museum in the Global Age', in Peter Weibel and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.), *Contemporary Art and the Museum. A Global Perspective*, Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2007, pp.16-41; and Hans Belting, 'Contemporary Art as Global Art: A Critical Estimate', *The Global Art World. Audiences, Markets and Museums*, Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009, pp.38-73.

6 Belting (*op. cit.* 2009, p.49) reminds us about the contribution of another expert who observes the assimilation of contemporary art museums to the model of the *Kunsthalle*, whilst anchoring itself too much in the programme of temporary exhibitions, like in a gallery or cultural centre without a permanent

collection, in an attempt to increase the number of visitors and secure its audience.

7 Hans Belting, *ibid*, p.68. (italics by Ana Gonçalves Magalhães).

8 Let us still remember that the Bienal de São Paulo, when organised by the old Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM-SP), was fundamental in the making of the first collection of international modern art in the country. For an analysis about the formation of the old MAM-SP collection and its connection to the Bienal de São Paulo, see, for instance, Ana Gonçalves Magalhães, 'Purchased at the Biennial: How São Paulo Obtained a Museum Collection of German Art', in Ulrike Groos and Sebastien Preuss (eds.), *German Art in São Paulo. German Art at the Biennial 1951-2012,* Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz / IFA, 2013, pp.97-101. The text was a result of partial research for the exhibition *Um outro acervo do MAC-USP: Prêmios-aquisição da Bienal de São Paulo, 1951-1963*, inaugurated in August of 2012, at Museu de Arte Contemporânea of the University of São Paulo, curated by the author.

9 This is even more relevant, if we think that in his first proposal to organise a handbook on the history of art in Brazil, the first director at the Museu de Arte Contemporânea of the University of São Paulo (MAC-USP), Walter Zanini, dedicated a chapter of the two volume publication to art education. See Walter Zanini (ed.), *História geral da arte no Brasil* (2 vols.), São Paulo: Instituto Moreira Salles, 1983, vol.2, contribution by Ana Mae Barbosa.

> *covered, and sometimes reinvented, as it is threatened by a global traffic of goods and ideas.*[7]

Resuming the case studies presented – about exhibitions set up in territories without a long tradition in museums or biennials and which, until recently, were not part of the art history manuals – the relationship between the audience and their local history is even more compelling, because institutions of art, when they do exist, still operate in a very fragile manner and are subject to oblivion. In that sense, the Bienal de São Paulo is in a very unique position today: we are talking about a historical exhibition (one of the first in the world of this kind), which was born in the heart of the first museum of modern art in South America and is known by the local audience (whether experts or not) as an important landmark for the city of São Paulo.[8] In reference to the creation of an audience, ever since its first edition, its art directors were concerned with consolidating an audience for modern art and, later on, for contemporary art. In order to do this, guided visits have always been contemplated in its programme – to the extent that Art Education is an autonomous subject in Brazil and has become a postgraduate level all over Brazil, at the same time qualification programmes in Art History were being established in the country.[9] It should also be observed that entire generations of critics, curators and educators who, until this day, work in cultural institutions in the city, started as visitors guides in editions of the Bienal de São Paulo. For its audience, the experience at Bienal de São Paulo is somewhat connected to the memory of the Brazilian modern project and the experience of a democratic, cosmopolitan and international society for the country. Its location inside Ibirapuera Park – designed by Oscar Niemeyer – makes it effectively associated to the project of modernisation of the country. The park is considered a rehearsal for the construction of Brasília. Besides, its archive consists of the most important collection of documents of the history of art in Brazil in the twentieth century. Having said that, and considering the obvious dichotomy of setting art museums against periodical exhibitions and the precariousness of these structures in 'non-Western' countries, the Brazilian situation is distinct – maybe because at a very early stage the country joined the process of internationalisation according to the models of Western society and liberal economy –, but it can possibly teach us about the development of a certain art system. Thus, from now on I will make a few observations considering the Brazilian case which, due to its somewhat consolidated history, may be enlightening to the current situation.

One thing we can take from it is exactly the audience profile. Despite the

lack of precise studies on the matter (until recently), the presence of students, from primary school all the way to university level, is evident in the exhibition spaces. For a few years now, most of the educational programmes in the Bienal de São Paulo have been dedicated to supporting public and private schools of the city and the state, also providing teacher training.[10] As Cayo Honorato pointed out whilst being questioned about the precariousness of the structure at Bienal de São Paulo, he reminded us that its educational programme has trained about 300 students in each edition, maintaining a staff of nearly one hundred during the event. A programme of this kind has only recently been put into place by similar exhibitions, such as the German (Documenta) and Italian (Venice Biennale) ones. Another important aspect is that this audience is taken on guided tours of museums throughout the city and other art exhibitions, turning it into a circuit of exhibition visits that is incorporated into their school calendar. Therefore, besides the educational action within the Bienal, the museological institutions in São Paulo give special attention to mediation in their programmes for temporary exhibitions. Even though there is a programme directed towards their respective permanent collections, they are equally divided with the programme for temporary exhibitions.

But, in order to get to the key issue of the current situation, we go back to focusing attention to the development of a specialised environment and a professional system of cultural production, promoted by the editions of the Bienal de São Paulo, which, in its almost 65 years of existence, exports experts from curators to producers and art handlers.[11] We can say that perhaps this is the most effective contribution to the instruction in art by the Bienal de São Paulo: it has developed a system of arts in the country as well as the professionalisation of the Brazilian artistic milieu and the development of a high-quality reflection about the artistic phenomenon here and abroad. Artists, curators, critics, gallery owners, cultural producers, educators, researchers of art history who work in the city of São Paulo have had and will have, at some point in their careers, some experience with the Bienal. Many of them have graduated by participating in the educational programme of the exhibition as undergraduate or post-graduate students. Some started as guides of guided visits, carried on to coordinating teams of guides and are now internationally renowned curators. In this sense, the Bienal de São Paulo has been important to audiences of art in the country, considering it has consolidated a *corpus* of historiographical reflection and tradition about art in Brazil, which often uses the experiences of the Bienal de São Paulo in other institutions and art museums.

10 Like the curatorship of education proposed by Denise Grinspum for the 27th Bienal de São Paulo (2006). Initially, Grinspum proposed a long-term programme to educate the audience and multipliers (teachers). From 2010 on, under the coordination of Stela Barbieri, the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation finally created a permanent staff of educators in their team. For the analysis about the importance of permanent activities related to education and a report about the role of educational initiative at the editions of the Bienal de São Paulo, see article written by Evelyn Ioschpe, "Bienal e educação", *Revista USP*, *op. cit.* pp.108-115. Although written in 2001 and without considering the latest experiences, the author's report has recurring elements. Ioschpe has made the analysis from her own experience as director of the education axis at the 24th Bienal de São Paulo. In this edition, as well as in the edition of 2006, the curatorship of the Bienal de São Paulo, in fact, focused on a threefold purpose: exhibition, education and publication.

11 Some Brazilians as heads of the curatorship of Bienal de São Paulo have already been invited to curate collections, museums and other biennials abroad. From the cultural production standpoint, when the Bienal do Mercosul was structured in 1997 in Porto Alegre (in the State of Rio Grande do Sul), they counted on the support of a cultural production company from São Paulo – with experience in the Bienal – in order to consolidate the project. This company would later be responsible, for instance, for coordinating the production of Bienal de Ushuaya, in Patagonia, Argentina, in 2007. The body of art handlers operating in the city of São Paulo in the beginning of the 2000s was essentially comprised of art students from local schools and universities, who were involved in the installations at the main museums of the city. This team of professionals was often called to assemble more than one exhibition at a time.

Thus, looking at the situation superficially, the Bienal de São Paulo has fulfilled its role with the audience, for both dilettantes and experts. Right? Partially... It has certainly transformed the local art market; it has advanced Brazilian artists on an international level and it has put contemporary art in school programmes. However, concerning this last point, a few observations must be made.

The Bienal de São Paulo is experienced and understood by the audience as an isolated event, that is, visitors are not aware of its *history*. People certainly know the event, but they do not know that behind the organisation there is an institution (the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation), which has sometimes been associated to other institutions and projects in the city.[12] The audience also does not know of its relationship to the *public* collections in the city of São Paulo: who remembers that Kenny Scharf's graffiti panel, now displayed at the entrance of Museu de Arte Contemporânea (MAC-USP), was made during his participation at the Bienal de São Paulo in 1983? This artwork, amongst nearly 600 others in the collection of MAC-USP, can tell us of the history of the Bienal. We could talk about *Tripartite Unity* by Max Bill or *Tragic Head* by Karel Appel and *A soma de nossos dias* by Maria Martins (also displayed at the entrance of the museum), amongst others, but the highlight given to Scharf's panel is symptomatic, for it has become a privileged background for visitors of MAC-USP to take *selfies* for social networks. Nowadays, graffiti is very popular and debated, and it puts São Paulo amongst the most important stages for graffiti in the world.[13] Scharf was shown in the Bienal de São Paulo when the city had already been experiencing interventions by Brazilian artist Alex Vallauri throughout the streets. His famous character, the 'Rainha do frango assado' [something like 'The Queen of the Roasted Chicken'], was the motto for the installation he did at the following Bienal, of which MAC-USP also maintains a few objects.[14]

However, MAC-USP and the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation contribute very little to foster effective knowledge about the event. Only twice has the museum's programme promoted and exhibition of the works from the collection they inherited from the old Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM-SP), which came from the Bienal de São Paulo acquisition prizes.[15] On the other hand, when celebrating their 50th anniversary, the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation organised a historical exhibition, displaying the highlights from the museum's collection, which had been awarded in previous editions of the Bienal, alongside great contemporary projects especially commissioned for the occasion. However, when celebrating their 60th anniversary, the institution that organises the Bienal de

12 The audience does not know, for instance, that MAM-SP and the Bienal were once a single institution and that the separation of the old museum from the Bienal gave origin to MAC-USP.

13 The best known ensemble can be found at Rua Gonçalo Afonso, the so-called Beco do Batman, in the neighbourhood called Vila Madalena.

14 See exhibition *MAC em obras*, 27 May 2011 to 2 June 2013 at MAC-USP, in which Vallauri's installation was a case study to address preservation in relation to documental dimension. The recordings available in the library of the museum showed interviews with artists, critics, curators and conservators within this context. In the case of Vallauri, see interview with curator João Spinelli.

15 The catalogue for the exhibition of 1985, in this sense, is the most valuable, for it attempted, for the first time, to systemise the list of works coming from this context. See the exhibit catalogue *Prêmios da Bienal de São Paulo*, São Paulo: MAC-USP, 1985, containing texts of Maria Alice Milliet, Ivo Mesquita, Walter Zanini, Wolfgang Pfeiffer, among others.

São Paulo seems to have chosen not to talk about its history – or at least not to connect it to the most important collections of modern and contemporary art in the country. In 2011, the celebration of their 60th anniversary was inaugurated with the exhibition *In the Name of the Artists* with great international names in contemporary art – at the entrance, we immediately came across the well-known Damien Hirst's embalmed shark. His artworks, as well as the works by Jeff Koons, Matthew Barney, Cindy Sherman, Jason Rhoades etc., all coming from the Astrup Fearnley Collection, in Oslo,[16] composed a framework of the masterpieces of North American production from the past thirty years. The exhibition was broadly advertised in the media, leading us to imagine a tremendous attendance success.

Two years later, in 2013, what we could refer to as a Brazilian version of the exhibition from the Astrup Fearnley Collection, the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation came with the idea of presenting a history of Brazilian art in the context of the editions of its event. Even so, *30 x Bienal: Transformations in Brazilian Art from the 1st to the 30th Edition* chose not to dialogue with the MAC-USP collection and instead request artworks that came mostly from galleries and private collectors to build their narrative about the Bienal de São Paulo.

In the past few years, the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation approached art museums in the city to discuss a conjoint programme of exhibitions during the editions of the event. In a meeting in 2012, MAC-USP proposed the exhibition *Um outro acervo do MAC USP: prêmios-aquisição da Bienal de São Paulo, 1951-1963* [Another Collection of MAC-USP: Acquisition Prizes of the Bienal de São Paulo, 1951-1963], which inaugurated at the same time as the 30th Bienal de São Paulo, in order to show visitors of both MAC-USP and the Bienal, artworks that had been seen very rarely or only outside the context of the Bienal. It is surprising, even for experts, how little this path is known – not to mention to the greater audience.

Returning to the issue concerning educating an audience to appreciate contemporary art, this still occurs in small stages: through occasional visits to exhibitions – without there necessarily being any connection between them, or the institutions that organise them and even what this all means for a country like Brazil. This contradiction is still to be overcome. ●

16 Patron of Astrup Fearnley Museet.

Unrepentant Populism

Cayo Honorato

(1)

In an article published on 29 August 1948, entitled 'A importância do público',[1] Léon Degand, organiser of the opening exhibition at the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM-SP) – institution that would later produce the 1st Bienal de São Paulo –, questions the lack of attention that was historically given to the public. According to him, what is usually mentioned is the 'incomprehension of an audience [...] with regard to artistic innovations', being very few the 'complete and profound' studies about 'the various states of public opinion'. To Degand, however, the public would be an essential component of the artistic phenomenon:

> As a phenomenon, an artwork is not merely what the artist intended it to be, consciously or unconsciously. It is also, [sic] everything that each of us, in obedience to the spiritual trends of the time and of [sic] personal mood, decreases, adds or changes.[2]

However, his argument differs from what, for example, Marcel Duchamp proposes under an 'art coefficient'. While Duchamp introduces a fissure at the core of the creative act through which both the public and the outside world invade it, Degand keeps creation and fruition as two parallel worlds. He suggests, on the one hand, that the public discover 'as accurately as possible' the feelings governing artistic creation, and on the other, that they react in the 'most vivid way' even if the reaction 'is not in accordance with the original intentions of the artist', to then conclude: the important thing is 'the collaboration of an audience'.

But as we said, in this collaboration there is no point of contact between one instance and another. In fact, Degand does not specify any kind of intersection between the 'innovations' of art and the 'contradictory reactions' of the audience; nothing that could advance, as he proposes, an understanding of 'artistic thought through [...] non-creators'. So where is his defense or recognition of the importance of the public? In what way does he expect the public to collaborate?

1 This is a kind of summary of the first Léon Degand conference, made weeks earlier, in the former Biblioteca Municipal (today Biblioteca Mário de Andrade) on 9 August 1948. See Léon Degand, 'A importância do público', in João Bandeira (ed.), *Arte concreta paulista: documentos*, São Paulo: Cosac & Naify, CEUMA/USP, 2002, p.23.

2 *Ibid*.

(2)

In any case, the receptivity of Degand has its ambiguities. In the text 'Estarão divorciados a arte e o público?',[3] available for consultation in the Historical Archive of the Bienal de São Paulo, the author disputes the claim that modern artists have been separated from the public due to their individualism, or contempt for the people. For Degand,[4] these two instances have never been 'married', as it cannot be said, about any time, that the public fully understands the 'aesthetic purposes of art':

> thanks to the artistic revolution that began during the first decades of the nineteenth century [...], it was noted, at last, that the public was only interested in fine arts by virtue of a misunderstanding – that of mistaking art with 'scenography' [the representation of identifiable characters and objects in 'vivid' paintings or dramatic scenes] – whilst the specifically plastic elements of these arts [the interplay of forms and colours] generally eluded them.

Therefore, if earlier Degand signaled the importance of the public, even to the understanding of artistic thought, this time, he understands that the public would never have comprehended it and that their possible interest in art is ultimately the result of a misconception. In this sense, his attempt to put those two worlds in contact seems to build a bridge far too inclined, which always puts the public – whose role is to cross it – in an inferior position in relation to art. After all, what does it mean to recognise the 'contradictory reactions' of the audience, to then consider them a misunderstanding? And if such reactions were actually non-compliant reactions, at times antagonistic even, would they be in any case misunderstandings?

As is known, the presumed openness of Degand, even to the public's idiosyncrasies, prepares the transmission of a specific message, that is, of the purposes of abstract art, which request an equally abstract public, in the sense of a mere support for extraneous intentions. According to Cristina Freire,[5] the 'modern' functions as a basic operating system, used to 'manage behaviors, educate and 'civilize' manners, taming bodies and, in the same movement of this imposed decorum, depoliticise the presentation of art and its education, relieving it from crisis and conflict'; a system that, according to her, still resists in time and space, operating sometimes unconsciously.

3 Apparently, the question came to him before. In March 1946, the periodical *Les Lettres Française*, a communist cultural newspaper, which Degand was a collaborator, had done a survey on 'The art and the public', publishing the following Paul Éluard response, also a collaborator of the journal; a response very similar to Degand's arguments: 'For the general public, what matters is the subject, the theme. But artists dedicate themselves to nothing other than art, while the public only preoccupies itself with the subject. A divorce then occurs, that worsens since the Impressionists [...]. However, from the moment they freed themselves from all the realistic constraints, from the moment they began to use forms as they wished, artists should have given the public the desire to free themselves too. But the public does not want to free itself. As with politics, it wants everything broken down. *The divorce does not have to do with the artist, but with the crowd and its poor education [...]. Let critics and teachers educate the masses*.' Paul Éluard *apud* Jean-Charles Gateau, *Éluard, Picasso et la peinture*, Histoire des idées et critique litteraire, vol.212, Gênova: Droz, 1983, p.269. Emphasis the author's. Extracted by Jean-Charles Gateau from the periodical *Les Lettres Françaises*, no.100, 22 March 1946).

4 Degand, *ibid*.

5 Cristina Freire, 'El inconsciente moderno del museo contemporáneo en Brasil', in Annateresa Fabris et al. (eds.), *History and (in) Movement*: *Minutes of the International Colloquium MAM 60*, São Paulo: Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, 2008, pp.35-44.

(3)

More than to effectively consider the different reactions of the public, Degand seems interested in the legitimacy that the public could confer on modern art and the ideals of progress that corresponded to it, according to a horizon of expectations supposedly shared. In any case, from his point of view, in order for the audience to matter, that misconception should be overcome:

> There is only one means to stop this misunderstanding: to teach the public, from early childhood, in school, in the academies of fine arts, everywhere, that in every work of art belonging to the visual arts (painting, printmaking, sculpture etc.), the important thing, in the first place and essentially, is plasticity.[6]

It is also necessary to consider that, behind the innocence of organising an abstract art exhibition, 'an entire world was growing full of Cold War intrigue, political schemes and covert actions'. At the same time, the desires of an entrepreneurial class for the development of a progressive and liberal culture were growing in Brazil. In this context, the discourse of 'public importance' is sponsored by a missionary crusade – as proved by the actions of Nelson Rockefeller in the country –,[7] interested in the promotion of modern art and capitalist democracy through an 'educational museum', among other strategies.

In other words, in order for the importance of plasticity to be recognised, it was necessary to spread a subjectivity that was the '[...] expression of a modern, urban and rational world'.[8] Educating takes here the meaning of fabricating and imposing the modern individual, as well as the role of persuading the public of the importance of art. In a letter to Ciccillo Matarazzo (founder of the Bienal de São Paulo and its emeritus president), Degand could finally be more clear when defending a public action of private initiatives:

> The public knows nothing about modern art. They must be educated even without having such intention [in a translation by Vera d'Horta, regardless of their acceptance]. In the present state of things, it is the triggers, that is, bold private individuals who must educate them. Thus, his role [that of Matarazzo] is well defined.[9]

6 Degand, *ibid*.

7 The 'cultural attaché' for MoMA New York in Brazil not only sponsored the creation of the Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM), both in São Paulo and in Rio de Janeiro, but also the reformation of Congonhas Airport in São Paulo, the publication of *Revista Seleção* a magazine from *Readers Digest*, among other actions. (Freire, *op. cit*.: pp.37-38).

8 Guilbaut, *ibid*.

9 Letter from Degand to Cicillo Matarazzo, Paris, 9 July 1947; available for consultation, according to Guilbaut, in the Historical Archive of the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation.

* * *

What do we have here? The remarkable contradiction between (1) the discourse on the importance of the public, which seems to consider public opinion, their states of mind, their reactions, even as keys to understanding artistic thought, and (2) the discourse on the public's incomprehension, stating that the public is unable to comprehend due to a misunderstanding, to a timeless misconception about art, (3) finds its outlet in the directive to teach the public, regardless of their acceptance. After all, it is the importance of 'plasticity' that must prevail, under the auspices of 'bold individuals'. Thus, the importance of the public is transfigured by the importance of art. Not of art in general, but a specific art whose tradition and growth 'derive from social processes within the upper middle class or the bourgeoisie',[10] although projected in a horizon of supposedly shared expectations.

After more than sixty years, the educational purposes of the Bienal de São Paulo are certainly much more amicable. There are no traces of imposition, although its current president has used the term 'forced public' to refer to schoolchildren.[11] On the contrary, they seem to address consolidated expectations. Their readiness to 'surrender to dialogue' would be in response to a public that is 'hungry for information',[12] to interlocutors that are 'increasingly desirous'.[13] In this sense they seem to deepen the receptivity of Degand, but not exactly transpose its contradiction. Willing to 'truly hear what the other has to say',[14] to 'get to know each person through the issues they bring with them, and their ways of communicating',[15] the Bienal Educational Program claims to believe in the 'voice of the other that lives and perceives the contemporary world in his or hers particular way'.[16]

More than that, the Bienal Educational Program aims at having an 'attentive listening that enables effective communication',[17] claiming that 'people leave marks and transform our [the program's] activity'[18] and understanding that information about the works, brought by the educator 'intertwine with those of the person [the educator] is with',[19] and therefore, 'if people have something to say, we need to create spaces for them to speak and for their voices to reverberate'.[20] However, if these marks and interweavings are not shown, that is, if they remain as simple statements, rather than as exposure of the consequences of these spaces, all that readiness seems to revert to a certain *delimitation*, which considers 'the most varied public', or the variety of their issues and their references, only to the extent to which they can be subsumed to art.

Therefore, it is not enough to just create such spaces in which 'people feel

10 Roger Taylor, *Arte, inimiga do povo* [1978] (trans. Maria Cristina Vidal Borba), São Paulo: Conrad, 2005.

11 The term appears in a video release of the preparations for the 31st Bienal de São Paulo. In an interview, Luis Terepins says: 'We [the presidency and curators] talked a lot about this process of the Educational Program, of the possibility of this reaching this larger public, which I call forced public, which are the 300,000 children from 30,000 educators who go through the training process.' Available at: <http://migre.me/mup6c> (last accessed on 26 October 14).

12 Stela Barbieri, 'Lugar de respirar', *29ª Bienal de São Paulo* (exh. cat.), São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2010, pp.402-411.

13 Stela Barbieri, 'Estratégias da intuição', *30ª Bienal de São Paulo* (exh. cat.), São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2012, pp.306-309.

14 *Ibid*.

15 *Ibid*.

16 *Ibid*.

17 *Ibid*.

18 *Ibid*.

19 *Ibid*.

20 Stela Barbieri, 'Educational Program Presentation'. Available at <http://www.bienal.org.br/pagina.php?i=375>, (last accessed on 12 October 2014).

at ease and in the liberty of placing themselves',[21] without the willingness to effectively discuss and expose the consequences of these 'placements'. To operate with the assumption of its effects, in an exclusively positive manner, only yields credits to the proposition of the programme, not to the appropriations of the public. And one would have to consider them retrospectively so that such proposition would not be reduced to simple 'advertising material'. Surely, what reaches the public in the programme's texts is much more enthusiastic about future possibilities than about confronting emerging issues; much more about self-promotion than self-critical evaluation. Incidentally, it is in this sense that the Bienal Educational Program seems more concerned with the management of its corporate image than with what occurs in the temporary and fragmentary 'public sphere' of an exhibition. That is why many educational programmes, although created in the name of the public, have been disappearing with the public.

In any case, we are at a certain distance from the public in an abstract sense, as a support for extraneous interests but not much: 'The Bienal Educational Program's movement is toward expanding its territory in order to reach more varied groups and encompass the public as a whole.'[22] Here one can see a certain degree of ambiguity between the publics in plural (varied publics) and the public in the singular (whole), if not a reduction of the first within the second. After all, this 'expansion of territory' (on which weighs an imperialist purpose) is proposed in the face of other territories; which seems to elude possible cultural and/or social differences. Similarly, the diffusion of contemporary art, as if it were a kind of scarce resource, could only affirm, to those who lack those resources exactly that, that they do not have what Bienal Educational Program has to offer them. Even the project Bienal in the Communities commits such ambiguities: it arises in order to show that the Bienal 'is not restricted to its physical space', aiming to 'develop intersecting spaces' (between the Educational Program and the communities), but also 'provide experiences [...] that sensitise human relationships and "being in the world"'[23] – a kind of atemporal task, that would assert itself as infinitely necessary.

But what are the spaces created by the Educational Program? The so-called 'educational clues', for example,[24] which seem to structure the educational materials of the Bienal de São Paulo since 2010, bring – amid information or even reflections on the works, artists, curatorship of the exhibition and 'contemporary life' – propositions or 'suggestions for practical actions' to be carried out mainly by students along with their teachers, at school or outside the exhibition. Other than that, they bring featured questions like: Why silence? Are there certainties

21 Stela Barbieri, 'Pragmatismo poético', in Carmen S. G. Aranha & Katia Kanton (eds.), *Espaços da mediação*, São Paulo: PGEHA/ Museu de Arte Contemporânea da USP, 2011, pp.59-61.

22 Barbieri, 'Educational Program Presentation', *op. cit.*, 2014.

23 The project presentation text was written by a spokesperson for the Educational Programme, and includes excerpts from interviews with the coordinator and producer of the project. See <http://migre.me/mxgks>, (last accessed on 27 October 2014).

24 In fact, there is a variety of these spaces: meetings with teachers, educational shifts, laboratories for the development of educational material, conversation circles with the public, etc.

that can be taken down? What happens each time you consent? Or even: How to start a city? What paths do the spaces invent? What happens when you walk? [25]

Some questions may seem unusual. It is not clear how they were formulated, nor the context to which they refer; they oscillate between the phenomenological and the metaphysical, in a way that seems to dismiss any historical, social or even cultural approaches. Surely, they are attempts to excite the public's curiosity in relation to the exhibition; they want to mobilise perception, imagination and conscience. With some advantage, they request unrestricted answers to any particular discipline. Likewise, they may be answered by any person, admitting multiple responses. They are therefore a particular type of question. Based on the idea that 'the role of art is not to provide answers, but to propose questions', or, that the educator is a 'mobilizer of questions'.[26] They are questions designed for the public that, from the perspective of the Educational Program, neither art nor educators would be expected to undertake.

In fact, it is not expected that the Bienal Educational Program be responsible for answering the questions. These are questions that do not seem to raise any subsequent investigation. They do not seem interested in building any kind of knowledge that is objectively shareable, perhaps just a type of 'experience', as a kind of uncertainty that should be cultivated in itself. In one of the clues, it is written that 'an inquiry is not a question and does not necessarily need answers'. But then, right after, that 'questions, doubts and opportunities imply choices'. However, the logic of these questions seems to correspond to a convenient positioning: counting on a permanent structure since 2011, which would allow one it to 'maintain an active knowledge that used to be lost',[27] the Bienal Educational Program admits that its work 'can be invisible', that 'everything we do is ephemeral'.[28] Again, it is the prerogative of the questions, the supply and the art, which disappears with the answers, the appropriations and the publics.

* * *

But what would be *populist*: (1) to create spaces in which 'people feel at ease and in the liberty of placing themselves', spaces that are narrated, for all purposes, as institutional supply, whose significance is at no time supplanted by any appropriations, or (2) to effectively discuss and expose the consequences of these 'assertions', whatever they may be, especially in the case of appropriations that are divergent, conflicting, antagonistic? Perhaps both are populist, but in ways that need to be differentiated. More than that, different forms of popular would be at stake, different populisms.

25 The two series we recorded exemplify questions present in, respectively, the Bienal material of 2010 from the intermediate exhibition in 2011, entitled *In the Name of the Artists*, and the 2012 Bienal. Each educational material can bring five, seven or even dozens of these questions.

26 Barbieri, *op.cit.*, 2010.

27 Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, *Relatório de gestão e contribuições à sociedade, 2010-2011*, São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2011.

28 Barbieri, *op.cit.*, 2012.

In complex societies like modern and contemporary societies, that are highly specialised, and marked by differentiating 'functional subsystems', a communication between those sections must be built. It is not out of laziness or cowardice (of learning medicine or law, for example), as would have thought Immanuel Kant in his well-known text on the Enlightenment, that a doctor uses the services of a lawyer and vice versa. Surely, a doctor can become a lawyer, considering that the transit between different functions, which would no longer be attributed to individuals by birth, is the result of a modern achievement. However, studying medicine assures no knowledge in either law or any other field. Thus, in the best of situations, so that the laity are not simply guided by experts, these need to condescend to the level of the laity. The means to doing so, according to Niels Werber,[29] is *popularity* (or the *popularisation*).

However, more than functionally asymmetric, modern societies are marked by the social division of labour and class struggle, so that a level playing field to take part in different social functions cannot be assumed. In this context, popularisation can act ambivalently, not only as an ideal reintegration of society, but also as a means of ensuring a clientele for experts, to make the laity recognise themselves as such. This means that the modern principle of inclusion holds a possibility of exclusion, in so far as it is treated as an 'inclusion' only in specific functions: as voters, consumers, payers, etc. In this sense, to include does not mean to confront the laity with the complexity of expertise (such as with popularisation), but inform what is already decided. For Werber,[30] *populism* seeks simply to integrate individuals to the masses, reserving its leadership to an elite of scholars and/or powerful.

This is how, from a critical perspective, one might claim a popularity without populism. There are, however, *populist forms* of *popularisation*, as when, for example, lay people are led to believe that their opinions participate in the elaboration of specialised knowledge. In this case, they are not confronted with the complexity and contingency of this process, nor are led to simply accept their results. Werber[31] shows how historian Max Imdahl – at a seminar on modern art for workers of a German factory in the late 1970s – reformulates the participants' answers to make them match his own reasoning. More than that, to induce them to affirm, 'Yes, that's what I said', even if they completely said something else. In the case of the Bienal Educational Program, not only only do the publics' responses vanish, but also their questions. In one of the 'episódios contrapúblicos',[32] that the Brazilian artist Diogo de Moraes collects, he reports:

29 Niels Werber, 'Populism as a Form of Mediation', in Lars Bang Larsen; Cristina Ricupero and Nicolaus Schafhausen (eds.), *The Populism Reader*, New York and Berlin: Lukas & Sternberg, 2005, pp.147-159.

30 *Ibid*.

31 *Ibid*.

32 'Episódios contrapúblicos' could be translated as Counter-public Episodes [editorial note].

> It was during a mediated visit to the exhibition *30 x Bienal*, with a group of pre-adolescents from the public school system [...], that I pricked my snooping visitor ears and began to listen [...] the conversation between the students and the exhibition's educator [...]. One of the boys, without asking permission and totally diverting the conversation, asked the following question: 'The Bienal is whose? Who pays for this exhibition?.' [...] The educator tried to translate the boy's question for herself and the rest of the group: 'You want to know the provenance of the money that pays for all this structure, and who owns the São Paulo Bienal Foundation?.' To which the boy replied decisively: 'Yeah, that's right.'[33]

This time, the student's question is not distorted by the educator's reformulation. However, in relation to the questions of the Educational Program, it is a question that asks for a response; which refers to a concrete problem. It does not precisely aim to include the student as audience, in the sense of someone 'hungry for information' (as long as limited to a certain 'metaphysical' spectrum of questions). Through it, the student comes up with his own demands, transforming an administrative problem into a political issue; demanding that – judging by the Bienal funding model, which in its previous editions (2010 and 2012) had on average 78% of its budget funded by public funds – a problem within the institution, supposedly restricted to a technocratic domain, be openly discussed as a common problem. Furthermore, to the extent that the 'conversation is diverted' the question suggests that the public does not only constitute itself as a receptive space for institutional supply. By the way, it is in this transition from a receptive condition to the submission of a demand that we can find a defining feature of *another populism*,[34] which does not relate to any attitudes of experts toward the laity, but to the political dimension of demands which are duly popular.

Certainly, a question is not enough to form a people. According to Ernesto Laclau,[35] the emergence of 'the people' requires the transition from a plurality of heterogeneous, isolated and unsatisfied demands, to a 'global' demand, which represents a broader subjectivity, by the formation of a 'chain of equivalences', that is, by the formation of a symbolic and contingent totalisation, by the formation of a part (*plebs*) that claims to be the whole (*populus*), in constant tension with the 'differences' of each demand. Besides that, this transition necessarily delimits a political frontier towards power, discursively constructed as an antagonistic force. In this sense, the 'people' does not refer to any essential identity, nor an expression of an ideological nature, but to a particular relationship

33 Diogo de Moraes, 'Episódios contrapúblicos', *Revista Urbânia*, no.5, São Paulo: Pressa, 2014.

34 Ernesto Laclau, *A razão populista* (trans. Carlos Eugênio Marcondes de Moura), São Paulo: Três Estrelas, 2013.

35 *Ibid*.

between social agents, which is identified by a performative nomination. The 'people' is an empty signifier (but not abstract), which seeks to name an absent plenitude, signaling at the same time the fractures of social space.

In any case, the interruption of a certain institutional expectation of connection between art and the public, raising questions not prioritised by the Educational Program, the student's question, on a small scale, serves us as a metaphor of that urgency. In fact, it is not the question itself – whose answer has been published in some way – that is ignored by the Program, but the very possibility of that urgency. By limiting 'the most varied groups' to pre-existing entities, totaled by systemic and unhistorical categories such as the 'scheduled public' and the 'spontaneous public', deprived of any socio-political imaginary, the Educational Program not only disappears with the ethical-political moment of a particular 'public sphere', but also disappears with the public as collective agents of political action. Thus, for the Educational Program, where there would be demands, there is simply 'groups': entities functionally included as 'visitors', which can be profiled, measured and governed. ●

Post-Colonial or Neo-Colonialism? A Reflection on the 'World Biennial Forum' in São Paulo[1]

Ana Paula Cohen

In order to reflect upon the World Biennial Forum nº2, organised in São Paulo by the *Biennial Foundation*,[2] entitled 'How to Make Biennials in Contemporary Times',[3] it is important to distinguish a few notions and practices that traverse such an event.

The first would be the very notion of a biennial exhibition, as a model that is initiated in Venice in 1895, having as reference the international fairs of the nineteenth century, followed by São Paulo,[4] in 1951, and numerous others throughout the second half of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century. The 'biennial' model can be, at first, analysed as a colonial project and, currently, as a neo-colonial one, that feeds a capitalist system of global circulation (of goods, products, and people), reproducing the format created in Europe according to local political needs, aiming to reach and dominate a narrative of international art. The 'original' model would then be replicated – always serving as a parameter – and would form a global system of biennials, appearing homogeneous with respect to its frequency (every two years) and to its format of an art exhibition with national representations, artists, etc.

Nonetheless, it seems essential to to counterpose the 'collective fantasy'[5] of an abstract model of biennial, that would repeat itself around the entire world infinitely and without distinction, to each exhibition project entitled 'Biennial', created from different contexts and coming together in completely different forms.

The Bienal de São Paulo, despite having followed the Venice model[6] rigorously, consolidates itself, as the years go by, as a way of looking at an international art production from a South American perspective, reformulating possible art histories, not always controlled by the artistic centres or in accordance with the hegemonic canons, creating a local scene that is in constant dialogue with the continent's artistic production. The public that these events address is also significantly different: while the international public of the Bienal de São Paulo makes up 3% of its total public – the so-called specialised audience – the Venice Biennale's public is, for the most part, international. Venice, with its

1 The text below comes from a brief introduction presented at the roundtable: No More Imagined Communities: Creating New Biennials Beyond National Art Competitions and Neoliberal City Marketing. The introduction was thought as a response to the context in which the forum took place, the discussions and lectures presented in the first two days, and the audience that was present there, as well as a critical reflection on the subject and title of the table I was invited to moderate.

2 Seeking clarity in my argumentation, the title *Biennial Foundation* will be used in English and in italics to refer to the online platform with offices in The Netherlands, established in 2009, Biennial Foundation; and Fundação Bienal, in Portuguese and without italics, when I refer to the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, that started from the Bienal Internacional de Arte de São Paulo, established in 1951, and transformed into a foundation in 1962.

3 The WBF was co-organised by the *Biennial Foundation*, ICCO and Fundação Bienal de São Paulo. [Editorial note]

4 The second major periodic international exhibition created just after Venice was the Carnegie International in Pittsburgh, USA, in 1896. Until 1955, the exhibition occurred annually and was, from the beginning, more geared to the local context and less an attempt to create narratives in an international discourse, systematically following the practice of acquiring international works for the museum that created the event.

5 Notion developed by Peter Osborne in the

keynote speech of the World Biennial Forum nº2 in São Paulo.

6 In addition to national representations, there are details, like the dimensions of the catalogues of the Bienal de São Paulo, that carefully followed those of the Venice Biennale; each time the size was modified in Venice, the one in São Paulo was also changed in its next edition.

national awards and pavilions, is produced above all for a specialised audience, while in São Paulo close to 97% of the public is made up of visitors from the city, the country and the continent. This fact makes it so that the concrete project of each of the first biennials in the world be absolutely different in relation to each local context and its complexities.

One may even think that there is some kind of autonomy to these biennials, if we consider that they are initiated by local political and financial forces, and thus, are not subject to an external central control, unlike most global systems of circulation of capital.

Beyond the sexagenarian Bienal de São Paulo, most biennial projects in the world do not follow the model of national representations, and may vary in scale, budget, timeliness, frequency, materialising in many different ways, from projects that began in an artist's apartment (like the London Biennale, created by Filipino artist David Medalla), or in a neighbourhood of Bogotá, Colombia (the Bienal de Venecia, created in the neighbourhood of Venecia), to the ones that may serve the new needs of representation of power, as in the case of Manifesta in post-Cold War Europe, contributing to the building of the image of a Common European Community.

In this sense, one can even think of a democratic character in the use of the magic word 'biennial', which instantly transforms any group exhibition, in any city of the world, into an accepted institution and with visibility within a certain international contemporary art scene. No city in Asia, Africa, or Latin America needs to ask for permission or pay duties to Venice when creating a new biennial. The current system of biennials, while problematic, seems less centralised, euro-centred and homogeneous than other circulation systems of art exhibitions, for example, those conceived in large museums in Europe and the United States, and sold as a package deal to museums of the so-called developing countries.

Most of all, it seems important to think about how the different forces that come together for each biennial event can create a space for critical inquiry, even if temporarily, through artistic practices, discourse and public debate within a local context.

Another point that traverses the same event, and which I hope to distinguish here, would be the exhaustion of a critical discourse on the biennial model – a discourse which the World Biennial Forum proposes itself. Questions like: 'Why Bienials', 'How to Make Biennials', or 'What to Do with Biennials' were elaborated and answered thoroughly in the last fifteen years by projects and

studies of theoretical and practical nature, in conferences, articles, books, and even in biennial exhibitions which dedicated themselves to questioning their formats, to look into their histories, among other strategies, creating forums around the world for discussing the relevance of this 'abstract' global model through concrete objects of study.

The problems intrinsic to the biennial model are therefore already known by professionals; yet biennials continue to take place. New biennials are created every year, the existing ones follow their programmes, some cease to exist, and the circulation system of artworks, artists, and curators comes second only to the art fairs, that, albeit at a faster pace, are more and more presented to the public in events very similar to biennials themselves.

If on the one hand, creating new biennials or not does not seem to make a difference in such a complex and extensive system, just as criticising the model also appears to not have any impact on the present, on the other, I believe that acting in a decolonising way in every new project is a responsibility of those involved in critical thinking and in the production of art and exhibitions. Even so, if it were possible to go into the details of what it would be to act in a decolonising way here, we would have to, once again, analyse specific projects, since the notion of ethics and the urgencies to be questioned are different in each region of the world, are in constant transformation, and should therefore be reconsidered at each new edition of a biennial.

And so we arrive at the third point that traverses the event, the format of the very *Biennial Foundation* and of the 'World Biennial Forum'. Following this line of thought, the relevance of a *Biennial Foundation*, detached from any specificity, a hyper-institutionalisation that bases itself solely on the abstract idea of biennial, homogenising collective exhibitions of such diverse contexts, and capitalising on a critique that, despite having been exhausted (or precisely because of this) still gathers audiences and sponsors, could be questioned.

If the Venice Biennale, in 1895, proposed itself as centralising stage of a geo-political territory of national representations, in a hierarchical and euro-centred form, gathering national territories within its own territory, the *Biennial Foundation* seems to operate within a similar logic, albeit in the molds of transnational corporate capitalism. When trying to gather all of the world's biennials under its dominion, in a pyramid-like power structure, where it places itself at the top, and organise a discursive apparatus with a name that claims to be unique in the world, 'World Biennial Forum', while all the institutions in this system have names linked to the cities where they take place – and

thus connected inevitably to local specificities – the *Biennial Foundation* and the 'World Biennial Forum' can be seen as an attempt to claim a centre for something that is not homogeneous nor centralised, following a colonial logic with respect to those who provide knowledge, those who produce the goods in remote, tax-free regions, and those who consume these, when sold in major global capitals of the world.

In this sense, and in an attempt to decolonise our way of thinking and our daily practices, I ask: Does the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation, with its 63 years of existence, and the know-how of having produced 31 biennial editions, all with public programmes, conferences, publications, artists, curators and international artworks, need to import an event conceived by the *Biennial Foundation* in the Netherlands, initiated in 2009, that follows a transnational corporate logic in respect to its circulation as a service offered from Europe for having a legitimacy that we supposedly do not have in Brazil, to organise an international conference whose theme is 'How to Make Biennials in Contemporary Times'– despite the Bienal de São Paulo having held similar forums in its previous editions? Would paying for an event of this scale with local public money to bring the 'World Biennial Forum' to São Paulo be underestimating, by the local organisers themselves, the legitimacy, visibility, and repertoire that the Bienal de São Paulo Foundation conquered decades ago?

Finally, the realisation of the 'World Biennial Forum', as a parallel event to the 31st Bienal de São Paulo (which included a vast programme of conferences and lectures interconnected with the curatorial concepts and projects developed by participating artists – none with the amount of exposure in the local and international media as the 'World Biennial Forum'), serves as a reflection and self-criticism of how we still live – in the so-called 'global South' – buried under a colonial structure, deeply rooted in the collective imaginary and in the construction of subjectivities that populate our sides of the world. This mark, I believe, is more profound and interiorised – and therefore much harder to heal – than the external impositions of the global economic or financial circulation.

It is worth remembering that for a deeper investigation on 'how to make biennials?' one of the most relevant archives is located in Ibirapuera Park, at the Bienal Pavilion, 200 metres from where the forum took place. The Wanda Svevo archive began operating in 1954, and therefore systematically documents the entire history of the Bienal and the surrounding events related to contemporary art in the city, country and continent. ●

Biographies

The editors

Galit Eilat (Israel/The Netherlands) is the founding director of The Israeli Center for Digital Art in Holon (2001-2010). Eilat is also the co-founded of *Ma'arav* ('Ambush'), an online arts and culture magazine, for which she was chief-editor (2004-2010). With Eyal Danon, Reem Fadda and Phil Misselwitz she developed the *Liminal Spaces* traveling seminars (2006-2008), which was not an actual exhibition, but rather a joint research project, a collective micro-residency, production platform and a series of interventionist, site-specific conferences rolled into one. In 2010 Eilat left her base in Israel and continued her committed work at the Van Abbemuseum, where (2010-2013) she was research curator. In 2011 she curated with Sebastian Cichocki the exhibition of Yael Bartana *And Europe Will Be Stunned* at the Polish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. In late 2011 she co-curated with Alenka Gregoric the project *It's Time We Got To Know Each Other*, 52nd October Salon, at the Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade, Serbia. Along with this project she additionally edited a reader, *Symptoms of Unresolved Conflict*. Recently Eilat co-curated the 31st Bienal de São Paulo - *How to (…) things that don't exist* together with Nuria Enguita Mayo, Charles Esche, Pablo Lafuente, Oren Sagiv and associate curators Luiza Proença and Benjamin Seroussi.

Nuria Enguita Mayo (Spain) is an editor and curator. She is the editor of *Revista Concreta* and was co-editor of *Afterall* journal (2007-2014). She is a member of the direction team for the programme *arteypensamiento* at the Universidad Internacional de Andalucía (UNIA) (2000-2003). Mayo co-curated the 31st Bienal de São Paulo, (2014). She has a degree in History and Art Criticism at the Universidad Autónoma in Madrid. She was artistic director at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies in Barcelona (1998-2008) where she organised exhibitions and publications on Chris Marker, Renée Green, Eulàlia Valldosera, Victor Burgin, Asger Jorn, Jon Mikel Euba, Sanja Ivekovic, Pedro G. Romero and Steve McQueen among other, as well as seminars and video and film programmes. Also, Mayo worked in projects such as *Culturas de Archivo o Tour-ismes. La derrota de la disensió*. She was a conservator at the IVAM-Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno, Valencia (1991-1998), co-curator for Manifesta 4 (2002) and for the Encuentro Internacional de Medellín (2011). She curated exhibitions on Eulàlia Valldosera e Ibon Aranberri for the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía. She has lectured on art theory and arts management in various centres and universities and has published many texts in catalogues and magazines about contemporary art such as *Parkett*, *Afterall* and *Concreta*.

Charles Esche (Scotland) is a curator and writer. He is director of the Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven) and professor of Curating and Contemporary Art at Central Saint Martins (London) where he is co-director of *Afterall* journal and books with Mark Lewis. He lives in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Pablo Lafuente (Spain/Brazil) is a writer, researcher and curator based in Brazil, where he moved to be part of the curatorial team for the 31st Bienal de São Paulo (2014). Before, he was an editor for *Afterall* journal and *Afterall's Exhibition Histories* series, and a Reader at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. He was also associate curator at the Office for Contemporary Art Norway in Oslo (2008–2013). He has been the curator of, among others, *A Singular Form* (Secession, Vienna, 2014), *Beware of the Holy Whore* (Norway's representation at the Venice Biennale (2013), with Marta Kuzma and Angela Vettese) and *Forms of Modern Life* (OCA, Oslo, 2013, with Marta Kuzma). He is the editor, among others, of *A Singular Form* (Secession and Revolver, 2014) and *Whatever Happened to Sex in Scandinavia?* (OCA and Walther Koenig, 2012).

Luiza Proença (Brazil) is a curator, editor and writer. Currently she is assistant curator at Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP). She was associate curator of the 31st Bienal de São Paulo (2014) and was the editor of publications of the 9th Bienal do Mercosul in Porto Alegre (2013). She was assistant curator of the project *The Insides Are on the Outside (O interior está no exterior)*, at Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi (São Paulo, 2011–2013), and one of the curators of the programme for emerging artists in Brazil *Rumos Artes Visuais*, Instituto Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, Belém and Rio de Janeiro (2011–2013).

Oren Sagiv (Israel) is an architect and curator, director of Studio Oren Sagiv, an interdisciplinary studio that has designed numerous projects worldwide focusing on installation architecture, art exhibitions, theatre and dance. The scope of Oren's work ranges from large-scale public projects, such as *Intersection Project* (Prague, 2011) or *Urban Platform* (Tel Aviv, 2014) to smaller scale experimental public interventions. Oren is the chief designer of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, and a professor of architecture and the pedagogical coordinator in the Department of Architecture at Bezalel Academy for Art and Design in Jerusalem.

Benjamin Seroussi (France/Brazil) works as curator, editor and cultural manager. He is associate curator of 31st Bienal de São Paulo. He holds a MA in Sociology (Ecole Normale Supérieure and Ecole de Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales) and a MA in Cultural Management (Sciences-Po). Seroussi was deputy director at Centro da Cultura Judaica (Jewish Cultural Center, São Paulo) from 2009 to 2012. He currently teaches at Escola São Paulo and participates in the revitalisation project of Casa do Povo (People's House), a cultural institution in Bom Retiro, São Paulo. As editor and curator, Seroussi conceived and developed projects such as the publications *Pop'Lab Guillaume-En-Egypte* (2009, with Chris Marker, Annick Rivoire and Toffe) and *Revista 18* (2010-2012, with Michel Laub and Joca Terron Reiners); the exhibitions *Visões de Guerra: Lasar Segall* (2012, with Jorge Schwartz and Marcelo Manzoni) and *Singularities*, *Nira Pereg* (2012, with Sergio Edelsztein); and the *New Jerusalem* project (2011-ongoing, with Eyal Danon) - a transdisciplinary research focusing on new religious movements.

Authors

Moacir dos Anjos (Brazil) has worked as a researcher with Joaquim Nabuco Foundation since 1990, where he coordinates, since 2009, the exhibition programme Politics of Art. He was director of Aloisio Magalhães Museum of Modern Art (MAMAM) in Recife from 2001 to 2006. He was a visiting research fellow at the Transnational Art, Identity and Nation (TrAIN) research centre of the University of the Arts, London, in 2008 and 2009. He was the curator of the Brazilian Pavilion (Artur Barrio) at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011), of the 29th Bienal de São Paulo (2010), of the 30th Panorama da Arte Brasileira (2007) at Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo (MAM-SP), and co-curator of the 6th Mercosul Bienal (2007) in Porto Alegre. His published books include *Local/Global: arte em trânsito* (Zahar, 2005) and *ArteBra Crítica* (Automática, 2010).

Ana Paula Cohen (Brazil) is an independent curator, editor, and writer. She has been a visiting professor at the California College of the Arts, San Francisco (2011-2013), and the co-director of PIESP, an independent program for artists and curators in São Paulo (2013/2014). She was the curator-in-residence at the Center for Curatorial Studies – Bard College, NY (2009/2010), the co-curator for the 28th Bienal de São Paulo – *In Living Contact* (2008), and co-curator of the project *Encuentro Internacional de Medellín 07* (Colombia, 2007). Cohen was the co-founder and director of the project *Istmo – flexible archive* (2004-2007), in São Paulo. She has written for several art publications, concerning the work of artists such as Goldin+Senneby, Erick Beltrán, Mabe Bethônico, Renata Lucas, Lygia Clark, and Cildo Meireles. Cohen is currently working in the project 'Embodied Archeology of Architecture and Landscape' (Tel Aviv, 2013; São Paulo, 2014-2016).

Fabio Cypriano (Brazil) holds a Ph.D. in Communications and Semiotics from the Pontific Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP); his dissertation was about the German choreographer Pina Bausch, in view of which he lived for three years in Berlin, Germany (1997-2000). Professor at PUC-SP since 1995, he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on Art: History, Critique, Curatorship and Journalism. Presently, he is the coordinator of the graduation degree in Art: History, Critique and Curatorship. Art critic and reporter to the *Folha de S. Paulo* newspaper since 2000, he writes for many other national publications such as *ARTE! Brasileiros* and international publications such as

Connaissance des Artes (France), *Frieze* (England), *Flash Art International* (Italy), *The Art Newspaper* (England) and *Atlantica* (Spain). He wrote *Pina Bausch* (Cosac Naify publishers, 2005), among others. He has participated as jury member in various salons and awards, and written monographs about artists such as Joseph Beuys, João Tabarra, Rosângela Rennó and Amilcar Packer, to name a few.

Övül Durmusoglu (Turkey/Germany) is the artistic director of Yama Public Screen Project in Istanbul. Currently, she is working on a long term research project Solar Fantastic developing between Mexico and Turkey. Her educational initiative Sentimental Thinking will be part of 14th Istanbul Biennial's public programme. In 2013 she was the curator of the international contemporary art festival, Sofia Contemporary in Bulgaria named *Near*, *Closer*, *Together: Exercises for a Common Ground*. She organised different programmes and events as a Goethe Institute fellow at Maybe Education and Public Programmes for dOCUMENTA (13). Durmusoglu was among the curatorial collaborators of the 13th Istanbul Biennial in 2013. She is also part of Episodes of the South network initiated by the Goethe-Institute Sao Paulo.

Elvira Dyangani Ose (Spain/Equatorial Guinea/England) is lecturer in Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London, and curator of the eighth edition of the Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art, (GIBCA), in 2015. She was curator of international art at Tate Modern between 2011 and beginning of 2014. At Tate, she took a leading role in developing the museum's holdings of art from Africa and its Diaspora and working closely with the Africa Acquisitions Committee. Prior to Tate, she was curator at the Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno (2004–2006) and at the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo (2006–2008), where she organized several exhibitions including works by, among others, General Idea, Viennese Actionism, Alfredo Jaar, Lara Almárcegui, Ábalos & Herreros and Ricardo Basbaum. She was also the guest curator of the Triennial SUD-Salon Urbain de Douala (2010), in Cameroon, and the artistic director of the third edition of the Rencontres Picha. Lubumbashi Biennial (2013), in Congo.

Marina Fokidis (Greece) is the founding and artistic director of Kunsthalle Athena, which has been presenting several exhibitions, workshops performances and talks since 2010, i.e. *This is Not My Beautiful House* and *This Must Be the Place*. Since 2012 she is also the founding director of *South as a*

State of Mind, a bi-annual art and culture publication, and since 2013 she is an adjunct curator in Schwarz Foundation – Art Space *Pythagorion*. From 2000 to 2008 she served as the co-director of *Oxymoron* a non-profit organisation dedicated to the promotion of contemporary visual art in Greece and on an international level. Marina Fokidis has been recently appointed head of Artistic Office Athens for documenta 14 (2017). In 2011, she was one of the curators of the 3rd Thessaloniki Biennale and she has been the commissioner and the curator of the Greek Pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennale (2003) and one of the curators of the 1st Tirana Biennial (2001).

Anthony Gardner (Austria/England) is associate professor in Contemporary Art History and Theory at the University of Oxford (United Kingdom). He writes extensively on postcolonialism, postsocialism, and exhibition and curatorial histories, and is one of the editors of the MIT Press journal *ARTMargins*. Among his books are *Mapping South: Journeys in South-South Cultural Relations* (Melbourne, 2013), *Politically Unbecoming: Postsocialist Art Against Democracy* (MIT Press, 2015), *Neue Slowenische Kunst* (with Eda Čufer and Zdenka Badovinac, Ljubljana, 2015) and (with Charles Green) *Mega-Exhibitions: Biennials*, *Triennials*, *Documentas* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016).

Ana Gonçalves Magalhães (Brazil) is an art historian, associate professor and curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo (MAC-USP), in charge of the modern art collection of the museum. She was editorial coordinator at Bienal de São Paulo Foundation between 2001 and 2008, and has been a member of the Brazilian Committee of Art History (CBHA) since 2000. She has a degree in History at the State University of Campinas (1992, UNICAMP), a Master's degree in the History of Art and Culture at the same University (1995), and a PhD in Art History and Art Criticism at the University of São Paulo (2000, USP). She is professor at the Graduate Programme of Aesthetics and Art History and at the Museology Graduate Programme at USP. Her most recent research tackles the origins of the modern art collection of MAC-USP, which once belonged to the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo (MAM-SP).

Charles Green (Australia) is professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Melbourne, Australia. He has written *Peripheral Vision: Contemporary Australian Art 1970-94* (Craftsman House, Sydney, 1995) and *The Third Hand:*

Artist Collaborations from Conceptualism to Postmodernism (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2001), and has been an Australian correspondent for *Artforum* for many years. As adjunct senior curator, Contemporary Art, National Gallery of Victoria, he worked as a curator on *Fieldwork: Australian Art 1968-2002* (2002), *world rush_4 artists* (2003), *2004: Australian Visual Culture* (ACMI/NGVA, 2004) and *2006 Contemporary Commonwealth* (ACMI/NGVA, 2006).

Cayo Honorato (Brazil) is a researcher of cultural mediations on the conjunctions and disjunctions between the arts and education. He is a professor at the University of Brasília's Institute of Arts in the Department of Visual Arts. He holds a Doctorate in Education and Philosophy from the University of São Paulo and he is also active in the extra-institutional mediation group, working through social networks.

Manuela Moscoso (Ecuador/Brazil) is a curator who mostly emphasises speculative thinking and actions in order to privilege imagination. Whether organising exhibitions, commissioning or initiating projects, she sees collaboration intrinsic to her practice. Moscoso was the adjunct curator of the 12th Bienal de Cuenca, in Ecuador, and she has recently curated exhibitions in Brazil, Argentina, Spain and United States. Together with Amilcar Packer she runs *Typewriter*, a curatorial programme centre in art writing, and together with Sarah Demeuse she created *Rivet*, a curatorial office investigating notions of deployment, circulation, exercise and resonance.

Fernando Oliva (Brazil) is a researcher, doctoral candidate in Art History at the University of São Paulo (ECA-USP), university teacher at FAAP and curator – part of the curatorial team for the 3rd Bienal da Bahia – *É Tudo Nordeste?* and is an assistant curator at São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP). He acted as curator of the exhibitions *Batalhão de Telegrafistas* (Galeria Jaqueline Martins, 2014), *O Retorno da Coleção Tamagni – Até as Estrelas por Caminhos Difíceis* (MAM-SP, 2012), *Cover = Reencenação + Repetição* (MAM-SP, 2008), *Comunismo da Forma* (Galeria Vermelho, 2007) and *À Chinesa/À la Chinoise* (Microwave, Hong Kong, 2007). Oliva edited the publication of essays and artistic projects *Caderno Videobrasil - Turista/Motorista* (2010). He was the director of curatorship at São Paulo Cultural Centre (CCSP) and projects coordinator at Paço das Artes as well as at Museum of Image and Sound (MIS-SP).

Peter Osborne (England) is Professor of Modern European Philosophy and director of the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy (CRMEP), Kingston University London, and an editor of the British journal *Radical Philosophy*. He was the co-curator of the lecture series making up the Norwegian Representation at the Venice Biennale, 2011. His catalogue essays include contributions to Manifesta 5, Tate Modern, Biennale of Sydney, among other important institutions and cultural events. His books include *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (1995; 2011), *Philosophy in Cultural Theory* (2000), *Conceptual Art* (2002) and, most recently, A*nywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art* (Verso, 2013).

Daniel Rangel (Brazil) is a curator and since 2011 has been the cultural manager and artistic director of the ICCo – Institure for Contemporary Culture, based in São Paulo, Brazil. He was one of the curators for the II Trienal de Luanda (Angola, 2010) and the 17th Bienal de Cerveira (Portugal, 2013). Collaborated with projects developed for the La 11th Bienal de La Habana (Cuba, 2012), the 16th Bienal de Cerveira (2011), the 7ª Bienal Internacional de São Tomé e Príncipe (2013), as well as the 4th Bienal del Fin del Mundo (Argentina, 2014). Rangel is a guest curator of the upcoming 8th Bienal Internacional de Curitiba (2015) and is a member of the International Biennial Association (IBA). Before working at ICCo, he was the director and curator of the SOSO+Cultura (São Paulo, 2011), director of the Direction of Museums of the Secretary of Culture of State of Bahia (2007-2011) and assistant for the board of directors and the curatorship of the Museum of Modern Art of Bahia (MAM-BA) (2010).

Lucy Steeds (England) is a writer, teacher and editor specialised in the history and theory of exhibitions of contemporary art. She manages *Afterall*'s Exhibition Histories book series while co-leading the MRes Art: Exhibition Studies course at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. Her recent publications include the edited anthology *Exhibition*, *for the Documents of Contemporary Art* series (Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2014) and the lead essay in *Making Art Global (Part 2): 'Magiciens de la Terre' 1989* (Afterall Books, 2013). Lucy previously worked in the exhibitions department at Arnolfini Centre for Contemporary Art in Bristol and taught Art History and Theory at the Ruskin School of Art, Oxford.

Anne Szefer Karlsen (Norway) was curator for Lofoten International Art Festival – LIAF 2013 (with Bassam El Baroni and Eva Gónzalez-Sancho) and Associate Curator for Research and Encounters, Biennale Bénin 2012 (Artistic Director Abdellah Karroum). As director of Hordaland Art Centre in Bergen, Norway (2008–2014) she curated several exhibitions and seminars, as well as further developed its residency programme. She initiated, and is Series Editor of, the book series *Dublett* – a book series of twin publications consisting of a new artist book by and an anthology of commissioned texts on contemporary artists (2012–2015) and co-edited *Self-Organised* (Open Editions/Hordaland Art Centre, 2013, with Stine Hebert). Her interests are in artistic and curatorial collaborations as well as developing the language that surrounds art productions of today, linguistically, spatially and structurally.

David Teh (Singapore/Australia) is a writer, curator, art advisor and researcher based at the National University of Singapore, specialising in Southeast Asian contemporary art. After receiving his PhD in Critical Theory from the University of Sydney, Teh worked as an independent curator and critic in Bangkok (2005–2009). More recently he was co-curator of *Unreal Asia* (55. Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, Germany, 2009) and a convenor of *Video Vortex #7* (Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 2011). His latest exhibition was *TRANSMISSION* (Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok, 2014). He is currently working on a book about Thai contemporary art, tentatively entitled *Present Tense*. Teh is also a director of Future Perfect, a gallery and project platform in Singapore.

Credits

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