

The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds. Globalization and Contemporary Art

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ABSTRACT

One effect of globalization is that encounters between different cultures, religions, and languages, as well as between different ethnic and national identities, have intensified. My own explanatory model starts from a theory of rewriting. This theory proceeds from the observation that liberal democratic terms such as integration and assimilation in fact center on the pair of terms inclusion/exclusion. The theory particularly concerns the West and one of its greatest inventions: modernity. The idea of rewriting is based on the assumption that every system consists of a finite number of elements and of a limited number of rules as to how these elements are connected and can be sequenced. How precisely these rewriting processes of cultures, economic systems, and states occur under pressure from globalization was an essential focus of the exhibition *The Global Contemporary. Art Worlds after 1989* at the ZKM Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, in 2011. This exhibition showed how historical, ethnic, and cultural characteristics are rewritten by the global cultural and economic transformations that are taking place. The world of art offers a glance at these global rewriting processes through a magnifying glass.

KEYWORDS

globalization, modernity, rewriting, art history, inclusion/exclusion

The Rise of New Art Worlds

One effect of globalization is that encounters between different cultures, religions, and languages, as well as between different ethnic and national identities, have intensified. At the moment there are two main hypotheses offered to explain the resulting conflicts and rifts: one hypothesis, formulated by Samuel P. Huntington (Huntington 1996), is that civilizations meet in a clash, that is, as hostile antagonists or protagonists. The other suggestion is that there is hope for a “confluence of cultures”, a proposition put forward in Ilija Trojanow and Ranjit Hoskote’s book *Kampfabsage* (Trojanow and Hoskote 2007). My own explanatory model, by contrast, starts from a theory of rewriting.

This theory proceeds from the observation that liberal democratic terms such as integration and assimilation in fact center on the pair of terms inclusion/exclusion. Hence the point is not to ascertain that those who do not integrate or assimilate are excluded by society. The point is not to establish that specific sections of the population are excluded from participating in social function systems. Nor is the point to define the problems that arise as a result of class rule. All these variants play down the problem of exclusion, for inclusion can only exist if exclusion is possible. Inclusion and exclusion are inherent in and of relevance to the system, which is why I organized a first exhibition on the thematic complex of globalization, migration, and postcolonialism back in 1996 with the title *Inklusion : Exklusion* (steirischer herbst, Graz) and conceived a “museum of global art.”

The theorem particularly concerns the West and one of its greatest inventions: modernity. For Europe and North America - or rather for the European-North American axis - globalization is the first case in history where they do not apply this binary opposition to other peoples and states, but where it can be applied to them. Up to now, Europe and North America have always been able to define who was included in the respective national, economic, or military alliance, and hence who was automatically excluded. Now, for the first time they find themselves in the situation - or at least potentially in a situation - where other states determine who is included and excluded. Thus for the West globalization means applying the rule of inclusion/exclusion to itself. This is creating unrest and anxiety in the West. For the application of the inclusion/exclusion mechanism to the West itself calls into question the West’s dominance over the entire world.

What were the prerequisites for this hegemony of the West? I would say it was the Borromean rings of economics, politics, and art under the sign of “creative destruction” (Schumpeter 1942), that is, innovation. The most common answer, however, is the development of sovereign nation-states and the capitalist mode of production. The spread of the capitalist economy within the framework of globalization as far as China is quite evident. The spreading of the territorial system of nation-states is also on the increase. Even in Europe, once medium-sized states such as Yugoslavia are breaking up into a number of small states under the pressure of globalization. Here, too, the global expansion of the idea of the nation-state is now being applied to Europe itself in the form of renationalization. Hence the powerful forces that once led to the global hegemony of the West - namely, the nation-state and capitalism - are threatened from within. Modernity was nothing other than a cultural expression of these two forces and itself a part of European expansion. In this sense, it follows that globalization has merely continued the work and the process of colonization, which was based on the obliteration and exploitation of the Other.

As long as these processes of modernization, colonization, and globalization only concerned the rest of the world but not Europe itself, Europe naturally regarded this as legitimate. Only now, when the consequence is apparent that these forces are threatening Europe itself - namely, that as the Other Europe will be expunged - are the negative sides of modernization, colonization, and globalization recognized.

Significantly, the contours of a postmodern order and a postmodern culture were sketched in the '80 as escapism, as a reaction to emerging conflicts. The ideas of postmodernism were the first dubious and desperate attempts to untie the Borromean knot of the nation-state, capitalism, and modernity. Failure was inevitable because postmodernism did not accept the axiom of the mechanism of inclusion and exclusion upon which modernity is fundamentally based.

If we follow the theory of Niklas Luhmann, as outlined in his 1997 book *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* (Luhmann 1997) then we must acknowledge with him that problems of exclusion are inevitable consequences of the functional differentiations of the social system, and that modernity - and in particular modern art - is precisely the result of such a functional differentiation. The differentiation of social systems upon which modern society is built make the reinforcement of deviations, and hence of exclusions, unavoidable. Only the difference between inclusion and exclusion makes it possible to construct identities; that is, closed subsystems. In this sense the inclusion/exclusion difference is a metadifference that is responsible for all the other distinctions within a social system. Whether identity is national, religious, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural, every construction of identity is the result of such operations of distinction and exclusion, because that is the process by which it is determined; it is immaterial whether the members of the functional system believe in the same God or not, speak the same language or not, belong to the same ethnic group or not. Only when this difference has been ascertained can the identity of the group be defined. The difference operation is the prerequisite for the construction of identity. Thus it follows that inclusion and exclusion are also the metadifference for the distinction between just and unjust, moral and immoral, culture and barbarism.

Ultimately, differentiating implies applying the mechanism of inclusion/exclusion. Because modernity is the result of differentiation, it also applies rules of inclusion/exclusion. This is the reason why there is no simple solution for counteracting tendencies to exclude. All liberal-democratic projects, all assertions of modernity that promise to keep the space of social and cultural inclusion open sooner or later avail themselves of the mechanism of exclusion. One of the collateral effects of those modern societies that are unavoidably built on mechanisms of exclusion, though without knowing or being aware of it, is the growing world of alterities that protest these exclusions.

In the age of globalization, however, in which the legitimacy of differentiated systems and subsystems is called into question by encounters with other functional systems, a critique of the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion has arisen. Let there be no misunderstanding: globalization is, on the one hand, the result and the product of Western modernity, but at this historical moment globalization is turning against the very author of globalization. Hence it does not argue about belonging to a culture, nation, or civilization - as is still articulated in hegemonic terms in the concept of integration or assimilation - but concentrates on monopolizing the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. Those who integrate, subjugate themselves to the dominant culture. In essence they extinguish themselves as the Other.

Other cultures do not wish to subjugate themselves to the monopoly of the West - that is, to reject their own culture through mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. Other peoples and civilizations fight against this monopoly and want to decide themselves who and what is included or excluded. As a result of this contention about the monopoly over mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, a new epoch began after 1989, because the year 1989 signified the end of the Western monopolies. The rise of art from Arabia, Asia, Africa, and South America, amongst others, in Western institutions is nothing other than the legitimate attempt by other cultures, nations, and civilizations to strip the West of its monopoly on exclusion. As Hans Belting once wrote, “the definition of modern art [...] was based on a double exclusion.” (2009). These artists from Arabia, Asia, Africa, South America, and elsewhere, do not want to integrate into Western culture; at most they want to break down these mechanisms of exclusion. In this respect they differ from Western modernism. Global art after the collapses of 1989 does not ask for inclusion nor can it naively demand the elimination of all mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion; it would, however, like to break up the Western monopoly. In that respect, these new art worlds create new mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, which I would like to describe with the term *rewrite* rather than *clash* or *confluence*.

The idea of rewriting is based on the assumption that every system consists of a finite number of elements and of a limited number of rules as to how these elements are connected and can be sequenced. These rules are called rewriting rules. In language, they constitute grammar. In society, they can be called codes of behavior, or marriage laws, or traffic laws, or rules for cooking. If we consider society as a system, then it is possible to apply the idea of rewriting programs to it. It is also the case that rewritings can take place in society. What has been happening in nature for millions of years is a constant process of rewriting. This process is called evolution. It would be absurd to assume that social systems are less complex than natural systems. So let's take as given that social systems are subject to rewriting rules, as are all other systems. So what we have been calling integration, assimilation, inclusion, and exclusion are, from this perspective, merely processes of rewriting. How precisely these rewriting processes of cultures, economic systems, and states occur under pressure from globalization was an essential focus of the exhibition *The Global Contemporary. Art Worlds after 1989* at the ZKM Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe. This exhibition showed how historical, ethnic, and cultural characteristics are rewritten by the global cultural and economic transformations that are taking place. The world of art offers a glance at these global rewriting processes through a magnifying glass, as it were. The global world system has transformed the global art system.

The Colonial Condition of Modernity. Extrinsic Causes of the Transformations of the Art World

The end of European expansion, that is, the end of the colonial condition, signified the end of modernity. In the twentieth century, the world was subdivided into three social zones. The industrialized nations of Europe, North America, plus Australia, New Zealand, and Japan formed the “First World”, The former communist societies in the USSR and Eastern Europe were considered the “Second World”. The “rest of the world”, which is not white, was called the “Third World”, although it contained the majority of the world's population.

The countries of the Third World, from Brazil to India, were almost all colonies of the West from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century. In other words, the Third World is a product of colonization, of the colonial condition. The process of colonization profoundly and enduringly shaped the global map in social and cultural terms. The affluence of the industrialized nations of the First World is causally related to the poverty of the agricultural Third World. In the global colonial condition, agrarian societies form the necessary complement to the industrialized societies. The industrial nations of the First World need the Third World's natural resources (oil, gas, metals, etc.). For this reason, a simple distribution system was enforced; the North industrializing, the South remaining agrarian. The Third World is thus also having to shoulder the burden of mitigating climate change. The asynchrony between the developing countries and the so-called developed nations is thus not due to chance or nature, but a politically controlled and engineered fact. The First and Third World are intimately bound up with each other. The Third World's role is to provide the raw materials, and the First World trains the trading network. The Third World makes commodities and the components available; the First World furnishes the capital and the manufacturing facilities. The division between industrialized nations and agrarian societies is weighing increasingly heavily on today's global society, and without doubt it is a product of colonization. Colonization may only have a five-hundred-year history, but it also has a present because its impact persists. Postcolonialism can be understood as an emerging awareness of the consequences of centuries of colonization of the larger part of the world by the smaller part. The permanent state of the colonial condition is a highly industrialized First World at the cost of the Third World, which is kept in an agrarian state as a resource supplier that cannot make use of its own raw materials, and as a market that buys goods from the First World. Europe subsidizes its farmers and fishermen to ensure that products from Africa remain too expensive, for example, to stop imported chickens and fish from being cheaper than those farmed or caught locally. The First World has little interest in the industrialization of the Third World. Using the World Bank's controlling mechanisms and guiding instruments, the Third World countries are artificially kept in the status of agrarian nations. Emission trading in response to global climate change is today a very visible expression of this policy.

For the colonies were never an end in themselves, but always a means to increase the wealth of the mother country. The rise of the modern capitalist world system depended on colonization, and colonization included slavery. The prosperity of the white immigrants in the colonies rested on the misery of the colored indigenous populations. The affluence in the dominating countries in particular required additional hands to provide the so-called unskilled labor, and these hands were dragged in violently from all over the world. The transatlantic slave trade was thus part of the colonial condition, followed by racism, which to this day is responsible for the problems of immigration, of migration. Capitalism, colonialism, slavery, and racism together form a dynamic quadrupel, whose elements cannot be treated in separation. Together, they created five hundred years of Western hegemony. This hegemony has created a global geography that is based on the structure of exclusion. The capitalist world system and its colonial conditions have constructed a social space in which the "white" nations of the North are included and the "colored" nations of the South with their religions and cultures are excluded. The division into First and Third Worlds is itself such an exclusion. Exclusions for ethnic, religious, ideological, economic, or political reasons are central and dominating strategies of the Western world.

The development of the idea of modernity needs to be considered in this historical context, for modernity is itself part of European expansion. The exclusion strategies of the economic world system also apply to the world system of art. Both modernity and modernism are the result of this Western hegemony. The Third World's cultural exclusion, and until recently, namely 1989, of the Second World as well, is part of the capitalist world system. Since the Berlin Wall came down in 1989 and the Soviet Union's implosion, new art worlds have thus been coming into existence in which the Second and Third Worlds play a central role. Their artists are even conquering the metropolises, museums, biennial, and league tables in the First World. Two sociological analyses are of especial import in this content: Anthony Giddens theories, that hinge on postmodernism relativizing or concerning itself with the contradictions of modernity, and the theories of Immanuel Wallerstein, who hopes in the Marxist sense that capitalism's inner contradictions will lead to its implosion. Giddens believes two organizational structures are of especial relevance for the development of modernity: the nation-state and the systematic capitalist mode of production. The power of these two complexes has led the West's dominance to spread across the entire globe. A fundamental result of modernization is the globalization that extinguishes the Other (Giddens 1990). Giddens speaks of the "two main thrusts that drove the spread of modern institutions. The one is the expansion of the capitalist economy, the other the expansion of the territorial system of nation-states" (Giddens 1992).

Starting from the fact that in modernity not only contradictions are visible, but also developmental trends that carry the potential for radical social transformations within them, Giddens develops his "utopian realism", a critical theory of late modernity in which the trends and corrections already latent in modernity become more radical. Instead of the global threat that the interaction of the capitalist global economy could pose, the international division of labor, the system of nation-states and a military world order, Giddens hopes that we will see the contours of a liberal and open, postmodern order emerge. Postmodernism, therefore, takes the place of modernity at the historical juncture when capitalist production and the colonial condition come to an end.

The thought of Immanuel Wallerstein is profoundly informed by the search for the roots of inequality and the battle against the institutions that support inequality in the world. Thus one of his most important books is entitled *World Inequality* (Wallerstein 1975), which rephrases the French Revolution's call for equality under the changed conditions of historical capitalism. Wallerstein also accords the nation-state an important role. In the nineteenth century, the claim to equality was coupled with the idea of the nation-state. Every nation had the same right to be free, and within each nation everyone had the same right to liberty, to affluence, and so on. Yet in the twentieth century it soon became clear that such justifications did not suffice. The nation-state was no longer an autonomous unit. Today, the economy is global and extends far beyond the nation-state. This is why Wallerstein also speaks of a "capitalist world economy" and the "modern world system" as logically linked. An Australian company operates multiplex cinemas throughout Europe. A Swedish company builds furniture all over Europe. Banks do business from Hong Kong to London. In other words, globalization is a product of trade, which knows no national borders. Today, globalization means producing and distributing goods to all comers of the globe. Should tax regimes, wages, and so on be too high in one country because of the influence of trade unions, a company simply relocates to neighboring or remote low-wage countries. American products such as computers and smartphones then get manufactured

in the land of the ideological enemy, for example, in China. Thus the battle against inequality cannot be fought successfully within a nation-state, but only within the global system as a whole.

The modern global system is a capitalist world economy as a result of European expansionism (Wallerstein 1984; 1974). The capitalist global economy arose in the sixteenth century in Europe on the back of the accumulation of capital, mechanisms of inequality (unequal exchange), and the division of labor. It is immensely important - if the global economy is to function - for the world labor force to be ethnicized, for a correlation to be established between ethnicity and economic role; for example, at the international level by imposing low wages on non-European, Asian, or African workers, or at the national level on immigrants. The visible classification of labor power and ethnic groups provides the index for income distribution, often justified by appealing to "traditions" that were in reality socially constructed. This institutionalized racism (and it goes beyond xenophobia) is one of the most significant pillars of historical capitalism (Wallerstein 1983). Racism serves as an all-embracing ideology to justify inequality, wrote W. E. B. Dubois in his *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*, (1899), where for the first time a Black sociologist showed how the Blacks' social space was hierarchically constructed in terms of unequal wages (for the same activities as those performed by whites).

The second key ideology that serves to maintain capitalism is that of universalism. "The belief in universalism has been the keystone of the ideological arch of historical capitalism" (Wallerstein 1983, 81).

While the ideology of racism as a mechanism served to control the direct producers (the laborers) worldwide, the ideology of universalism shored up control of the bourgeoisie. The concept of a neutral universal culture that the ruling cadres of the respective countries all tended to deploy, functioned as the pillar of the global system. The ideology of progress and modernization supported this collection of ideas in forming a universalized whole. Universal culture, a knowledge of the same languages, literary and visual works all became the fraternal signs by which the capital accumulators of the world recognized one another. This universal culture was something that one needed to assimilate to, and historically it aided the expansion of capitalism worldwide. It guaranteed global sales markets for standardized goods, including those of the entertainment and culture industry, for example the worldwide distribution of American movies. In other words, universalism served colonialization and servitude.

The ostensibly contradictory trends of capitalism, ethnicization, and universalism complement one another at different levels for they serve one and the same goal, the accumulation of capital. Ethnicization means the allocation of groups to specific lower rungs of the wage hierarchy. Sexism and racism and other discriminatory practices were all used to justify paying lower wages for certain tasks within end-to-end production chains. According to Wallerstein, households are the smallest units in the world economic system. Domestic labor is just as devalued as the work of a Thai - in order to lower production costs or, by dint of low wage costs, to maximize profits. Ethnicization thus means assigning people to groups whose social status is low or is made low to justify paying them a lower wage.

Ethnicization is therefore a strategy of particularization: groups are isolated from others and are thus constructs. Segments and segregation are created in order to legitimate inequality. The designation

“white” or “upper class” is a social construct. Races are created socially by the dominant social forces as are classes, or peripheries and provinces in order to defend the center, where the production and commodity chains converge (Balibar e Wallerstein 1991).

My hypothesis relies neither on Wallerstein’s conflict model nor on Giddens’ appeasement model, but focuses on a confluence of cultures through rewriting programs.

Modernity, and by extension modern art, were part of European expansion, part of the expansive universal ideology, part of historical capitalism’s ideology of progress. Eurocentric culture as part of the capitalist world system that arose around 1500 in Europe is increasingly being questioned by the colonized countries. Contemporary art in the global age addresses the opportunities for a gradual transformation of the culture of this capitalist world system and the attendant difficulties and contradictions as well as the opportunities for developing an understanding of other cultures and their equality, assuming that such art takes such qualities seriously and is worthy of its name.

We are at present witnessing the beginning of a transformation process that needs and utilizes the plethora of biennials in Asia, South America, and the Arab world to take form, whereas modern art, naturally, is defending its position hysterically in the capitalist world system’s fairs and auctions by charging high prices. The art that is part of this transformation process can be considered as contemporary, because modern art is not.

Speculum Artis. Intrinsic Reasons for the Transformations of the Art World

Any exhibition can, by virtue of its focus, function like a magnifying glass on the contemporary art world, as art itself is a magnifying glass on the contemporary world.

What we observe through these magnifying glasses are above all transfers and transformations, translations and changes, within the art world and with the world, on a global scale. We recognize there is a new cartography of art as an effect of globalization. New continents and countries, from the Asian to the Arab world, enter the art world. But with this attention shift, we experience not only a remapping of the cartography of art, but also a rewriting of art itself. The canon of modern art linked more or less to the West, to the European-North American axis, is loosening. It may be, as the eminent art historian T. J. Clark has declared (Clark 1999) that we are saying farewell to the epoch of modern art at the threshold of the twenty-first century.

We can observe and name at least several transformations. The starting point of these transformations is the evidence that in the global art world everything is contemporary. From the names of museums to titles of auction catalogs the word “modern” is substituted by the word “contemporary”. With a fine nose for the Zeitgeist the artist Tino Sehgal instructed his performers, the attendants of the German pavilion at the Biennale di Venezia 2005, to sing for every visitor: “Oh, this is so contemporary!”. They did not say: “Oh, this is so modern!”. We cannot claim that all the art, which is produced now in Asia or Africa, is modern according to the canon of the West. But this art is truly contemporary. To speak about art as contemporary art is already the effect of global transformations.

We can therefore decide between external agents of transformations, like economic and political causes, and internal agents which can be tracked in the art system itself. When contemporary art changes the Western canon, it must be possible to identify reasons for these transformations both inside and outside of the art system.

The Paradigm of the Media

It is evident that the most influential paradigm in twentieth century art was the covert hegemony of photography. Famous painters like Francis Bacon, Gerhard Richter, or Andy Warhol have painted photographs or have derived their paintings from photographs. From Constantin Brancusi and Man Ray to Erwin Wurm, sculptors have been influenced by photography. Photographic documents are the remnants of Land art, Performance art, and other genres. Photography was the beginning of a long chain of new technical media of images: film, video, television, computer. The new paradigm of twenty-first century art is the global web, especially since the Web 2.0 revolution: access by all to all media at all times. “Anybody anything anytime anywhere” is the imperative of the new, digital age (Davidson 1996; 1997; 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001). The media experience has become universal. “Understanding Media” (McLuhan, 1964) is the prerequisite for understanding the world. We experience the world through media. “Whatever we know about society, or indeed about the world in which we live, we know through the mass media” (Luhmann 2000).

With an iPod everyone can make his own radio program: podcasting instead of broadcasting. With videocasting everyone can make his or her own TV program. With the Net everyone has become a broadcaster.

The advent of new media, new materials, and new technologies has produced a tremendous effect on contemporary art production. Beyond the market and the museums a huge generation of young artists, designers, and architects all over the world have created a new culture, new visual and acoustic worlds in a new architecture. These productions are normally suppressed by art institutions and therefore the general public has no idea what contemporary art is really about. Contemporary artists all over the world, from Chile to China, work in all media. It would not be correct to neglect one medium (painting) at the expense of another (computer). An exhibition on contemporary art should include all media, all genres, and all disciplines, from Sound art to Performance art, from installation to painting, from sculpture to Net art, all contemporary forms of time-based and space-based art, because contemporary artists have expanded their vocabulary in all directions and into all media. The equality of materials and media is the artistic equation of our time. This media justice could also be defined as the postmedia condition, since today everything is a medium, from a car to a painting. The triumph of media is not the existence of a new media art, but their influence and effect on classical art, from painting to sculpture (Krauss 2000).

The postmedia condition is defined by two phases: the equivalence of all media and the mixing of media.

At the end of the twentieth century, after a battle of one hundred years, the equivalence of the media was finally achieved. Media art, from photography to film, became accepted as a genuine medium of art by collectors, curators, and museums. In this phase each medium has unfolded its own intrinsic

material and conceptual qualities and possibilities. Painting has demonstrated the intrinsic value of paint by flowing and dripping techniques. Photography has demonstrated its ability to portray the object world realistically. Film has demonstrated its narrative capability. Video has demonstrated its critical subversion of the mass medium of television. Digital art has demonstrated its powers of imagination in virtual worlds. This phase is more or less completed.

The second phase, which is happening now, is the mixing and crossing of the media. Video, for example, triumphs with the narrative imagination of film by using multiple projections instead of one screen, and telling a story from many perspectives at the same time rather than from just one perspective. Video artists establish a strong relationship to the mass media. They refer to Hollywood stars and Hollywood genres. The mass media play a new role in video art. The border between art and film has blurred. Art as film and film as art has created a new genre. With the availability of new digital cameras and graphics programs, photography is abandoning the realistic world and inventing unseen, virtual worlds. Sculpture can consist of a photo or a videotape. Sculpture can be articulated in any medium: photography, video, or language. Language on LED screens can be a painting, a book, and a sculpture. Video and computer installations can be a piece of literature, architecture, or a sculpture. Photography and video art, originally confined to two dimensions, achieve spatial and sculptural dimensions in installations. Paintings refer to photography or digital graphics programs and use both. The computer graphics programs are called paint programs because they refer to painting. Film is proving to be increasingly dominant in documentary realism, which takes its critique of the mass media from video. The Web supplies dialogs and texts for all media in its chatrooms. The Web can produce self-generative pictures and words.

This mixing of the media has led to extraordinary major innovations in each of the media and in art. No single medium is dominant any longer; instead, all of the different media influence and determine each other. The array of all media forms a universal medium. Most artistic practices are not subordinated to the task of representing reality, but instead make references to media. Most artistic productions use media in reference to other media.

References have replaced reality. Naturally, the effect of this tendency is also a counterreaction: a reenactment of reality, a remaking of historic events, a reentry of history into the present. The reality check is also part of contemporary art practices.

The Substitution of Representation by Reality

However, the media of representation, from painting to video, have not only been transformed, but also substituted. Therefore, in contemporary art we find a mix of representation and reality, and sometime we find only reality, particles of reality, a doubling of reality as art.

Around 1913 the classical program of art, defined by Leonardo da Vinci, quoted by Laura L. Bass (Bass 2008), to “render visible the universal essence of things”, by means of the science of painting like line, point, plane, volume, shadow, and light, was disbanded. The end of representing the world of visible things was declared. One school banned the object entirely from painting and just represented the formal elements of painting (lines, points, planes...). This representation of the means of the medium painting, starting with Kazimir Malevich and finding in Wassily Kandinsky’s book the

programmatically titled *Point and Line to Plane: Contribution to the Analysis of the Pictorial Elements* (1926), we call abstract art and it dominated painting and sculpture in the twentieth century. But another school declared just the opposite: this school, starting with Marcel Duchamp, introduced the real object into the art system. The representation of reality was declared to be at an end. Instead, two different, even opposite strategies of representation followed: the representation of the means of art and the representation of things. The object as painterly representation was banned, but the real object was introduced. Between this bracket, between this binary opposition, modern art happened and developed. Everything that formerly had been representation was substituted by reality: painted landscapes became Land art; painted still lifes became collages, assemblages, installations, environments of real things; painted portraits became Body art; genre paintings became performances, events, happenings; painted waterfalls were substituted by real artificial waterfalls, painted fire was substituted by real fire. Real air, real earth, and real animals were exhibited and, finally, real people. The classical program of art, representation, came to an end with modern art. Representation was completely substituted by reality, by the reality of the elements of representation or the reality of things.

Slowly a third school arose in the twentieth century, beginning with photography - the reality of media. This school was in conflict with the doctrine of modern art, because photography, film, and video were still media of representation, although they could be combined with real things and real people in installations. Therefore media were very fitting to transform the doctrine of modern art. Media art rewrote modern art by bridging the gap between representation of artistic means and representation of objects. They created a new reality: media reality.

The Performative Turn (The Participation of the Public)

In 1967 Richard Rorty published his famous book *The Linguistic Turn. Essays in Philosophical Method* (Rorty 1967). This “linguistic turn” summarized a worldview from anthropology (Claude Levi-Strauss) and psychoanalysis (Jacques Lacan) in which the structure of language formed a universal model. The product of this linguistic turn was Conceptual art. In the 1980s we experienced the return of the image. Therefore, in 1992, W. J. T. Mitchell coined the term “the pictorial turn”, which was published in 1994 in his book *Picture Theory* (Mitchell 1994). Also in 1994, the German art historian Gottfried Boehm spoke of the “iconic turn” in his essay “Die Wiederkehr der Bilder” [The Return of the Images] (Boehm 1994). This sequence of turns reminds us a little bit of the sequence of modernity, post-modernity, and second modernity (Heinrich Klotz 1996; Beck, Giddens, Lash 1994), or altermodernity (Bourriaud 2009). But the decisive book was published in 1961: *How to Do Things with Words* by J. L. Austin, which announced the “performative turn” (Austin 1962). Since the experimental music of the 1950s (from John Cage to Henri Pousseur) and the experimental poetry (Umberto Eco), the public has been invited to participate in the creation of artworks. The artist is not the sole contributor to the work, there is also the spectator. Marcel Duchamp stated in 1957 in his famous lecture on the creative act: “All in all, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator [...] adds his contribution to the creative act” (Duchamp, 1957). Modern art is much more than just abstract painting. The real rupture with classical art is the introduction of real objects, real movements, real time, and finally real people into the art system. In the beginning it was only the artist, who acted in the artwork, but soon the act of performance was transferred by, for example, Happenings, to the spectator and the audience.

Since the end of the 1950s, we live - maybe unnoticed - in the age of the performative turn. The arts, from music to sculpture, are immensely influenced by the performance of the public. The performative turn in the arts mirrors the slow dispersal of representative politics by performative politics. This performative turn has an influence on our notion of creativity, on the behavior of the masses, and on our concept of art. First and foremost, we experience the emancipation of the audience: the visitor becomes a user.

The very terms “user innovation” or “consumer-generated content” bear witness to the birth of a new kind of democratic art in which everyone can participate. The model platform for this participation is the Internet, where everyone can post his or her texts, photos, or videos. For the first time in history there is an “institution”, a “space” and a “place” where the lay public can offer their works to others with the aid of media art, without the guardians of the art world. Until now, of course, the products of the masses’ creativity have been censured. Only museums and other state-owned or privately controlled zones like art magazines or galleries could define what art is and what good art is. They defined and stipulated what could be exhibited. They defined legitimate art. Now the gate is open for illegitimate art (Bourdieu 1965). With the advent of picture machines like the photographic camera, painters lost their monopoly on image making. And now, with the existence of the Internet as a global distribution system, art in general has lost its monopoly on creativity. After the expanded arts (George Maciunas), we are living in the epoch of expanded creativity. Everybody is an artist (Joseph Beuys, 1970) and everybody is creative (on the Web). Art loses its image monopoly and its monopoly on creativity. The mass media lose their control function. On the Internet everybody is a distributor. Public activism was already a major factor in revolutionary art practices in the '60. Now we have a triumphant comeback of performance practices and strategies, due to public and private activism in the political, social, and artistic spheres performed on social Web platforms and in public spaces.

Rewritings

Some people perceive the transformations of the global world from the perspective of a clash (Huntington 1996). Some people see these transformations from the perspective of confluence (Trojanow and Hoskoté 2007).

Our perspective is that we are experiencing an epoch of rewriting programs: rewriting art history, rewriting political and economic history on a global scale. Translations and transfers from one culture to another, in a multilateral and multipolar world, no longer create the hegemony of an international art, but the reevaluation of the local and the regional. We are witnessing the reentry of forgotten and unforeseen parts of geography and history, we experience how historic concepts and events are reenacted. Contemporary art and the contemporary world are part of a global rewriting program. We observe how Indian art rewrites European art and how European art rewrites Indian art, how European art rewrites Asian art and how Asian art rewrites North American art. We are witnessing a new cartography of art in the making. What we see today is a rewriting of technologies, economies, politics, cultures, and art forms. We intend to expose the traces of these rewriting programs in global art that articulate the confluences and influences of cultures. In this sense we are living in a postethnic age; we encounter the postethnic state of art.

Notes

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