

Editorial

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E. 6 - 13

The aim of the present volume is to introduce a new project at the ZKM | Karlsruhe, one that is still in its initial stages. The texts collected here represent a first attempt to document the impact of globalization on contemporary art and the worldwide museum scene. In this respect, special attention is addressed to countries "beyond Euramerica." John Clark introduces this label here with reference to a new geography of art production characterized by its global expansion. At present, this production has become visible only in a rising number of biennials and traveling exhibitions that have spread across the globe over the past two decades. With respect to art museums, however, we are dealing with an entirely different set of issues that have hardly been investigated. Such questions focus on the institutionalization of contemporary global art. In the West, these issues are shaped differently than in other parts of the world. The inclusion of non-Western artists in permanent museum collections in the West is still of marginal importance. Outside the West, the new art production creates problems in that museums encounter national barriers and even political resistance. Sometimes their existence is no more than the expression of economic interests. In general, museums in non-Western parts of the world either have no institutional history or refer back to a colonial past. Often, museums are places with a disproportionate share of private investment. Thus, such museums face challenges that not only require new theories but demand institutional solutions to issues other than the budget concerns of their Western counterparts.

In a preliminary phase, in cooperation with the International Research Center for Cultural Studies (IFK) in Vienna, the museum topic was introduced within the context of cultural theory. A first conference, in January 2006, opened the usual museological discussion to an extended background of research by identifying museums as contested sites where the representation of a given culture becomes a political issue. A second meeting in Karlsruhe, in June 2006, confirmed the project's high relevance. The participants, who came from around the world, called for an initiative to create an ongoing exchange among institutions

involved in the museum's changing profile over the next several years. During the second meeting, participants discussed a number of questions that can be summarized here as follows: How is contemporary art currently understood in institutions located in different cultures? How does its exhibition practice differ from that of "modern" art? Is it true that so-called modernism is nowadays considered as synonymous with Western hegemony and with the ideology of the modern in general? How is modernism represented in global art? Does global art practice substantially change the concept of contemporary versus modern art? What impact does the shift from modernist to post-modern art in the West around 1960 have on current conceptions of art? How is contemporary art, and art in general, thought of in such places where there is no art history and no tradition of exhibitions? Is Western modernism now at the stage of shrinking to an episode in the history of art and is the canon of art that it created thus no longer mandatory? Does global contemporary art encompass much more than merely modern art? Does the dualism between "high" and "low," which was so important to modernism, survive in present day cultures?

The discussion also touched other aspects of the museum scene in a global perspective. Considered essential was to turn attention to the cultural and social environment of art museums, as opposed to migration, which is a highly discussed situation of individual artists. This also includes the issue of inclusion and exclusion. Are museums also dealing with this question in their collection and exhibition policies? In what ways are they dependant on issues of local importance such as art as a public medium? In this respect, what does art, as a contemporary phenomenon, mean outside a Western context? Is it no more than the most recent development of modern art or does it represent something else that demands mediation by museums? Agreement was reached that one of the main objectives of the project will be investigating the reciprocal impact that contemporary art and local museums have on one another.

Contemporary art, in a Western context, usually meant the updating of modern art, whether it was considered as postmodern or simply "recent." But even in Western museums, the extension of contemporary into global art necessitates a thorough rethinking, especially in the realm of public collections that serve as representation of a contemporary world. Local societies may be reluctant to participate in and react to a

global world. In such circumstances, non-Western museums face different problems than their Western counterparts. As public institutions, they depend on a local audience still unfamiliar with the experience of art in the Western sense. Their task is to create local art audiences different from the local art audiences in the West. But such a development will also have repercussions for the Western art scene, when artists with global recognition suddenly produce for the local audiences in their countries of origin and address a local imagination.

The problem is already prefigured in multicultural societies of the West in which minorities may not share the mainstream definition of art. In this respect, the former colonies or third world countries, on the one hand, will look for their own art to represent their culture. On the other hand, however, their claims will have to acknowledge their place in the new process of global art. It is evident that art and politics will increasingly interact with or contradict each other, which the conflict with Islamic countries, in particular, brings to the fore. It seems that art's future will be decided in the twenty-first century in those parts of the world that have not yet had a voice. Institutions are thus compelled to respond to a changing art discourse developing in a new cartography of cultures.

National memory, local societies, and the art market develop disparate strategies that rarely coincide. In this context, museums as public institutions face challenges of their own. Discourse will hereby shift away from individual artists and temporary exhibitions to the institutional role of the respective museums. Museums are places that also represent changes in culture and in the demands of national imagination. In African countries, colonial museums did not address local imagination. The artifacts of ethnology may intersect with contemporary art on many levels. Museums are, therefore, forced to represent narratives of a national past versus a transcultural iconography. Sometimes such narratives carry a local or national memory that provides the desired identity, although from a Western view, the concept of a nation may be a past ideal, especially for modern art that claims to be international. Nowadays, post-national ideas often replace post-colonial debates.

There is an additional aspect to be taken into account. In terms of modernity, which currently disperses into multiple modernities,

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Claude Ardouin, London	John Clark, Sydney	Bogumil Jewsiewski, Quebec
Karin Adrian von Roques, Bonn	Ekaterina Degot, Moscow	Ladislav Kesner, Prague
Waltraud Bayer, Graz	Shelly Errington, Los Angeles	Beral Madra, Istanbul
Hans Belting, Karlsruhe/Vienna	Julia Fabényi, Budapest	John Onians, Norwich
Lin-Chi-Ming, Taipei	Ginta Gerharde-Upenice, Riga	Wonil Rhee, Seoul
	Gregor Jansen, Karlsruhe	Peter Weibel, Karlsruhe

THE CHALLENGE OF ART MUSEUMS

///ZK/// Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe

museums are asked by their audiences and sponsors to reconstruct a local art history even in those cases where none exists in the modern sense. This issue, in turn, leads to a redefinition of "art" by recovering neglected avant-gardes or, alternatively, by renaming local arts and crafts as neglected art forms. In short, museums outside the West are still in search of their new role, as local forums and as sites for international tourism and global presence.

Contemporary art, as it is exhibited in local institutions of different cultures and countries, no longer seems to qualify as the universal concept it was for some time for a Western gaze. In this respect, China and soon India, as emerging world powers, will need their own focus. The same applies to Islamic countries where, however, the rich, oil producing countries in the region play a distinct role. South America also requires different consideration, as it participated in Western traditions from a very early stage and in some ways appears as another face of the West. Looking beyond such regions, it will also be necessary to cast a new glance at the remaining parts of the world that are not included in the historical geography of art.

Change in museum policies is also manifest in institutions that hoard the common collections of objects and artifacts from traditional societies. Symptomatic of this change is the renaming of former ethnological museums as "Museums of World Culture." But what is considered as culture beyond its traditional face? We might even ask whether in some parts of the world, contemporary art has begun to fill the void resulting from the loss of material culture in a former sense. The interrupted production of objects, which were once destined for rituals, necessitates a new definition of culture in a global world. Previously, ethnological museums often displayed the results of field work that served as research on other cultures. Today, the notion of culture is changing together with the function of field work. The field of field work changes, too, as it increasingly takes over the study of contemporaneous worlds in the sense used by Marc Augé. Whereas traditional cultures were interpreted as agencies of living memory, today they either become part of advanced societies or are left behind as dead matter, which reifies memory.

After the exhaustion of ethnic arts and crafts in many parts of the world, contemporary art, especially where it has no genealogy of art history, is attracting roles and functions that differ from one place to

another. It is unclear whether museums in the old sense will be given a share in this ethno/art turn or whether new centers of cultural production are necessary, which remain in competition with museums. Seen from a global perspective, the future of museums is closely linked to the future of art and attracts the conflicts that are carried out in the art scene. One of the conflicts will be the secret separation of the arts of different cultures in the West. For the art of Western culture, there are museums of art. The art of non-Western cultures are put in "Museen der Kulturen" or ethnographic museums by the West. But the division between ethnic art and contemporary art will diminish in a global world.

In the West, art institutions are undergoing changes documenting the decline of the welfare state and progression toward corporative institutionalism. A professional change has also passed through the museum gates, mandating a rethinking of exhibition programs and special events. Museums experience the need for self-organization including cooperation with institutions that operate on quite different models. Such partnerships characterize an expanded urban or transnational space of cultural production and cultural events. Other changes are felt in museums that exist outside the European or North-American scene. To quote from the *Art Museum Network News*, new art museums, from Qatar to West Kowloon, Singapore and Beijing, "are built to house collections that often have yet to be identified, let alone acquired."¹ This means that the museum, once regarded as a container for long standing collections, is now exposed to different interests and visions that require a new discourse. "In the past, museums were carved out of palaces or erected to house collections secured by conquest, nationalization, gift, or purchase. Today an increasing number of museums are being built as speculative investments designed to attract two often incompatible currencies: collections and crowds."²

The future of art museums in the domain of contemporary art will rely on the potential and continuity of what we have long regarded as "a collection." For the time being, most museums still live from the profile of their permanent collections. It is, however, uncertain whether art will remain a collectable item in the sense of providing materials that can be stored and exhibited. The time-based variants of contemporary art already represent a departure from collections that were object-based and space dependent. In addition, museums were usually considered to

be spaces for exhibition rather than platforms for ephemeral events that would never materialize in a collection. The globalization of contemporary art will also be reflected in various forms of collections that differ throughout the world. It is also unlikely that museums everywhere will be able to match the economic level that characterizes the international art market. Thus, acquisition may be restricted to regional currencies and artists. If that happens, museums will differ more among each other than we could possibly foresee at the moment. In other words, their geographical situations will be mirrored in the profiles of the respective collections. But this is not the end of the story. Locally-based collections will not be authoritative if they start from point zero. They will have to build up their local genealogies, a kind of neglected avant-garde, as it were, in a modernist sense. Even if such issues seem premature, their importance will soon become increasingly evident.

As the present volume indicates, ZKM | Karlsruhe aims to create a platform where such ideas and problems find an open forum. We intend to initiate a discourse and to enter into an exchange with other institutions that will help to advance the discussion. Selected papers from the two conferences mentioned above comprise the core of the texts. Preceding these texts is a survey that Hans Belting first delivered at a museum conference at the Vatican in December 2006. Following the critical essays are selected texts that have proven to be exemplary contributions in integrating cultural theories and museum practice. Under the heading of "archive," such texts are meant to represent leading authorities in the debate. Thus, the present volume aims to open a new discussion that we hope will find resonance throughout the world. ZKM offers, in particular, to serve as an observatory for gathering and dispersing information on the changing scene of contemporary art museums on a global scale.

Three of the texts in the Archive were first published in the year book 1994/95 of the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin where they had a small circulation. They were written after a vivid debate about the role of art museums in Berlin and in other cultures. Salma Khadra Jayyusi, as a writer and poet, expresses the views of a Near-Eastern culture where the visual arts traditionally played a marginal part. The two texts by Hans Belting and Mamadou Diawara reproduce a dialogue that centered around the problematic function of an art museum in an African context.

Mamadou Diawara, as an anthropologist from Mali, formulated a skeptical position about the significance of museums, especially those with a colonial history, in his homeland. Serge Gruzinski, the leading authority on the colonial politics with images, in his contribution deals with a global imagery in new films that have reached an advanced stage in the process of globalization. Rustom Bharucha discusses the museum in Asia from an external point of view, as he mainly operates in theatre and performance. Rasheed Araeen's text has become a landmark in discussing the famous exhibition *Les Magiciens de la Terre* of 1989 and his critical views are still valid in the present global scene.

Notes

1 Maxwell L. Anderson, "The Expansion Wager: Collections v. Crowds," in *Art Museum Network*, <http://www.amn.org>, (1 March 2007).

2 See note 1.