AUFSÄTZE

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“A very civil idea ...”

Art History, Transculturation, and World-Making – With and Beyond the Nation

I. Prologue

At the Venice Biennale of 1993, the Austrian pavilion featured an audio installation, *Garden Program*, created by the artist Andrea Fraser, that allowed visitors an unusual peep into an important meeting of the Biennale's national commissioners as they debated whether the principle of national representation, the central organizing principle of the world's oldest and most canonical biennial, still had a *raison d'être* in a rapidly globalizing, post-Cold War world.¹ Fraser's ingenious work was a tongue-in-cheek collage of sound clips with recordings from the deliberations surrounding plans for the 45th Biennale di Venezia, the first since the end of the Cold War.² The recordings usher us into a moment of uncertainty, a roomful of confused, contradicting voices, each looking for ways to handle the challenges with which a transformed geopolitical condition confronted the institutions of the art world.³ In their anxiety to be global and therefore in keeping with the times, curators from the more established art centres of the metropolitan West spoke for an inclusion of artists from 'elsewhere' into the Western art system by proposing that existing pavilions be opened to participants from the 'peripheries'

in the Eastern and Southern hemispheres. “A very civil idea” was how Achille Bonito Oliva, the director of the Biennale, described what he further termed a gesture of “cultural hospitality”.⁴ As opposed to such moves that – in an inverted spirit of patriotism – questioned the rationale of a national pavilion, the response of nations from Latin America, or those from Eastern Europe, or Central Asia, newly born following the demise of the Soviet Union, was not entirely surprising. Their spokespersons made a forceful claim to a demarcated, non-shared space, now due to them as independent nations, to be able to showcase their national cultures on an equal footing with Western nations.⁵ In what today has the appearance of a single world that has discarded its former tripartite division, the intimate connection between art and national identity retains its hold over imaginations in diverging, though mutually constitutive ways. While older, metropolitan nations strive to establish their ‘cosmopolitan’ credentials by offering to share their exhibition sites with art from the hitherto neglected backwaters of the globe, ‘latecomers’ in the race for nationhood cling to the view that art bearing exclusive national labels is one effective way of catching up with the present.

II. Art, Nations, Cultures

These positions could perhaps serve as a wedge to break open the idea of the nation, conventionally characterized as a juridical, geo-political entity, and instead to conceive of it as an imagined conceptual realm, not territorially bounded, but one that in the imagination of artists and scholars could both be local and transgress boundaries. How do the debates about the tangled relationship between nations and cultures challenge our disciplines and institutional practices as they urge us to develop new frameworks for our scholarly enterprises? More specifically, how does art history negotiate the tension between national identity and such relationships that break out of national frames and inform memories and visions of so much of artistic and literary production? When art is made to stand for or express allegiance to the nation, what does the art historical life of that entity embody at any given moment in the past or present? Have art and artists been able to outline different modes of engaging with the idea of the nation?

The events of 1989 and their aftermath brought forth a flurry of terms announcing a post-ideological, post-ethnic, post-historical, even post-political condition, while art, at the same juncture, is said to have become fully 'contemporary', that is, an active component of a shared present. The proliferation of biennials, art fairs, and mega-exhibitions in and beyond Euro-America since 1989, that featured works of artists from distant corners of the world, meant that the "the global contemporary", according to Hans Belting, could be characterized as a freely circulating, ahistorical, non-situated, and economically exploitable mass.⁶ Critical responses to such an interpretive framework that unquestioningly links aesthetic changes to the geopolitical shifts of 1989 have since then come from several positions.⁷ The discussion of the contemporary has now shifted from the issue of visibility gained by art from beyond the

West in the exhibition circuits and scholarly accounts of the 'mainstream' to querying the conditions that make such visibility possible.⁸ The new geo-aesthetic maps of globally networked "artworlds",⁹ that figured prominently in the Karlsruhe exhibition curated by Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg, cannot be read as an unproblematic dissolution of hierarchies without examining the nature of relationalities that connect the luminous nodal points distributed across the surface of cartographic representation. Like all signposts, 1989 has not turned out to be consensual; grasping its explanatory message depends on the location of the traveler. The inability to gather from a single viewing position the dispersed elements of a world map has, however, turned into a productive exercise, given the shifts in critical attention that have followed. The euphoria over the forces of globalization expressed in the writings of the early 1990s that celebrated an effortless, even naturalized 'flow' of materials, goods, capital, and human resources, dissolving national and cultural boundaries, has given way in the new millennium to critiques of neoliberal economics and politics, the disregard of human sovereignty, and evasion of environmental responsibility.

For art historians some key questions have been: Must a global art history follow the logic of economic globalization, or does it call for an alternative conception of globality to be able to effectively theorize relationships of connectivity that encompass disparities as well as contradictions and negotiate multiple subjectivities of the actors involved? What are the choices available to artistic producers to negotiate between complicity with or dependence on global capital, and critical initiatives that foster transcultural modes of co-production and sustainability? How can art history enable us to view the historical present as a simultaneity of clashing and conjoining temporalities constituted by their pre-histories?¹⁰ How does it handle issues of com-

measurability or its absence among cultures? How can it translate intellectual resources and insights of regional experiences beyond Euro-America into globally intelligible analyses?

These are some among the many unresolved questions that confront the discipline today as it strives to respond to the challenge of globality. One of the difficulties stems from the slippery quality of the well-worn term 'global' that has been used in several and diverging ways, as for instance to characterize art history as a discipline to be practiced uniformly across the globe, one that would subsume 'local' art. Alternatively, the epithet 'global' signals towards an inclusive discipline – also labelled world art history – that would encompass different world cultures, or that searches for the lowest common denominator to hold together humans across time and space who have been making art for millennia "because our biological nature has led us to do so".¹¹ The term is equated at times with conceptual imperialism, at others with multicultural eclecticism. Hans Belting's definition of "global art" to characterize those contemporary artistic productions emanating from the non-Western world, which become publicly accessible through exhibitions and mega-shows, continues to inform the discussions on what could define the contours of a global art history, namely a focus on artworlds post 1989.¹²

A further source of disarray is the circumstance that the terms 'global' and 'world' are more often than not used as interchangeable, when conceptually they need to be distinguished from each other. Both terms are related to the ubiquitous phenomenon of globalization. 'Global' (from globe) is an abstraction to describe a space on which globalization plays itself out, imagined as a surface, a sphere, a zone of networks and mobility, whose potential could unfold anywhere. In contrast, the 'world' stands for an inhabited place, spells situatedness, is marked by lived features, memories, relationships that provide a context, while they undergo

change, prompt mobility or restrict it and even produce exile. Worlds are something we carry while traversing the globe and negotiating its scales.

The notion of world-making that figures in the title of this essay has featured prominently in literary studies where it has at times been used to conceptualize language or signs, understood as autonomous structures upon which experience is founded and which therefore exist prior to the world.¹³ While my use of the term as a tool of criticality departs from influential theories such as those of Nelson Goodman or Ansgar Nünning, it responds in part to the impulse that comes from the work of Pheng Cheah who, by conceptualizing the world as a "temporal" rather than an exclusively spatial category, endows it with a capacity to rethink the normativity of neo-liberal globalization.¹⁴ "Literature's worldly causality",¹⁵ as Cheah terms it, can plausibly be extended to art production that, like literary creations, makes alternative imaginations possible and accessible. More importantly, the idea of world-making needs to be anchored as a perspective with which to shape disciplinary practice – here the reference is to art history – where the relationship between "archive and vision" is itself an ethical responsibility.¹⁶ Art history as a mode of world-making, I argue in the following, is both a site and an active participant in the production of knowledge, both historical as well as of the present, and works in tandem with other sites and institutional practices such as curating, collecting, displaying. Pheng Cheah's move to connect the idea of the world to that of cosmopolitanism in view of its potential to "embrace the whole of deterritorialized humanity" overlooks two crucial questions.¹⁷ First, it does not address the wider reality of a supposedly "deterritorialized" and increasingly networked world that at the same time is characterized by a proliferation of security fences, militarized borders, and barricades to seal mobility and migration – in other words: a world that under-

goes a re-territorialization in the wake of dissolving borders and media connectivity. More fundamentally, to advocate cosmopolitanism as normative practice without questioning the understanding of culture it is premised on risks a decline into a de-historicized multiculturalism that liberal societies today put forward as a political imperative and a managerial mode to deal with diversity (as I discuss in a later section of this article). World-making as a critical, self-reflexive process as well as a practice of art history can only deliver its promise when based on an understanding of culture as unbounded by political and territorial formations of the modern nation-state and one that is capacious enough to encompass human and more-than-human worlds. The concept transculture/transculturation that forms the keystone of a critical globality enables such a disciplinary practice – its genealogy and ramifications will be discussed in the following sections.

The epithet ‘world’, when used to qualify art history, refers in most cases to an art history expansively charted to bring the ‘world’ in its fold within a framework of concepts that go back to Immanuel Kant and Latin Antiquity, and whose histories and underpinnings remain unquestioned. Such an orientation makes world art history merely one more variant of a master narrative. For expansion, as a methodological and pedagogical move, does not by its analytical intent undermine the frameworks it seeks to transgress, or at best does so only tangentially.¹⁸ This is a lesson to be learnt from precedents of a century ago, when art history assumed a similar world-configuring function while seeking to produce authoritative knowledge about nations, cultures, and the world. A look at this particular genealogy of world-making in art history directs our attention to those epistemic foundations that continue to shape our scholarly practice: the exercise in unpacking these is an urgent one in contemporary times as the discipline strives once more to become ‘global’.

III. Genealogical Routes

The intent to bring the ‘world’ into the purview of art history is not a new one. The transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, which coincided with the revitalisation of art history as a scientific discipline, was marked by similar moves to make art history inclusive of regions beyond the West. German art historical writings in particular had espoused a *Weltkunstgeschichte* as “a history of art of all times and peoples”,¹⁹ a historiographical perspective that today is being upheld as an example of a cosmopolitan moment in art history, one that is claimed to have prefigured the present ‘global turn’ in the discipline and its institutions.²⁰ It is worth taking a closer, critical look at this current in art historiography in order to understand the founding premises of the discipline that continue to be largely unquestioned even as it seeks to expand its range of vision. As the nineteenth century transited to the twentieth, art history was confronted with the challenges posed by the globality of that particular moment, a challenge not dissimilar to that of our present. Art history’s effort to redefine itself as a scientific discipline – as a *Kunstwissenschaft* rather than *Kunstgeschichte* – was viewed as a new orientation that could offer a key to grappling with the ‘world’ as a category.²¹ *Weltkunstgeschichte*, though it meant different things to different people, was intended to equip art history with a series of aesthetic categories and explanatory methods that would be able to encompass a new and ever-increasing diversity of objects the discipline was confronted with. The physical presence and continuous flow of objects and archaeological finds from other regions of the world into European contexts had brought forth a fresh challenge – to museums, curators, publics – and not least to a discipline fixated aesthetically on classical antiquity. Museums of different kinds functioned as a primary site where viewers in the West could encounter non-European objects of art, and from where

persuasive narratives of sameness and difference could be constructed and disseminated. A further consideration animating the concern to write an art history as the story of all regions and peoples of the world, and going back in time to the beginnings of humanity, was to find a way in which art could work as a criterion to register the humanity of its creator – to be able to locate human beings on the evolutionary ladder beyond animals. In other words, the search for the origins of art was equally linked to the tangled question, whether the earliest forms of art were a biological or a cultural phenomenon.

For the proponents of *Weltkunstgeschichte*, art theory, by drawing on ethnology, would be able to transcend its Eurocentric bias, abandon its speculative character, and come closer to the spirit of the natural sciences – this would in fact lead up to a revitalization of the humanities. For the art historian Ernst Grosse (1862–1927), ethnology was an intrinsically comparative science as it investigated the world's various “peoples” or “nations” in the totality of their environmental and socio-cultural settings.²² While the prime purpose of *Kunstwissenschaft*, according to him, was to study the systematic relationship between “art and culture” crucial to the understanding of any art form – for which comparative studies of all cultures of the world were needed in order to avoid the trap of theorizing on the basis of a few selected examples from Western Europe – such comparisons were methodological contributions only ethnology could provide.

Proponents of *Weltkunstgeschichte* argue that all cultures or peoples produce ‘art’: objects earlier designated as curiosities, trophies, idols, are now all subsumed under the category of art and seen as scientific data requiring documentation according to taxonomic principles. In *Anfänge der Kunst*, Grosse recognizes art or aesthetic sensibility as a human universal, a criterion to distinguish humans from animals. Universalism goes hand in hand with cultural relativism, that is, the differences in taste, development and aesthe-

tic feeling he observed and that required finding the way to explaining these. Both Grosse and, following him, the prolific though controversial Viennese art historian Josef Strzygowski (1862–1941) espoused an anti-humanist position that stemmed from a critique of classical philology, to privilege material objects as a subject for art history.²³ An emphasis on materiality was fully in keeping with archaeological findings and the collecting practices of the time. Based primarily in the new ethnological museums, the examination of objects was considered by an ethnographically informed art history to show the ‘objective’ route to the study of humanity. Collections like those of Berlin's Museum of Ethnology (“Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde”, back then) were described as a laboratory for studying the world's cultures through the objects these cultures produced. Here, factors of geography, climate, and customs came into play. They were meant to reveal ‘underlying principles’ that would then allow for the formulation of laws of artistic development – this included form, taste, and talent. To do so, Darwinian principles of evolution were harnessed to provide the explanatory framework for cultural difference. The terms used in the discussion of cultural differences and of attributes of different people across the world are instructive. *Völker* (peoples) is the most frequently used; the term subsumes both physical and cultural characteristics, and it is used interchangeably with ‘race’ and ‘nation’.²⁴ Together they add up to a concept of culture, enclosed within the territorial formation of the nation that subsumes race under cultural difference and ethnicity. Having to grapple with the complexity of humanity, in this context the idea of race went beyond skin colour and blood ties, to be conflated with climate, beliefs, habits, morals, and aesthetics. The nexus of race – nation – culture, of which art, the aesthetic domain, is an articulation and a marker, becomes one of the main planks of modern art history, a premise that underlies many of its ‘classics’, as those authored by Jacob Burckhardt, Gottfried

Semper, or Heinrich Wölfflin.²⁵ Writings on world art abound with observations about “nationaler Geschmack” (national taste) or “nationale Geschmacksdifferenzen”: about Germans who are fonder of music while the French love form and colour, hence painting and sculpture, or that the drawings of the Aborigines of Australia owed their high artistic quality to the developed, sharp visual sense and finely tuned motoric capacities of peoples who lived by hunting and gathering.²⁶ In the discussion of such differences – as well as of the shifts within fields of artistic endeavour across time, that is, the study of national taste that undergoes transformation – it became important to find an explanatory paradigm adequate to comprehending stylistic change. Here a ‘developmental history of art’ comes into play, corresponding to evolutionary classificatory schemes that typologized the world’s cultures ranging from ‘savage’ to ‘civilized’ (*Naturvölker* and *Culturvölker*). Such an evolutionary model gets replicated in art history when elucidating the concept of style, which developed into a convenient tool to coordinate and stabilize mobility and metamorphoses of forms.

The discipline carried many of its founding premises as it migrated beyond Europe to the colonies and young post-colonial nations, where these values were appropriated, reconfigured, and reaffirmed, as each of these assiduously cultivated its own narrative of cultural uniqueness. Thus, the most globally prevalent form of art historical writing we have inherited is a narrative framed within discrete cultural units – be they national or civilizational – and one that subsumes experiences of cultural braidedness under the taxonomic categories of ‘influence’, ‘borrowing’, or ‘transfer’. The idea of stylistic development, now firmly anchored within art history, implies a scheme that is artificially maintained by attending to a geographic location as self-contained, and by suppressing the plurality of agency and the circulation of objects, forms, and practices.

Any move to ‘globalize’ the discipline needs to start by rethinking these epistemic moorings and the values they transport. An understanding of globality conceptualized as transcultural can serve as an enabling mode of criticality, by its virtue of questioning the definitions of culture that were formed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries within the contexts of empire and nation-building. A conceptualization of culture as both identifiable with and a mode to access a fixed and *a priori* national identity, shaped the formation of disciplines in the humanities, including the more inclusive shades of art history, together with the institutional structures – universities, museums, archives – that prescribed the frameworks of education, research, and the formation of citizens. More radically, culture conceived of as territorially bounded, monolingual and ethnically homogenous when conscripted to the cause of the nation, has informed extreme forms of nationalism, fascism, and racism that have left their scars on history, but are by no means a thing of the past, as their resurfaced *avatars* of the twenty-first century constantly remind us. When applied to societies of the past and present, the discursive category of ‘culture’ has invariably existed in tension with the unruly and contradictory trends generated by mobility and extended contacts that have characterized regions and social collectives across the globe since the earliest historical epochs. The terms ‘transculture’/‘transculturation’/‘transculturality’ are an explicit critique of this notion, as the prefix ‘trans-’ enables an emancipation from this concept.

IV. Transculturation

The genealogy of the transcultural – or transculturation – also goes back to the political context of the mid-twentieth century. Politically this was a time when fascism and militarism had engulfed much of Europe and drew the world

into its destructive fold, while in the colonized peripheries, anti-colonial movements – that saw the building of national cultures together with the fashioning of self-determining political structures – were already a source of ferment. More concretely, the year 1940 saw the publication of the book *Contrapunteo Cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (1881–1969), who first coined the term ‘transculturation’ (*transculturación*).²⁷ In his study of sugar and tobacco cultures in post-colonial Cuba, Ortiz saw transculturation as a process with an explanatory potential that went beyond the existing term ‘acculturation’ in that it helped reconceptualize processes of adaptation as transformation, as long term processes that unfolded through extended contacts and relationships between cultures. The context in which this investigation was undertaken – one marked by the changing geo-politics of empires, the failure of liberal democracies across the world that coincided with the defeat of progressive forces in Cuba, together with the emergence of assertive voices in locations affected by colonialism – endowed the notion of transculturation from the start with a critical potential that, as I will argue, makes it particularly relevant for grappling with crises of the present. Ortiz’s historical analysis of the creation of national identity in Cuba unfolds as a critique of the cultural representations of colonialism and its strategies of rule, as a dismantling of the superior claims of Western modernity that at the same time consciously eschews an idea of the nation as a site of ‘authenticity’ or a haven of purity. The anti-imperialist stance of the work has been developed within the framework of an emerging nation, a factor that accounts for the particularities of the book’s structure and its literary qualities that to a reader today might come across as an idiosyncratic use of allegory in a work of history; yet, the author remained very much in tune with his times when consciously deploying the literary modes that characterized writings on the nation in the mid-twentieth

century.²⁸ A tension familiar to us today runs through the work that, on the one hand, sets out to recover the voices and agency of the disarticulated; and on the other, to uncover dynamic processes of transculturation that followed from migration, multilingualism, and ethnic plurality and were constitutive of the identities of those inhabiting the “imagined community”.²⁹ Ortiz confronts these processes with attempts to stabilize their unruliness through representations of an integrated cultural unit, cast as the bounded space of the nation and the ideological basis for all fixed identities. The invention of a past uncontaminated by cultural contact is analysed by him in terms that point to the workings of power within groups that cut across the colonizer-colonized divide, a perspective that avoids the trap of thinking in binaries that has characterized both nationalist positions and much of postcolonial analysis during the later decades of the twentieth century. In other words, Ortiz’s study is indeed imbued with a political rationale to challenge national frameworks, a dimension frequently overlooked in the reception of his work.

In his preface to the 1995 edition of Ortiz’s book, Fernando Coronil draws our attention to conditions in which the book circulated and that determined its reception – a world divided into capitalist and socialist blocs; to these a third group of ‘developing’ nations was appended, who negotiated either of the two paths to arrive at modernity.³⁰ Ortiz’s book, he writes, “did not quite fit the terms of this polarized debate. It was unconventional in form and content ... and it proposed neither unambiguous solutions nor a blueprint for the future”.³¹ The world today presents us with new conditions for an engagement with the core concepts developed by Ortiz: the dissolution of older polarities, coupled with fresh tensions within national formations following globalization, intensified migration, and a backlash of xenophobic nationalism and transnational fundamentalisms. In the recent years, the transcultural has become a buzzword of

sorts, adopted by a range of scholars in different, at times loose and not always consistent ways, and framed by different disciplinary contexts. Not all of them respond to or even acknowledge the ground-breaking relevance of the reflections proffered by Ortiz.³²

Ortiz's narrative of Cuban history is that of a nation composed of an array of human groups, from Indians to migrants "from the four quarters of the globe", enslaved and voluntary, who lived in conditions marked by instability, violence as well as creativity. Its content resonates with many of the upheavals of the present world, ensuing from the crisis of liberal democracies and the crumbling of those structures of modernity that had convincingly postulated a firm nexus between concepts of the nation and culture. More than a quarter of a century following the end of the Cold War, earlier polarities have now been overwritten by urgent contemporary ones: migration from West Asia and Africa has breached even recent divisions between the Global North and the Global South, while the move to firm up the boundaries of the West – the European Union and the United States – echoes Ortiz's analysis of political and cultural boundaries as artifices of power. The presence of large immigrant communities in the midst of Western societies has generated discussions on citizenship and its nexus with culture: the meanings of citizenship as a juridical category that secures rights within a national framework while at the same time working as a tool for the bio-political regulation of illegality, have been declared to be insufficiently theorized.³³ In contemporary post-colonial societies too – India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Iran, and most recently, Israel – narratives of citizenship and belonging are ceaselessly being debated, reconstituted, and endangered, as they take on majoritarian hues and punitive forms, while forcing allegiance to an officially fabricated cultural past and a synoptic vision of the future. These issues assume an urgency for art that can function as a domain of symbolic action,

as an arena of political and creative practices, of affirmative, performative citizenship rather than a simply reactive aesthetic. By constructing imaginative possibilities that await potential realization, by envisaging a political horizon for the subject and community that challenges the monologic exclusivity, effectively unpacked in *Cuban Counterpoint*, on which dominant versions of collective belonging are based, artistic practice can "open up transformative potential of dislocation that decenters the very basis of national identity".³⁴ A transcultural understanding of cultural belonging thus from its outset it functioned as a lens and an analytical frame that, as it enters the space of present, has the potential of being adjusted, expanded, and recalibrated.

The opening section of *Cuban Counterpoint* introduces the reader to the "most important figures of the history of Cuba": sugar and tobacco; in the following section, we are then told that the "real history" of Cuba is constituted by the "intermeshed transmigrations of peoples".³⁵ The insistence on the nexus between objects and practices that constitute reference points on a field where a constellation of relationalities unfolds, was alleged to have created a "strange effect" on the readers of the book. We encounter sugar and tobacco as both objects and subjects of history, as products of human activity but also as agents in their own right that empower and constrain humans. Coronil describes Ortiz's method as a form of "counterfetishism" that reins in the "fetish power" of material commodities as a poetic means to appreciate the force it exercises over the imagination, much in the same way as Walter Benjamin did.³⁶ A close reading of this dense narrative that playfully oscillates between literary and empirical modes does reveal an underlying "counterhumanism" that underpins Ortiz's critique of modernity, a current that breaks down the ontological distinction between subjects and objects in favour of a distributive agency across persons and things. It anticipates by decades Bruno Latour's arguments challeng-

ing a post-Enlightenment naturalization of the ontological separation of humans and nonhumans – and with it shows the way to an expansive notion of ‘trans-culture’ that can breathe life into those categories reified by strategies of purification.

By bringing materiality to the heart of any investigation of culture, transculturation in this expanded sense takes us to ongoing discussions within art history, caught since its disciplinary formation in an uneasy relationship between the intransigent materiality of its objects and the dematerialization of meaning that in turn has effected different kinds of fragmentation cutting through the field.³⁷ Systems of value built into the discipline since its inception classify its objects as ‘fine’ or ‘decorative art’, ethnological object, craft, curiosities, or articles of mass consumption. Following from these taxonomies, that are also hierarchies, the objects of art historical investigation are relegated to different sites of display and storage, according to the often not very consistent logic of genres and regional labels. Is Delft chinaware art or an object of everyday use? Does a Fatimid rock crystal, mounted and transformed into a Venetian reliquary, qualify as Islamic or Christian art? Why is a painting by Cézanne a more privileged subject of analysis, considered to possess a greater iconological and semantic complexity, than an ivory box? The category of style mentioned earlier prevents, through its stabilizing function, an engagement with the endless metamorphoses of objects and forms. And finally, institutions that house and display these objects are confronted with the challenge of how to translate transcultural lives of things into a curatorial and pedagogical practice that can effectively make a polyphonous object narrate its many stories, or how to find ways of naming and locating that avoid freezing its identity within a myth of origins. An important plank of an emergent transculturally framed art history is to use connected material cultures to unsettle many narratives of style and civilizatio-

nal uniqueness, in scholarship as well as in the expanding world of curation and display. The instability introduced by the transcultural object within the ordered world of museum labels that once sought to allow a visitor, for instance, to read a ‘culture’ off a thing in a glass case, has already begun to suggest pathways for scholarship and curating, with a view to tackling the question of how matter shapes aesthetics and culture.

V. Agenda for a Transcultural Art History

Transculturation as a perspective for art history builds upon – and this might seem to be a truism – the groundwork of theoretical approaches of the past few decades, such as the linguistic-cum-cultural turn, gender studies, and postcolonial studies, whose critical insights it responds to, refines, and takes in different directions. Transcultural approaches owe a significant debt to the critical edge of such postcolonial studies that questioned master-narratives, claims to universality and diffusionist paradigms wherein culture is seen to flow from metropolitan centres to absorptive peripheries. Yet, a transcultural approach also moves beyond certain strains within postcolonial studies that, through a flattening of Saidian and Foucauldian arguments, postulate epistemic violence as an absolute principle. By eschewing the use of overly generalized concepts – notably the overused notion of hybridity – that have become straightjackets into which every mode of relationality gets forced, transculturation has worked to find a more precise and differentiated conceptual apparatus to plausibly describe and grasp the specificity and dynamics of global relationships. More importantly, by placing the opposition of the colonizer and the colonized within a larger matrix of encounters, the transcultural perspective does not adhere to a national framing of its objects of investigation.³⁸ And yet, the critical edges of a number of

finely tuned postcolonial approaches continue to dynamize transcultural analyses, such as the urge to ‘decolonize’ disciplines and institutions by questioning the assumptions on which they were founded, practised, and continue to function;³⁹ or to move beyond critiques of representation and to look for the fragility and fractures within Eurocentric constellations, to read representations against the grain.⁴⁰ That a self-reflexive combination of the two perspectives can be a creative process, has been established by the work of Christian Kravagna, whose concept of a *Transmoderne* joins the early beginnings of the notion of transculturation to modernist art practices, whose connections he brings to light.⁴¹

Today the agenda of writing a transcultural history of art has grown in complexity as it faces constellations of the present: this has brought forth its set of routine orthodoxies in thinking about cultural difference, following the logic of economic globalization and multicultural inclusiveness. Today we experience multiculturalism as a progressive political imperative in liberal democracies, one that is characterized by an affirmation of cultural diversity as value per se. It celebrates cultural difference as a form of plenitude in which diversity exists side by side, with little interaction or dynamism among the diverse elements. Multicultural inclusion frequently results in an extended horizontal breadth that tends to de-historicize and flatten out contradictory relationships amongst those brought together in the name of tolerance and inclusiveness. In the final section of this essay, I will return to the question of multiculturalism and its implications for art production and curation, and to distinguishing the multicultural from the transcultural.

Here I wish to draw attention to the methodological implications of prevailing positions that celebrate the assimilation of cultural diversity in contemporary art as a novel feature, held to belong to the present alone. Responding to the generally elated mood engendered by the vision of a

borderless and shared art world, Okwui Enwezor speaks of an “intense proximity” specific to the contemporary art world that has over the past two and a half decades made sites and mechanisms available for exploring the diversity of post-identitarian discourses.⁴² Elaborating on what he termed the “poetics of ethnography”, Enwezor argued that ethnography of the last century, marked as it was by a “voracious appetite for radical alterity”, presupposed a measure of distance between near and far – a distance that was both spatial and temporal between the modern societies and the objects that came under its ethnographic lens. Contemporary globalization has now brought us to a historic moment where “there are arguably no more outside cultures to discover or faraway places to explore”. This collapse of distance – “intense proximity” – allows you to shift from the idea of national space, enclosed by borders that constitute it as physical location, to “frontier space” that constantly assumes new morphologies – the local, national, transnational, geo-political, denominational, contaminated etc.⁴³

There are several variants of such a form of presentism, some more ahistorical than the others, yet each one works in insidious ways to re-affirm earlier canons, such as those of modernism, whose monocultural authority continues to be accepted as given. Instead of positing a progression from the modern to the contemporary in terms of collapsing distance, a transcultural perspective could be more usefully deployed to examine the specific dynamic between distance and proximity that operates within individual and different historical periods and at different sites across the globe. Further, it urges us to ask what the collapsing of difference that is induced by contemporary conditions of migration, travel, and media connectivity entails in terms of transactions with cultural difference? What are the new hierarchical modes that are created to deal with these? Where can we observe continuities within disciplinary and institutional hierarchical principles of the last century and this one,

and which new boundaries are created following the dissolution of older ones? Underlying these questions is the assumption that negotiating cultural difference is not an aberrant or incidental feature of artistic production in earlier historical periods; rather we need to test the hypothesis that takes it to be a structural, even normative characteristic for any period we investigate.

Postcolonial analyses have paid intensive attention to questions of modernity as well as artistic and literary modernism in colonial contexts. Transcultural Studies builds on much of this groundwork, yet it also seeks to avoid an overemphasis on polarities and oppositional structures by paying greater attention to multiple relationalities that unfold beyond the colonizer-colony divide; this involves finding ways of remapping experiences and experiments of the art world, by attending to scale, to multiple sites of knowledge, and to shifting perspectives.⁴⁴ Examining a generative agonism between power and resistance that often formed a driving force behind much modernist art also helps in highlighting the often highly ambivalent character of modernity under the aegis of colonialism.

In the following section, I hope to show how a transculturally framed art history can help uncover synchronicity or coevalness, where belatedness or derivative practices were assumed. By looking beyond linear explanatory models, the concept of transculturation involves more than simply adding missing artists to an existing canon. Looking at modernism as a global, transcultural process also urges us to take a closer look at regional singularities, to underline that transcultural interaction did not follow a straight, single, or foreseeable path. Instead, we become aware of different approaches to or modalities of transcultural interaction, so that we need to study a combination of comparison and entanglement.

VI. Transcultural Modernism – Connections and Comparisons

In an earlier attempt to take stock of what a transcultural art history might address, I had sketched a view of artistic modernism ‘from the peripheries’ as part of a move to question its monolithic nature and to argue for an expanded definition that would include the artistic experiments of modernist artists in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.⁴⁵ The engagement with visual practices beyond the metropolitan centres of the West meant asking: How is our understanding of modernist and avant-garde art practices reconfigured if viewed as emanating from networks of multiple centres across the globe, adding Bombay, Shanghai, Rio de Janeiro, Tehran, Seoul, or Tokyo to Paris, Berlin, and New York? To what extent can we explore transcultural fields of artistic production as emerging from a multi-polar and yet entangled modernism that was generated in Europe and beyond, often cutting across the colonizer/colony divide to connect with critical currents that were pan-Asian, too?⁴⁶ Recasting artistic modernism as a transcultural process involves more than bringing neglected currents into an existing canon; it means questioning the foundations upon which the notion of the modern has been constructed and to undermine the narrative that hinges upon a dichotomy between the West and the non-West and makes the latter as necessarily derivative, or views it as a series of distant, peripheral, or ‘alternative’ modernisms. Instead of coining a host of modernisms – Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan –, all understood as parallel streams that never meet and bring in national or ethnic units through the back door, a transcultural view of modernism regards these as enmeshed with the others, which allows us to begin asking to what extent such entanglement was constitutive for a Western avant-garde. The recent years have seen burgeoning research from several regional perspectives that have uncovered vast amounts of material from sites across

the globe – Cairo, Tehran, Ljubljana, Mexico City, Rio, Mumbai – undermining once and for all a story of belatedness, of centres and peripheries.⁴⁷ The task that remains – admittedly no easy one – is to draw these individual stories out of their isolated ‘areas’ and plot them on a common matrix that would show connections, uncover synchronicity and coevalness, refusal and rejection, and not least, rewrite the story of European modernism by situating it within the larger, complex political and cultural determinations of colonialism and global connections that made its emergence possible.

The following paragraphs outline – in necessarily condensed form – a direction towards framing the study of artistic modernism as a field of transculturation, composed of many histories that connect and diverge, where connections and comparisons both serve as useful tools, and perhaps a safeguard against flattening regional experiments, strategies, and subject-positions. Let us take as our starting point the narratives of European artistic modernism. Art historical accounts of modernism refer consensually to those experiments of the early twentieth century driven by movements such as Cubism, Surrealism, or Abstract Expressionism – the concept of the Avant-Garde – as having effected a radical breakthrough by undermining established systems and languages of representation, while they reined these movements to an institutional critique of academies and entrenched art practices. Even as a large number of writings in recent years have critically reviewed the claims to universality built into existing accounts of modernist art, questioning their eurocentrism, teleological structures, and gender ideologies, the critical discussion of artistic modernism has remained confined within a bounded domain of ‘art’ and individual artists, or at best has forged links with related movements in literature or music. Uncovering the transcultural foundations of artistic modernism calls for overcoming this taxonomic principle of separation, itself a product of mod-

ernist ideology, and for a plotting of art production onto a historical field that it shared with related phenomena, all engaged in producing artistic knowledge about the world, and in doing so through close material relationships with migrant objects. In other words, modernist experiments of the Avant-Garde were a nodal-point in an Ariadne-like web, to borrow from Bruno Latour, making up a shared matrix of transactions through which art and art historical knowledge about the world and about the sites of display were produced. This means that the modernist artistic revolution was coterminous and entangled with at least two other phenomena that have been relegated to distinct institutional and scholarly spaces: the building of ethnological collections and the writing of an art history of the world, *Weltkunstgeschichte*, discussed earlier in this article. What are the fresh insights that could be gained by bringing these strands together in a shared, braided history? Artistic movements such as Cubism or Surrealism have been frequently brought in conjunction with ethnological objects, collected by artists or that they viewed in museums: such encounters between artists and objects have been singled out to produce a discourse about the “affinities” between the “tribal and the modern” that became the pivot of the exhibition at the MoMA curated by William Rubin in 1984.⁴⁸ The scathing critique of the exhibition’s curatorial concept from different quarters brought with it a hardening of a modern institutional separation of the spaces where ‘high art’ and ‘ethnological objects’ were conserved, displayed, and thereby vested with signification and value: the two rarely met, apart from the one brief, notorious moment at the MoMA in 1984.

One among the many faces of modernity is the acquisitive quality of collecting – by colonial administrators, archaeologists, anthropologists, missionaries, travellers, scholars – that has meant that since the Renaissance hordes of objects from all over the world filled the repositories of ethnographic collections and museums.

Travelling, buying, and collecting acquired a particularly feverish character in the wake of colonialism, driven by the concern that modernization was leading to a rapid disappearance of remnants of the past that needed to be safeguarded and preserved. In its delineation of a 'developmental history of art' corresponding to evolutionary classification schemes to characterize the world's cultures from the 'savage' to the 'civilized', as discussed above, the practitioners of a *Weltkunstgeschichte* provided the world of art with a conceptual language to describe these objects. It is in this context that the concept of the 'primitive' was coined, a term that became a key concept of modernist culture at the turn of the century – artistic modernism's alter-ego as Kobena Mercer put it.⁴⁹

The primitive was deployed in the ethnology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – and subsequently appropriated by world art histories – to designate the *Naturvölker* of the present, that is, those who were still living through a stage of the past in the full light of the present and could serve as an available model to understand humanity's phased cultural development. These included the Aborigines of Australia, peoples of Africa and Oceania, or of native America – living societies of the present, colonized by Western powers, yet said to be frozen in an immemorial past: "living fossils" was how they were described by Grosse, whose *Anfänge der Kunst* is entirely devoted to this group. Selectively applying the label to living societies meant, for instance, that objects from Mexico or Central America were excluded from the category of the primitive, even though they were present in European collections long before those of Africa and Oceania. A likely explanation might be that the Inca and Aztec societies had long been destroyed and could no longer serve as living symbols of primitive simplicity that was subject to ethnological enquiry into humanity's past or aesthetic idealization. The mobile materiality of the objects made their reframing as objects

of knowledge possible – of knowledge produced by scholars, curators, and artists. They also figured in a central way within foundation myths of modernist creativity.

Among the most well-known and firmly anchored foundational myths about modern art – without which no art history survey book is complete – is that which tells the story of how creative energies were generated through the encounter between artists and the primitive, about how objects – particularly masks and statues, a category of objects often brought together under the label of 'fetish' – have been catalytic in releasing those energies that then effected a radical breakthrough in the language of form.⁵⁰ Foundation myths of this kind encapsulate the double-edged quality of primitivism: they transmit an expression of fear, ugliness, and terror that then gets purified by the facture of the modernist artist. This meant that the primitive could function as a source of new energies; this double-edged quality makes it open to transculturation and accounts for the global resonance it acquired.

A transcultural approach to such inherited narratives cannot stop at simply debunking them as Eurocentric constructs. It might be more productive to uncover the paths through which knowledge about the objects and their producers and collectors actually travelled. The authorities – anthropologists, art historians, curators, or artists – who read these objects as articulations of a mystical, preconscious mentality depended in turn for their knowledge on another group of border crossers or cultural brokers, such as missionaries or colonial administrators located in Africa – or ethnologists such as Leo Frobenius – with whom they were in contact and whose information carried the authority of being first-hand information.⁵¹ The attitudes of these different actors to colonial practices might have varied, in that some of these information brokers had adopted critical stances to overt acts of colonial appropriation or violence, yet they did so without questioning the epistemological foundations

of the knowledge they were complicit in generating. What they shared in common was the concern to overlook the transformatory effects of colonialism on the societies through which they travelled. Instead they were determined to search for that which was still untouched by the 'foreign'; from here ensued narratives about the native mind, a mentality that was outside of rationality, entrenched in myth.⁵² The fetish came to serve as a code to access the musealized object in Western collections, as its meanings and uses disseminated and were picked up by academic anthropology, psychology, and world art history.⁵³ Such interweaving of bodies of knowledge is seminal to the production and subsequent readings of art works.

The intense discussions provoked by the 1984 exhibition at the MoMA that postulated certain 'affinities' between 'primitive' objects and a modern aesthetic, hinged largely on a critique of the 'primitive' as a Western construct and of its separation and abstraction of objects from their context. Denial of history, of "coevalness" to that context, following from Johannes Fabian's *Time and the Other*, was the most frequently heard critical argument, as the curators of the display did not bother to provide information about the provenience and historical situatedness of the objects classified as primitive; they were therefore abstracted from time and history.⁵⁴ Indeed, the notion of coevalness can now take another dramatic turn that emanates from the following paradox: while information brokers like those mentioned above set out to search for those aspects of 'primitive' cultures that could be construed as immemorial or unchanging, the vast numbers of objects that we associate with modernism were in fact – as recent research has brought forth – participants within intricate commercialized collection networks that connected the French and Belgian colonies with art dealers and gallerists in Europe and from there to New York in the first two decades of the twentieth century. This is a long and tortuous story

involving collectors, dealers, theoreticians, and critics – parts of which were narrated by Yaëlle Biro in the exhibition *African Art. New York and the Avant-Garde* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2013–2014). It can now be affirmed that so much of 'primitive' art was commissioned and produced in the colonies during the early twentieth century for Western markets, whose thirst for it appeared unquenchable, making these various elements part of a single nexus of modernity and commodification; rather than survivals of a disappearing past to be salvaged, they were actors in a shared and entangled historical present.⁵⁵

A further dimension that restores coevalness to the connections between Europe and other continents, and relativizes the narrative of the primitive and the modern from a non-European perspective, is the emergence – in the wake of colonialism – of a prolific domain of art production in the colonies of Africa and Oceania that specialized not in recreating the primitive, but in more modern genres. Here too, a growing market for such genres as well as the spread of European images through media such as newspapers, journals, and popular literary productions, were decisive factors in this transcultural enterprise. The Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum in Cologne possesses a collection of such objects that had been assembled by its director, the anthropologist Julius Lips and author of the book *The Savage hits back*.⁵⁶ Mainly drawings and carved wood figurines, these objects – at an immediate, superficial level – can be read as a response of the oppressed native to his colonial master using the weapon of caricature. A *longue durée* investigation can help place such a genre of art objects within a longer history of transcultural contacts between Portuguese traders and the inhabitants of West Africa.⁵⁷ From the perspective of modernism, it is of interest to explore both the multiple sites as well as the different local strategies of image production. The objects collected by Lips still await a transcultural exploration – many of their caricatural forms, for example

a figurine of Queen Victoria or one of a young couple walking their dog, speak of an interaction with genres and materials, especially caricature or photographs, that had most likely migrated to the colonies accompanying colonial modernity.⁵⁸ In the early twentieth century, such artistic production was institutionalized at its site as 'modern' art, made identifiable through the oeuvre of individual artists, such as, to name one example, Thomas Onajeje Odulate, whose works too can be seen in the Rautenstrauch-Joest collection.⁵⁹ These, however, do not figure in discussions on modernist art, but have come instead to be labelled 'tourist art', after a market of buyers to which many of the artists initially responded.

Modernist art and art history, two faces of the same coin, crossed many borders as they migrated across the globe, including to those sites beyond the modern West that were cast as locations of the primitive, or placed on different stages of the civilizational scala. Frequently, colonialism was the channel through which the encounter with modernity unfolded, as was in the case of the Indian subcontinent. This encounter unleashed many creative energies, even in highly asymmetrical relationships of power. So when we strive to write a history of modernism as a global, multi-sited process, as a story of migration, intersection, reconfiguration, and refusal, we confront the primitive as a phenomenon that undergoes transculturation. Our attention is directed to how actors on these sites, caught in the throes of modernity with all its paradoxical tensions, ironically appropriated the primitive in different ways, and even sought to make its civilizational aspect serve as a critique of colonialism. This has been an argument made by Partha Mitter, who reads "the Indian discourse of Primitivism" as a critique of "Western progress".⁶⁰ Mitter discusses different variants of the primitive – that include artists, such as Amrita Sher Gil, statesmen like Gandhi, and institutions such as Rabindranath Tagore's university at Santiniketan – in what ends up as a romanticized,

somewhat indiscriminating use of the concept. The argument proffered here is that the concept was adopted as a mode of civilizational critique of the modern West and so functioned as an act of resistance to colonialism, an appealing position echoed by Mercer.⁶¹ Here, a more fine-tuned method indebted to transcultural analysis, that seeks to investigate the morphologies of relationalities and their often paradoxical or contradictory workings, can suggest more possibilities of reconfiguring a concept beyond the poles of colonial pejection and subaltern resistance. A close look at the ways in which artists since the early twentieth century have been drawing on the concept of the primitive does point to an attempt at reconfiguration, though not entirely an unequivocal act of resistance, even as the primitive is being turned on its head. Artists – for instance the modernist Ram Kinkar Baij, trained at Santiniketan – discover the primitive at home in the form of the Santhal tribals, who were branded by colonial administrators with all the markers of a terrifying primitive. In his work, Baij uses his proximity to the group to infuse coevalness into the concept of the primitive by locating its actors in the transformations of the present, such as the economy of the market or as factory workers living according to new temporal regulations. But while bringing coevalness, he also replicates some of the asymmetries of power built into modernity when framed by the idea of the nation.⁶² For here, another transformation intervenes to shape the artist's relationship to his subjects, one that is also a product of colonial modernity and needs to be brought back into the matrix. This relates to the emergence of the artist as framed in the context of modern art history – the "absolute artist", a concept whose genealogy Catherine Soussloff has studied.⁶³ In the Indian context, pre-colonial art production had been linked to patronage, first by ruling principalities, to be later joined by prosperous trading communities, officials of different East India Companies. The artist had the status of an artisan, was defined by

his work and caste, and not always named. Modernity in the form of colonial art schools and universities brought with it both the formation of the artist as professional and the teaching of art history. (The first art history department was established in 1919 in Kala Bhavana, Tagore's university by the art historian Stella Kramrisch as an adjunct to the ancient Indian history and archaeology department.) The artist aspired to become a member of a literate elite at a remove from subalternity; his status was now defined by creativity, as one who brings his gaze to the objects that are transformed into art.

For all the sympathies that Ram Kinkar Baij expresses towards his subjects, who are also the objects of representations, and the intention to infuse temporal coevalness into the concept of the primitive notwithstanding, otherness/distance is drawn into a national – anti-colonial – project through the issue of class. The modernist agenda with all its enchantments, accessories – and exclusions – was harnessed to the cause of the nation, making it a double edged tool: while anti-colonial, it at the same time replicates homogenizing narratives of nation building, which see the nation as a transcendent whole, flattening the stories of its many 'fragments' that survive on the margins. Dipesh Chakrabarty has drawn our attention to the paradoxes that are characteristic of critical moments of decolonization, located on an extended cusp of empire and nation. He points in particular to the deliberations that marked the 1950s and 1960s in India and fostered what he calls a "pedagogical style of politics" wherein the precise performance of politics re-enacts civilizational and cultural hierarchies.⁶⁴ It is in such processes that art history came to be centrally implicated; it actively participate in the exoticization and musealization of identities, such as those of the tribal groups discussed above, during the early postcolonial years.

A transcultural perspective must therefore navigate multiple paradoxes and challenges – in contexts beyond Europe its tool box must first

help to dislodge the epistemic frontiers of the discipline, grounded in a conception of nationally framed culture. This is particularly urgent as so much of art history still has to find a way of dealing with distributed agency that might then generate a dismantling of its evolutionist logic, wherein the single artist creating masterpieces stands for a pinnacle of achievement. At the same time, art historians still have to find a modality of rethinking the nation within a transcultural frame before it can be transcended.

The ability to navigate multiple scales, to avoid simple binaries between the global and the local, gives the transcultural approach an explanatory edge over concepts such as transnationalism, translocality, or methods used in global history. Yet, denominations of scale assume a further complexity that is a challenge to be addressed. On the level of scale, viewed from a geo-political standpoint, the nation stands between the global, the regional, and the local. However, the issue of subjectivity and self-positioning comes into play here. Scale frequently forms a field of tension between the perspective of actors and the processes in which they are involved. A region or even a nation can be perceived as a 'locality' from the viewpoint of the agents, for whom it may be a site to be recuperated, for instance from a larger constellation such as an empire, as was the perception of a large number of modernist artists in South Asia. The nation was the frame within which modernism's critical edge was appropriated, its potential energized anti-colonial resistance, and its metropolitan meanings were inflected and translated within the frame of an emergent national culture. A similar argument can be made for places designated as 'centres' or 'peripheries': they can be reconceived within individual narratives and re-imagined geographies that urge us to read the use of such terms as forms of self-positioning, and therefore, as one more factor to be woven into the web of transcultural relationalities.

VII. Beyond the Horizon⁶⁵

Transculturation, conceptualized in the work of Fernando Ortiz, described the agency of disarticulated groups as they selected and recreated from materials they appropriated from metropolitan sources, to form identities and negotiate power relations. The theoretical import of this concept provided a starting point and a foundation for research, which had the potential to be extended and refined into a complex framework to study the dynamics of cultural formations at every level, by traversing multiple scales and making place for varying subjectivities. Revisiting modernism through a transcultural lens and at different sites across the globe, as I just argued, allows us to move towards a view of art as a world-making practice, always already transcultured. The transition from the 'modern' to the 'contemporary' that takes place during what Stuart Hall labels the "fourth phase of globalization",⁶⁶ is characterized by the growth of transnational corporations, neoliberal economics, the heightened role of accelerated information technologies, and the culture industries; their workings bring fresh challenges that can serve to test the efficacy of available methodological tools and propel them towards further sharpening.

Any attempt to fix a signpost for contemporary art ends up as a dysfunctional exercise in view of differing, often conflicting standpoints, as indicated at the beginning of this essay. For Peter Osborne the "contemporary" is therefore a discursive category, an "operative fiction" through which we attribute a sense of unity to the present that encompasses disjunctive temporalities that we can never fully grasp.⁶⁷ Boris Groys ascribes a similar stasis to the contemporary that, as opposed to modernity that nurtured utopian visions of the future, "is interested primarily in itself".⁶⁸ Given its ambitions to encompass the world, contemporary art, it would seem, can no longer denote a style, or a period, or even an ideological position other than a com-

mitment to the present. Can the transcultural as a mode of thought become the basis for a new political imaginary that transcends presentism and enables artists, institutions, and scholarship to envisage the contours of a project to rethink the world?

A ubiquitous apparatus of liberal democracies today, to both compensate for past exclusions and respond to the challenge of inner diversity, is the principle of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism introduces a relativist pluralism of the current moment wherein all styles and beliefs are considered equally valid and where the prerogative of judgment is frequently ceded to the art market. Together with other kinds of cultural media, such as music, cuisine, or festivals, art too is called upon to provide the visible 'evidence' of a given society's multiculturalism. The burden this places on artists is the expectation, emanating from curators or the art market, that their art would function as a surface from which a clear national, ethnic, or religious identity could be read off. The nexus between the power of an expanding art market and the influential authority of a select "curatoriate"⁶⁹ has admittedly promoted a tendency to self-orientalization among artists of the non-West.

Yet, capitulation to spectacles of exotic difference built into the visual culture of global capitalism and multiculturalism has not been the only, not even the overwhelming response among artists. Rather they have seized this opportunity to appropriate for their art a function of refusal or resistance, to produce subversive meanings that would make transparent the terms on which inclusion in multicultural contexts takes place. Art becomes a generator of particular knowledge, as for example in the work of Yinka Shonibare⁷⁰ who draws upon expressive devices, that include both materiality and irony to scramble codes and in the process provide an eloquent commentary on closed concepts such as the nation or culture as identifying marks. One feature that runs through the artist's entire production is the use

of brightly colored batik fabrics, long associated in public perception with 'Africa'; from here the link between Shonibare's art and his ethnicity followed automatically. Material that ostensibly works as a guarantee of his art's authenticity is actually used in an ironic twist to disrupt precisely such a notion of the authentic African. The story of the material speaks of another geography, one of trade and global commercial relationships, that connected the continents and belie any notion of pure origins. The artist explained that he buys the cloth at the local Brixton market. It is designed by Asians living in North Manchester for export to Africa; the batik wax technique was not African but brought from Indonesia by the Dutch and from there it travelled to Manchester, where it was produced in the textile mills, designed by local Asians. The machine-made Manchester fabric was then exported to African countries, where it was worn by members of an urban populace who welcomed it as a product of advanced technology, to then be re-exported to Britain, where it sold as 'African' material.⁷¹ This elaborate story of the fabric's geographic circulations not only challenges all notions of origins and authenticity built into a present notion of multiculturalism, but is used by the artist to show how such ascriptions of identity are an artificial construct, that these are as transcultured as the fabric he uses for his work. This example of a specific artist's intervention sensitizes us to the conscious undermining of boundaries between different domains of knowledge production effected by contemporary art practices that strive towards criticality. Such visual thinking has an "undisciplined" texture, in that it can spawn forms of knowing not conflatable with mainstream disciplines, even as it draws upon their resources such as texts, writing, archives, and oral traditions.⁷² Such knowledge acquires a force of its own, unpredictable and incipient in any space – urban or rural, derelict or wasteland. The search for methods that enable us to productively explore its dynamics is still at an initial stage.

"If contemporary art is the answer, the question is 'How can capitalism be made more beautiful?'"⁷³ The artist Hito Steyerl's voice joins a small but vocal critical stream that draws attention to the increased proximity of global capital to the institutions of art – notably museums and biennials – and the dominant logic of privatization that impinges on their content, programs, and curatorial practices. One striking tendency is the way the encounter with art today is subordinated to the overwhelming spatial and material force generated by the spectacular architecture of museums of contemporary art that carry the signature of star architects: Frank Gehry (Guggenheim Bilbao; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris), Shigeru Ban (Pompidou Metz), I.M. Pei (Louvre Pyramid; Museum of Islamic Art, Qatar). Add to this list the upcoming super-sized buildings on Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat Island, intended to house art and performance, or the prominently showcased architectural plans for the KMOMA (Kolkata), the global panorama of emerging art museums suggests that the frame required for art must be first and foremost boldly designed, photogenic, and affluent. Are those institutions of art, once endowed with civic and pedagogical functions within emergent nation states, now being transformed into populist sites of leisure and entertainment? The main demand placed by corporate capital on the art institutions dependent on it, so the argument goes, is not only to sustain audience numbers, but to constantly strive to increase them, mainly through blockbuster exhibitions. This in turn raises further questions about issues of spectatorship – if we move beyond the modernist notion of spectatorship or audience as made up of the individual *flâneur*, or groups of viewers or consumers, to conceiving of publics as participants, co-producers or citizens, what does this imply for art and its institutions?⁷⁴

Among several speculative trajectories heading towards a critical reorientation of the world of art and its institutions, I will cite a few examples of how a concept of globality that is animated by

transcultural thinking might show the way to more experimental modes of engagement with the dilemmas of the contemporary: this could apply to the museum, to the category of art it enshrines, and the modalities of spectatorship it produces. The global proliferation of art institutions – museums, biennials, but also collectives, curatorial-cum-research platforms, and micro-organizations⁷⁵ – has allowed a greater space to experiment with more radical models of museology and art production. A more politicized engagement with the historical moment informs these initiatives: they eschew presentism to define the contours of a future art world, do not discard history but look at artistic endeavour as a way of “standing on the right side of history”.⁷⁶ Transcultural approaches are now inspiring museums to devise new curatorial strategies to anchor their collections in global contexts, either through temporary exhibitions or through rethinking the parcours of their collection, to make it narrate a story in which the palimpsestic identities of its objects are unmasked, reconfigured, and re-anchored both within and beyond the national space.⁷⁷

One such mode of critical curating that has already brought forth creative alternatives, disrupting existing taxonomies and disciplinary protocols, can be observed at the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid. This is an interesting example, not least because this is a national museum of modern and contemporary art in the heart of the Spanish capital, flanked by two canonical art institutions, the Prado and the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza. It is not a museum that needs to suffer anxiety over visitor numbers; this allows its curatorial policy to focus more on the *how* to steer the visitors through an array of works. It is in the presentation of its permanent collection that we observe a number of radical experiments. Most rooms – be they thematic (“Art in a Divided World 1945 – 1968”), devoted to a style (“Cubism”), or to a single, iconic work (“Guernica”) – present constellations of works that

scramble genres and media, being driven more by conveying a message seen through different lenses, that conventional art history bypasses in its fidelity to genres or concern for ‘quality’.⁷⁸ The radical potential of this approach is most apparent in the treatment of Picasso’s *Guernica* that no longer stands as an isolated masterpiece occupying a ritualized place in a white-cube setting. Rather it is part of an assemblage of documents, sketches, posters, magazines, and a documentary film on the Spanish civil war, all of which partook of the same historical moment and make visible and tangible the networks of knowledge production and relationships in which the work was imbricated. Instead of viewing the artist as a single custodian of a modernist canon, the visitor has access to sites of meaning making and interactive moments, also highlighting transcultural connections with Latin America that this single work shares with others.⁷⁹

In a similar manner, recursive interventions by individual curators in recurring institutional contexts – such as the Venice Biennale or the documenta – that have accumulated aura and authority through their longevity and periodicity, show another path to producing “a centrifugal diffusion of dissidence”.⁸⁰ Two different projects, both featured at the Venice Biennale, used this platform to reflect and debate on the nation-state in the context of the twenty-first century. *Citizens and Subjects* was a three-part project curated by Maria Hlavajova together with the artist Aernout Mik for the Dutch pavilion during the Biennale of 2007. *Citizens and Subjects* comprised of a multichannel video installation questioning the distinction between subjects and citizens in view of the challenges posed by immigration to the nation-state that responds with enforcement of security by deploying fear and anxiety. Reminding viewers of a field of ambiguity between subjection and possible liberation, the work of art created a space for discussions and interventions on related themes, making the pavilion less a representative of ‘art of the Neth-

erlands' and more a discursive space for artists, writers, scholars, and the public to engage in a discussion about the nation.⁸¹ A similar impulse motivated the curator Ranjit Hoskote who, when he accepted the commission to curate the first 'national' Indian pavilion at the Venice Biennale of 2011, deployed this canonical site as a laboratory to deliberate on whether the "idea of India"⁸² could be pushed beyond its existing limits. The intriguing title *Everybody Agrees: It's About to Explode* makes one pause at the ambiguous "it" that might refer to the nation-state, to contemporary art, to the art market, or to myths about these entities. The transcultural history of the exhibition space at the Arsenale was drawn into a project, in which each of the four artistic positions presented could be opened up to explore whether national identity could be extended across plural anchors of belonging.⁸³

This extensive survey has tried to delineate ways to coin a notion of globality informed by a transcultural perspective as a form of critical thinking about art production, its institutions, and the scholarly practice of art history. Art his-

tory as a form of world-making – of grappling with the past and of glimpsing the contours of emerging possibilities as embodied in art production – is dependent on the criticality of a transcultural approach to rethink its epistemic foundations. This also means that the transcultural approach has to be constantly sharpening its tools and refining its methods in response to ever-fresh challenges. It needs to move beyond studying connectivity or mobility or interaction per se, a characteristic of much of transcultural research till date, to be able to arrive at the transformative potential of transculturation that opens up from "behind the horizon",⁸⁴ to grasp the intellectual gains that are secreted from the connectedness of cultures. A transcultural art history needs to find ways of theoretically incorporating new factors that impinge on the relationships it investigates: paying attention to scale, to "anachronic" temporalities,⁸⁵ to textures of affect, and to different modes of knowledge beyond that of our scholarship – the artistic, the everyday and non-professional – that might bring with them conflicting claims to authority.

For my esteemed colleague Rudolf Wagner, with whom I have had several stimulating conversations on the ideas presented here and who has generously shared references and materials with me.

This essay continues the discussion I initiated in an earlier article on defining the methodological contours of a transculturally framed global art history. Its substance draws from my forthcoming book, *Can art history be made global? A discipline in transition*. See Monica Juneja, 'Global art history and the 'burden of representation'', in: Hans Belting, Jacob Birken, Andrea Buddensieg et al. (eds.), *Global studies: Mapping contemporary art and culture*, Ostfildern 2011, 274–297.

A considerably shorter and differently structured form of this essay – nonetheless retaining its core ideas – was delivered as a keynote address to the 34th *Kunsthistorikertag* held in Dresden (March 8–12, 2017) carrying the motto: "Kunst global – Kunst lokal". I would like to take this opportunity to thank once more the organizers of the event for honouring me with this invitation. I am grateful to the two anonymous reviewers of this journal

for their feedback. Thanks are equally due to Jennifer Pochodzalla for help with formatting.

- 1 Peter Weibel, 'The transnational pavilion: Austria's contribution to the 45th Biennale of Venice 1993', in: Andrea Fraser, Christian Philipp Müller, and Gerwald Rockenschau (eds.), *Österreichs Beitrag zur 45. Biennale von Venedig 1993*, Vienna 1993, 7–22.
- 2 Though the preceding Biennale that opened in June 1990 was subsequent to the fall of the Berlin Wall, plans for its content and organization had been laid earlier.
- 3 For the text of Fraser's *Garden Program*, see Fraser, Müller, and Rockenschau 1993 (as note 1), 185–203.
- 4 Ibidem, 187.
- 5 Ibidem.
- 6 Hans Belting, 'Contemporary art as global art: A critical estimate', in: Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.), *The global art world: Audiences, markets, and museums*, Ostfildern 2008, 38–73. See also the catalogue of the exhibition curated by Belting and Buddensieg at the ZKM Karlsruhe from September 2011 to

- February 2012, *The global contemporary and the rise of new art worlds* (exh. cat. Karlsruhe, ZKM), ed. by Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel, Cambridge, Mass., 2013.
- 7 See Ruth Simbao, What 'global art' and current (re)turns fail to see: A modest counter-narrative of 'not-another-Biennial', in: *Image and Text* 25, 2015, 261–286; Maria Hlavajova and Simon Sheikh (eds.), *Former West: Art and the contemporary after 1989*, Cambridge, Mass./Utrecht 2017; Michaela Ott, Die kleine ästhetische Differenz, in: *Texte zur Kunst* 23, 2013, 101–109.
 - 8 Discussed in Juneja 2011 (see unnumbered note above).
 - 9 The term comes from Arthur Danto, The artworld, in: *Journal of Philosophy* 61, 1964, 571–584.
 - 10 The discussion of alternate temporalities as resources for resisting and subverting Western teleological time goes back to Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference*, New Delhi 2000. More recently Boaventura de Sousa Santos has suggested that we replace "the monoculture of linear time" with "the ecology of temporalities", see Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*, New York 2016, 176.
 - 11 John Onians, Introduction, in: idem (ed.), *Atlas of world art*, London 2008, 10–13, here 11. For a more extensive discussion of these positions, see Juneja 2011 (see unnumbered note above).
 - 12 Belting 2008 (as note 6); most writings that now make up the global turn in art history have tended to reaffirm the presentism of the global perspective, see for example, James Elkins, Zhivka Valiavicharska, and Alice Kim (eds.), *Art and globalization*, University Park 2010, where almost all contributions deal with the present. A few welcome departures are: Daniel Savoy (ed.), *The globalization of Renaissance art: A critical review*, Leiden 2017; Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Catherine Dossin, and Beatrice Joyeux-Prunel (eds.), *Circulations in the global history of art*, Farnham, Surrey 2015; Mary D. Sheriff (ed.), *Cultural contact and the making of European art since the age of exploration*, Chapel Hill 2012.
 - 13 See Nelson Goodman, *Ways of worldmaking*, Indianapolis 1978; idem, *Languages of art: An approach to a theory of symbols*, Indianapolis 1988; Ansgar Nünning, Vera Nünning, and Birgit Neumann (eds.), *The aesthetics and politics of cultural worldmaking*, Trier 2010, all of which focus on literature and language systems. For a critical position, Arno Schubbach, *Das Bilden der Bilder: Zur Theorie der Welterzeugung und ihrer bildtheoretischen Verpflichtung*, in: Cornelia Bohn, Arno Schubbach, and Leon Wansleben (eds.), *Soziale Systeme. Zeitschrift für soziologische Theorie* 18, 2012, themed issue: Welterzeugung durch Bilder, 69–93.
 - 14 Pheng Cheah, *What is a world? On postcolonial literature as world literature*, Durham 2016.
 - 15 Ibidem, 19.
 - 16 See Claire J. Farago, 'The 'global turn' in art history: Why, when, and how does it matter?', in: Savoy 2017 (as note 12), 299–313, here 312.
 - 17 Cheah 2016 (as note 14), 15.
 - 18 For a different framework for a world art history, one that integrates nations and localities into "regional networks of interaction", see Claire J. Farago, *Imagining art history otherwise*, in: Jane C. Davidson and Sandra Esslinger (eds.), *Global and world art in the practice of the University Museum*, London/New York 2017, 115–130; it draws on her book in progress that carries the same title.
 - 19 This was the title of the work in six volumes by the art historian and director of the Dresden Art Gallery, Karl Woermann, *Die Geschichte der Kunst aller Zeiten und Völker*, 6 vols., Leipzig 1900–1922.
 - 20 See Ulrich Pfisterer, Origins and principles of world art history: 1900 (and 2000), in: Kitty Zijlmans and Wilfried van Damme (eds.), *World art studies: Exploring concepts and approaches*, Amsterdam 2008, 69–89.
 - 21 Ibidem. A more intensive engagement with these issues is Hubert Locher, *Kunstgeschichte als historische Theorie der Kunst 1750–1950*, Munich 2001, esp. chapters 3 and 4.
 - 22 Ernst Grosse, Ethnologie und Aesthetik, in: *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie* 15, 1891, 392–417. He applies this method in his study *Die Anfänge der Kunst* published three years later, a book translated into several languages: Ernst Grosse, *Die Anfänge der Kunst*, Freiburg 1894; English translation: Ernst Grosse, *The Beginnings of Art*, trans. by Frederick Starr, New York 1897.
 - 23 Josef Strzygowski, Vergleichende Kunstforschung auf geographischer Grundlage, in: *Mitteilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 61, 1918, issue 1/2, 20–48, here 34; on Strzygowski, see Suzanne L. Marchand, *German orientalism in the age of empire: Religion, race, and scholarship*, Cambridge 2009, chapter 9.
 - 24 Grosse 1894 (as note 22).
 - 25 Claire J. Farago, 'Vision itself has its history': Race, nation, and Renaissance art history, in: eadem (ed.), *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual culture in Europe and Latin America*, New Haven, Conn. 1995, 67–88.
 - 26 Grosse 1891 (as note 22), 405–406 and 410.
 - 27 Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban counterpoint: Tobacco and sugar*, transl. by Harriet Onís, New York 1947; reprinted with an introduction by Fernando Coronil, Durham 1995. All references here are to the edition of 1995.
 - 28 Fernando Coronil, Introduction, in: Ortiz 1995 (as note 27), xx. A more extensive study of the nexus between literary forms and nascent political forma-

- tions is Pascale Casanova, *The world republic of letters*, Cambridge, Mass. 2004.
- 29 Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, London 1991.
 - 30 Coronil 1995 (as note 27), xi – xii.
 - 31 Ibidem. Coronil further explains the marginal presence of Ortiz's work in mainstream anthropological writings of the twentieth century as a consequence of an asymmetry between scholars and theoretical perspectives emanating from the periphery and those that form the mainstream. Even the work of Eric Wolf, *Europe and the people without history*, Berkeley 1982, that deals with very similar and related questions, does not consider Ortiz. Ten years later, Mary Louise Pratt built on the work of Ortiz in: Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial eyes: Travel writing and transculturation*, London 1992.
 - 32 I have discussed this at some length in an interview with Christian Kravagna. Among the more recent theorizations of the idea of transculturation/transculturality is the work of the philosopher Wolfgang Welsch, *Transkulturalität: Zur veränderten Verfassung heutiger Kulturen*, in: Irmela Schneider and Christian W. Thomsen (eds.), *Hybridkultur: Medien, Netze, Künste*, Cologne 1997, 67 – 90. For a critical take on Welsch, see Monica Juneja and Christian Kravagna, *Understanding transculturalism*, in: Model House Research Group (ed.), *Transcultural modernisms*, Vienna 2013, 22 – 33.
 - 33 See Étienne Balibar, *Citizenship*, Cambridge 2015; Saskia Sassen, *Territory, authority, rights: From medieval to global assemblages*, Princeton, NJ 2006. Both Sassen and Balibar argue for a new model of "co-citizenship" or "shared citizenship" that is non-territorial, goes beyond being an institution determined by the nation-state, and includes solidarities that transcend borders of single nations. See also Giorgio Agamben's theorization of the refugee as a figure of "a new historical consciousness" that allows us a glimpse of a future beyond the nation-state founded on an exclusion of non-citizens. Giorgio Agamben, *Jenseits der Menschenrechte*, in: idem (ed.), *Mittel ohne Zweck: Noten zur Politik*, Berlin 2001, 23 – 32.
 - 34 T. J. Demos, *The migrant image: The art and politics of documentary during global crisis*, Durham 2013, xix.
 - 35 Ortiz 1995 (as note 27), 4 and 98.
 - 36 Coronil 1995 (as note 27), xxvii – xviii.
 - 37 The recent years have seen a large number of writings that have put forward ways of integrating materiality within the analytical apparatus of art history. These are too numerous to list here; of particular relevance to art history: Michael Yonan, *Towards a fusion of art history and material culture studies*, in: *West 86th* 18, 2011, 232 – 248; Jules D. Prown, *Art as evidence: Writings on art and material culture*, New Haven, Conn. 2001; Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of translation: Material culture and 'Hindu-Muslim' encounter*, Princeton, NJ 2009; Christopher Pinney, *Things happen: Or from which moment does that object come*, in: Daniel Miller (ed.), *Materiality*, Durham 2005, 256 – 272; Claire J. Farago, *Understanding visuality*, in: Dana Leibsohn and Jeanette F. Peterson (eds.), *Seeing across cultures in the early modern world*, Farnham 2012, 239 – 256. For an overview of the field, see Monica Juneja and Anna Grasskamp, *Art history, materiality, and the transcultural object: An introduction*, in: eadem (eds.), *EurAsian matters: China, Europe, and the transcultural object 1600–1800*, Heidelberg 2018, 3 – 33.
 - 38 These points are a summary of arguments I have made elsewhere: see Juneja and Kravagna 2013 (as note 32); Juneja 2011 (see unnumbered note above).
 - 39 See Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, *Das koloniale Unbewusste in der Kunstgeschichte*, in: Irene Below and Beatrice von Bismarck (eds.), *Globalisierung, Hierarchisierung: Kulturelle Dominanzen in Kunst und Kunstgeschichte*, Marburg 2005, 19 – 38.
 - 40 Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, *Ästhetik der Differenz: Postkoloniale Perspektiven vom 16. bis 21. Jahrhundert*, 2 vols., Marburg 2010.
 - 41 Christian Kravagna, *Transmoderne: Eine Kunstgeschichte des Kontakts*, Berlin 2017.
 - 42 *Intense Proximité* was the title of a show that Enwezor curated for the Paris Triennale in 2012. See *Intense proximité: Une anthologie du proche et du lointain* (exh. cat. Paris Triennale), ed. by Okwui Enwezor and Mélanie Bouteloup, Paris 2012.
 - 43 Okwui Enwezor, *Intense Proximity: Art as network*, in: French Ministry of Culture and Communication (ed.), *La Triennale*, Press release, 2011, 6 – 8.
 - 44 For recent research on artistic modernism as formed through multi-sited connections points in this direction, see the following section of this essay. For a study of the transcultural formation of the 'classical' in the monumental architecture of modern world capitals, beyond the colony-colonizer binary, see Monica Juneja, *The making of New Delhi: Classical aesthetics, 'oriental' tradition and architectural practice – a transcultural view*, in: Sally Humphreys and Rudolf G. Wagner (eds.), *Modernity's classics*, Heidelberg 2013, 23 – 54.
 - 45 Juneja 2011 (see unnumbered note above), 286 – 292. The investigation of artistic modernism from regional perspectives beyond Euro-America is an expanding field. A few landmark publications also problematize the global dimensions of the subject: Kobena Mercer (ed.), *Cosmopolitan modernisms*, Cambridge, Mass., 2005; idem (ed.), *Discrepant abstraction*, Cambridge, Mass., 2006; Partha Mitter, *The triumph of modernism: India's artists and the avant-garde 1922–1947*, London 2007; Iftekhar Dadi, *Modernism and the art of Mus-*

- lim South Asia, Chapel Hill 2010; Andreas Huyssen, Geographies of modernism in a globalizing world, in: Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (eds.), *Geographies of modernism: Literatures, cultures, spaces*, London 2005, 6–18; David Craven, *Art and revolution in Latin America: 1910–1990*, New Haven 2002; Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering modernism*, Chicago 2011; Alicia Volk, *In pursuit of universalism: Yorozu Tetsugorō and Japanese modern art*, Berkeley 2012.
- 46 These questions animated a lecture series held at the Heidelberg Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” in 2010, coordinated by the Chairs of Global Art History, Visual and Media Anthropology, and Japanese Art Histories. Several of the contributions are published in: Monica Juneja and Franziska Koch (eds.), *Multi-centred modernisms – Reconfiguring Asian art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries*, themed sections, in: *Transcultural Studies* 1, 2010–2011, URL: <https://heup.uni-heidelberg.de/journals/index.php/transcultural/issue/view/1> (date of last access 4 September 2018).
- 47 In addition to the titles cited in note 45, see more recently, Kravagna 2017 (as note 41); Sonal Khullar, *Worldly affiliations: Artistic practice, national identity, and modernism in India 1930–1990*, Oakland 2015; Sam Bardaouil, *Surrealism in Egypt: Modernism and the art and liberty group*, London 2017; Piotr Piotrowski, *In the shadow of Yalta: Art and the avant-garde in Eastern Europe 1945–1989*, London 2009; Klara Kemp Welch and Cristina Freire (eds.), *Artists’ networks in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, themed section, in: *ARTMargins* 2 1, 2012, 3–13; Mohamed Elshahed, *Egypt builds: A revaluation of the history of modernism*, in: Georg Schöllhammer and Ruben Arevshatyan (eds.), *Sweet sixties: Specters and spirits of a parallel avant-garde*, Berlin/New York 2014, 137–149.
- 48 William S. Rubin (ed.), *Primitivism in twentieth century art: Affinity of the tribal and the modern*, 2 vols., New York 1984. Among the most trenchant critiques, James Clifford, *Histories of the tribal and modern*, in: idem, *The Predicament of culture: Twentieth century ethnography, literature, and art*, Cambridge, Mass. 1988, 189–214; Thomas McEvilley, *Doctor, Lawyer, Indian, Chief*, in: *Artforum* 23, 1984, 54–60. See also Vincent Johnson and Jill Poyourow, *Critiques of MoMA’s 1984 Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, in: *Fireplace Chats*, blog post, last updated 31 July 2015, URL: <https://fireplacechats.wordpress.com/2015/07/31/critiques-of-momas-1984-primitivism-in-20th-century-art-affinity-of-the-tribal-and-the-modern/> (date of last access 10 May 2017).
- 49 Mercer 2005 (as note 45), 42.
- 50 The most well-known founding myth was the story told by Picasso to André Malraux about his visit to the Trocadéro museum on a Sunday afternoon in June 1907 (though his conversation with Malraux dates to 20 years later, i.e. 1937, and was published only in 1974 after Picasso’s death): the artist describes to Malraux the epiphany following his encounter with the “fetishes [...] magic things” that unleashed his creativity. The *Demoiselles d’Avignon*, he claimed, “must have come to me that very day [...]”. In 1984 this narrative was canonized by Rubin during the MoMA exhibition as a “turning point” in the artist’s production and the history of modernism as such; see Rubin 1984 (as note 48), vol. 1, 242.
- 51 See Suzanne Marchand, *Leo Frobenius and the revolt against the West*, in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 32, 1997, issue 2, 153–170.
- 52 In the case of Picasso, it can be established that he drew upon a variety of sources, including for the famous *Demoiselles*, the mysterious Ur-narrative of primitivist modernism notwithstanding – these included anthropological photographs and drawings, especially from Leo Frobenius’ volume on African masks, Leo Frobenius, *Die Masken und Geheimbünde Afrikas*, Halle a. d. S. 1898, that featured black and white and color illustrations of masks and objects, many of which were not available at the Trocadéro or in Paris at that time.
- 53 See Gabriele Genge (ed.), *Art history and fetishism abroad: Global shiftings in media and methods*, Bielefeld 2014.
- 54 See Clifford 1988 and McEvilley 1984 (both as note 48).
- 55 *Tribal Art Magazine* 2012, special issue: African art, New York and the avant-garde, ed. by Elena Martínez-Jacquet. I am grateful to Rudolf Wagner for this reference. See also Yaëlle Biro, *Avant Charles Ratton: Commerce et diffusion des arts africains aux années 1920*, in: *Charles Ratton: L’invention des arts “primitifs”* (exh. cat. Paris, Musée du Quai Branly), ed. by Sophie Laporte, Paris 2013, 42–57. A large number of the objects on display in the section on primitivism in the exhibition *Icônes d’art moderne. La collection Chtchoukine* (Paris, Fondation Louis Vuitton, October 2016 – March 2017), featuring the collection of the Russian textile magnate and passionate collector of modernist art Sergei Stchoukhine, were also produced mainly in the twentieth century. Among the dealers who supplied Stchoukhine his works was Joseph Brummer, proprietor of Maison Brummer in Paris (1908–1914) that also spread his activities to the United States.
- 56 Julius Lips, *The savage hits back*, New York 1966 (originally in German: *Der Weiße im Spiegel des Farbigen*). The publication of the German original was censored by the Nazi regime, so the book was first published in English translation (New Haven 1937), after Lips emigrated to the United States. Recently the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum featured an exhibi-

- tion devoted to Lips: see "Der Wilde schlägt zurück". Kolonialzeitliche Europäerdarstellungen der Sammlung Lips (exh. cat. Cologne, Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum), ed. by Anna Brus, Lucia Halder, and Clara Himmelheber, Berlin 2018.
- 57 See Claire J. Farago, On the peripatetic life of objects in the era of globalization, in: Sheriff 2010 (as note 12), 17–41. Suzanne Preston Blier, *Europia Mania: Contextualizing the European other in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Dahomey art*, in: Kumkum Chatterjee and Clement Hawes (eds.), *Europe observed: Multiple gazes in Early Modern encounters*, Lewisburg 2008, 237–270.
 - 58 Reproduced in Lips 1966 (as note 56), 230–231.
 - 59 Anna Brus, Julius Lips und die zeitgenössische globale Kunst, in: *Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* 2, 2015, 201–215.
 - 60 Mitter 2007 (as note 45), 29–35.
 - 61 Mercer 2005 (as note 45).
 - 62 A detailed discussion of the works of Baij and the artist K. G. Subramanyan, who reclaimed the notion of the primitive can be found in my forthcoming book, *Can art history be made global?*, chapter 3.
 - 63 Catherine M. Soussloff, *The absolute artist: The historiography of a concept*, Minneapolis 1997.
 - 64 Dipesh Chakrabarty, Legacies of Bandung: Decolonization and the politics of culture, in: Saurabh Dube (ed.), *Enchantments of modernity: Empire, nation, globalization*, New Delhi 2009, 264–290.
 - 65 My use of the term 'horizon' is inspired by Reinhart Koselleck's definition: "Der Horizont meint jene Linie, hinter der sich künftig ein neuer Erfahrungsraum öffnet, der aber noch nicht eingesehen werden kann." Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, Frankfurt a. M. 1978, 356. I am grateful to Friedrich Huneke for this reference.
 - 66 Stuart Hall, Creolization, diaspora, and hybridity in the context of globalization, in: Okwui Enwezor (ed.), *Creolité and creolization: Documenta XI Platform 3*, Ostfildern 2003, 185–198, here 193–194.
 - 67 Peter Osborne, The fiction of the contemporary, in: idem, *Anywhere or not at all: The philosophy of contemporary art*, London/New York 2013, 15–35.
 - 68 Boris Groys, Modernity and contemporaneity: Mechanical vs. digital reproduction, in: idem, *In the flow*, London/New York 2016, 137.
 - 69 The term has been coined by John Clark, see his essay, Biennials as structures for the writing of art history: The Asian perspective, in: Elena Filipovic, Mareike van Hal, and Solveig Øvsterbø (eds.), *The Biennial reader: An anthology on large-scale perennial exhibitions of contemporary art*, Ostfildern 2010, 164–183, here 167.
 - 70 A British-Nigerian (b. 1962) artist living in London who uses his work to probe into questions of history, colonialism, the relationship between Africa and Europe, and to look behind the outward signs that are used to define groups and cultures. See Mark A. Cheetham, *Artwriting, nation and cosmopolitanism in Britain: The 'Englishness' of English art theory since the eighteenth century*, Farnham, Surrey 2012, 129–134; Rachel Kent, *Yinka Shonibare MBE*, London/Munich 2013, URL: <http://www.yinkashonibaremb.com/> (date of last access 22 May 2017).
 - 71 Ibidem, also for several examples of Shonibare's work.
 - 72 "Undisciplined" is a term that Irit Rogoff posits in opposition to interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary work, "because that is a zone where dis-identification takes place". Hammad Nasar, Interview with Irit Rogoff, in: Iftikhar Dadi and Hammad Nasar (eds.), *Lines of control: Partition as productive space*, London 2012, 108. I draw upon and develop this distinction in my article, Monica Juneja, Migration, dispossession, post-memorial recuperations: An 'undisciplined' view of the partition of the Indian subcontinent, in: Burcu Dogramaci and Birgit Mersmann (eds.), *Art production, art theory, and global migration: A handbook*, Berlin 2019 (forthcoming).
 - 73 Hito Steyerl, Politics of art: Contemporary art and the transition to post-democracy, in: *e-flux journal* #21, December 2010, 1–6, here 1.
 - 74 See Simon Sheikh, A long walk to the land of the people: Contemporary art in the spectre of spectatorship, in: Maria Hlavajova and Ranjit Hoskote (eds.), *Future publics (the rest can and should be done by the people): A critical reader in contemporary art*, Utrecht/Amsterdam 2015, 230–261.
 - 75 The term refers to a new model of small, translocal organizations outside of known art institutions or artists' collectives, that combine research with art production and activism, see Marion von Osten, The end of contemporary art (as we knew it), in: Hlavajova and Sheikh 2017 (as note 7), 67–79.
 - 76 Claire Bishop, *Radical museology or what's 'contemporary' in museums of contemporary art*, London 2014, 6.
 - 77 A few examples of such initiatives in Germany that combine critical museology with research are: the programme *Museum global* at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein Westfalen (Düsseldorf, KNRW), the Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart (Berlin), and the initiative *Europa-Welt* at the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD). Both the KNRW and the SKD work in close collaboration with the Chair of Global Art History at the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies. The exhibition *Die Exzentrische Moderne*, planned for late 2018 at the KNRW Düsseldorf, aims to relocate the museum's canonical collections of Western modernist painting in the context of a globally sited Modernism. See Monica Juneja, *Jenseits der Glaswand: Museen der Moderne und die Herausforderung der Globalität*, in: *Magazin der Kulturstiftung des Bundes* 27, 2016. The Europa-Welt

- initiative at the SKD Dresden has already made a start with three small exhibitions, drawing on their own collections, while showing their transcultural histories. See URL: <http://www.skd.museum/de/forschung/forschungsprogramme/europawelt/index.html> (date of last access 22 July 2018) as well as the catalogue *Miniatur Geschichten: Die Sammlung Indischer Malerei im Dresdner Kupferstichkabinett* (exh. cat. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden), ed. by Monica Juneja and Petra Kuhlmann-Hodick, Dresden 2017.
- 78 On the tangled question of quality ("Qualitätsfrage"), see Juneja 2016 (as note 77), 29.
- 79 Jesús Carrillo and Rosario Peiró, *La Guerra ha terminado? Arte en un mundo dividido (1945–1968)*, in: Espinosa G. Sonsoles (ed.), *La Guerra ha terminado? Arte en un mundo dividido (1945–1968)*, Madrid 2010, 13–50; Eugenio Carmona, *Picasso and Spanish modernity: Works from the collection of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*, Florence 2014.
- 80 Nancy Adajania and Ranjit Hoskote, Notes towards a lexicon of urgencies, in: *Independent curators international research*, October 2010, URL: <http://curatorsintl.org/research/notes-towards-a-lexicon-of-urgencies> (date of last access 28 May 2017).
- 81 See the Reader on the Dutch pavilion: Rosi Braidotti, Charles Esche, and Maria Hlavajova (eds.), *Citizens and subjects: The Netherlands, for example*, Amsterdam 2007.
- 82 The title of a well-known book: Sunil Khilnani, *The idea of India*, New Delhi 2004.
- 83 See the curatorial essay by Ranjit Hoskote, Everyone agrees: it's about to explode, in: *Seminar* 2014, URL: http://www.india-seminar.com/2014/659/659_ranjit_hoskote.htm (date of last access 27 May 2017).
- 84 Koselleck 1978 (as note 65).
- 85 The term 'anachronic' has been proposed by Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood as an alternative to 'anachronistic' (that is premised on the idea that each object belongs to a given time and place) to describe the co-existence of different temporalities in a work of art. See Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, New York 2010, 14. Similarly Georges Didi-Huberman refers to images as "temporally impure, complex, overdetermined" that challenges art history to access "stratified multiple times [...] the *longues durées* of the *more-than-past* of memory". Georges Didi-Huberman, Before the image, before time: The sovereignty of anachronism, in: Claire J. Farago and Robert Zwijnenberg (eds.), *Compelling visuality: The work of art in and out of history*, Minneapolis 2003, 31–44. A transcultural approach would then be called upon to investigate such trans-temporal relationalities to ask why certain temporalities appear in particular historical objects at specific historical conjunctures.