

Peter Weibel  
Chairman and CEO, ZKM  
Co-Curator of the Exhibition

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This exhibition and this book represent an attempt to document the impact of globalization on contemporary art and to discover a new continent of art that has been unobserved until now, a new geography of art production that is characterized by its global expansion. Presently, this production has only become visible in a rising number of biennials, which, in the past decade, were spreading over the globe.

With this exhibition, a survey on the art revolution in Asia, the contemporary art production in 20 countries of Asia, we will pose the following questions: How is contemporary art today 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 today considered as synonymous with Western hegemony and with the ideology of modern art at large? How is modernism represented in global art? Does global art practice substantially change the concept of contemporary versus modern art? What is the impact of the shift from modernist to post-modern art in the West around 1960 on today's art conceptions? How is contemporary art and art in general conceived of in such places where there is no art history and no tradition of exhibitions? Does Western modernism today shrink to an episode in the history of art and is therefore the canon of art which it created no longer obligatory? Does global contemporary art encompass much more than merely modern art? Does the dualism between High and Low that was so important to modernism survive in present day cultures? What does art, as a contemporary phenomenon, mean in this respect outside a Western context? Is it no more than the most recent development of modern art or does it represent something else that demands the mediation of museums?

Contemporary art, in a Western context, usually meant the updating of modern art, whether it was considered as post-modern or else as just recent. But even in Western museums, the extension of contemporary into global art necessitates a thorough rethinking.

The traumatic experiences of two world wars, the Holocaust, totalitarian systems such as fascism, the Nazi era, communism, have put their stamp on modernism in Europe. In the 19th century Europe produced modernism, and in the 20th century it produced totalitarian systems. For this reason it would be naïve to continue the modernist project without casting a critical eye. Adorno and Horkheimer argued in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (first published in German in 1944; in English 1972), written during their exile in America while Hitler tyrannized Europe, that the logic of enlightened rationality, developed for dominating nature, may also become the logic for holding sway over man. However, modernism turned a relatively blind eye to the problems of nationality, particularity, and universality. Owing to the critical glance taken by postmodernism, central mechanisms of culture were discovered within the universalism of an international

world culture that is the same for all peoples and mankind as a whole: its standard being binding for all. With such mechanisms a monopoly was asserted on establishing universal norms and a standardization of the world from the perspective of an ethnic, gender- and class-specific, and national centrism. Modernism was simply not free of the fuzzy logic of nationalism, religion, and capital. It had only been neglected and not paid attention to. What was known as modernization was at the same time a covert strategy of colonization. Europe has discovered that its imperialist expansion and colonization was carried out in the form of a universal civilizing function in the name of modernization. The free, universal society of a European nature turned into the colonization of other nations, and meant the de-forming of other cultures through Europeanization, all done in the name of freedom, progress, and technology. But the colonization of particular ethnic groups within multi-ethnic societies by agents of central power is fading out, as events in Eastern Europe, Near East and Far East, have been showing us.

The problem already is 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 more and more interact with or contradict each other, as especially the conflict with Islamic countries brings to the fore. It seems that the future of art in the 21st century will be determined in such parts of the world, which have not yet raised their voice. It is therefore essential for institutions to respond to a changing art discourse that will develop in a new cartography of cultures.

The criticism of modernism from a non-European standpoint is the change that modernism made a universal doctrine out of particular characteristics of European life. The European singularity was elevated to become a generally binding canon for all peoples of the globe, a crude essentialism. The term 'subject' basically meant a white male bourgeois European subject. Reason, centered on the subject as a founding principle of modernism, was thus deconstructed already at the point when the subject was replaced with a non-European instead of a European, or a female instead of a male. It must be stated that the rise of postmodernism in the west came at the same time that a discourse on

post-colonialism was taking place. Postmodern deconstruction of the great logo-centric master narratives of European culture is comparable with the post-colonial project of the dissolution of the centrist/peripheral system of the imperialist discourse. The post-structuralist agenda such as the critique of the Cartesian concept of the subject, the instability and randomness of signification, the localization of the subject in the symbolic order of language and discourse are encountered again in a different way in post-colonial discourse. Deconstruction and decolonization thus share a common ground.

In colonialism one's own values are expanded to foreign territories, one's own particularity is held to be universally valid, and forced upon the Others. Colonization means territorial, economic, political, and cultural subjugation, appropriation, exploitation of other countries and peoples, in order to succeed with one's own hegemony and to achieve acceptance of one's own domination of the world. Put simply, we could say that 'world art' was defined as 'western art' and 'western art' was defined as 'white art'. The notion of a 'world art' is the child of western civilization, born of the ideological intention to suppress and exclude any artistic expression that does not adapt to the western canon. Therefore, our 'art museums' are full of the products of western art, while we have built so-called 'houses of foreign cultures' to present the art of other civilizations that we in the West call 'ethnic art'. Such a division expresses the symptoms of the cultural Euro-centric mechanism of exclusion. The distinction between 'art museum' and 'museum of ethnology' expressly marks the borderline between inclusion and exclusion. Therefore true global art today is post-ethnic.

Like all social systems of the First World, art is also embedded within the dialectics of difference. Only when a style distinguishes itself does it become a style. Only in difference does identity come about. Following its own logic, this system of differentiation produces and exercises exclusion, according to Niklas Luhmann's theory of social systems. The question inevitably arises as to whether the social system of art in a western sense is not itself the preferred field for the dialectics of inclusion/exclusion, and for this reason, might be defined as a colonial discourse. Within the European-North American frame of reference the art system decides first what products and practices are to be included as art, or as relevant art respectively, and second, which non-European products and practices are to be included into the European-North

Thronoelone  
Art - New Art in Warsaw, Wacław Płacz, Peter Weibel, Guggen Jansen (Wsp.)  
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American art system. Western culture draws borderlines between itself and other peoples, cultures, races, and religions. At the same time, it excludes the 'Other', as there are women, people of other skin colors, children, the elderly, homosexuals, etc. The voices and the knowledge of the Others are relegated to the margins, or excluded altogether. This is the reason for Luhmann's thesis that the culture of the western world is based in principle upon exclusion. The 'white cube', or the 'white cell' respectively, are synonyms for exclusion. The pure gallery space is not only pure aesthetically, but has also been purified ethnically, religiously, class- and gender-specifically, so that it is largely the works of art made by Catholic, white, European or North-American men that we see in the museums. The art of other religions and other peoples, of another gender, is neglected in the museums of modern art. Is (modern) art thus only an European invention, as Jimmie Durham asks? Paradoxically, art became a synonym for exclusion. Throughout the world the awareness is growing for a historical necessity to deconstruct not only the 'white cube', but also 'white art' as a field of practices for domination, rejection, and exclusion, and to undertake a 'cultural remix', or a 'remapping' of the cultural cartography from the viewpoint of colonial criticism. The map of culture must be decolonized in the sense of a truly global culture.

The change in museum politics also is manifest in such institutions that hoard the usual collection of objects and artefacts from traditional societies. It is symptomatic that former ethnological museums are renamed 'Museums of World Cultures' today. But what is considered as culture beyond its traditional face? It may be asked whether contemporary art, in some parts of the world, begins to fill the void that results from the loss of material culture in the old sense. The interrupted production of objects that were once destined for rituals, necessitates a new definition of culture in a global world. Ethnological museums had often displayed the results of field work which served the research on other cultures. Today the notion of culture is changing together with the function of field work. 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, which differ from one place to another. It is a question whether museums in the old sense, will be given a share in this ethno/art turn or whether it needs new centers of cultural production which stay in competition with museums. Seen in a global perspective, the future of museums is closely linked to the future of art and the conflicts, which 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 exist museums of art. The art of non-western cultures the West put in 'Haus der Kulturen' or ethnographic museums. But the divide between ethnic art

and contemporary art will diminish in a global world. Again and again, artists are posing the question, if art, as we know it, is just a genuine European invention. It is considered to be one of Europe's greatest accomplishments that an art was constructed that produces and exercises exclusion, according to Niklas Luhmann's theory of social systems, and which has created its own autonomy, sovereignty and a regulating system. The ship of modernity is now going to be analyzed from the inside and the outside. Like Otto Neurath, the well-known philosopher has said: "We are like skippers who have to deconstruct their ship in the middle of the sea and not on a dock where we would have the possibility to put it together, again with best constituents." (Otto Neurath, 1932)

In this kind of circumstances is modern art today. While the pressure of legitimation, which was put on her since the enlightenment and its imperative of rationality is still a burden, modern art has to challenge itself. In the era of globalization other cultures doubt our concept of art, the result being a relativization and poses different questions. How do we legitimize art history and how is art constructed - which are the rules and criteria?

Modern art today begins where modernism ends. It is not possible to say 'farewell to an idea' as T. J. Clark in 'Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism', 1999, wrote and sailing onward on the ship of modernism at the same time. Several exhibitions at the ZKM are posing exactly this question: How will it go on? Where will the journey end? Which 'turn' will follow the 'linguistic turn' (Richard Rorty, 1967), the 'pictorial turn' (W. J. T. Mitchell) or the 'iconic turn' (Hubert Burda and Christa Maar, 2004)?

One way to determine the situation is the observation of global art. This is the art of today - contemporary art - but not the art that is made in Europe or North America, but the art that is made beyond 'Euramerica' (J. Clark, 1999). Globally produced contemporary art is much more than a mere variation and evolution of modern art and shows both, national and international references. It is, to say it in Hans Belting's words, a post-historic and post-ethnic art.

Our exhibition 'Thermocline of Art - New Asian Waves' presents the first comprehensive view of contemporary Asian art production, with more than 100 artists from c. 20 Asian countries - from Japan to Korea to China, from Southeast Asia to central Asia. In the last two years, Asian art, above all art

from booming China, has received increased attention in museums in German speaking areas from Bern to Hamburg. Yet while prior exhibitions have been presented by European collectors or Western curators, ZKM | Museum of Contemporary Art offers Germany's first major Asian art exhibition by an Asian curator. Curator Wonil Rhee, artistic director of the Media City Seoul Biennale and co-curator of 2006 Shanghai Biennale, is a recognized expert on Asian art. The exhibition is not limited to internationally recognized artists who have immigrated to the West, but presents mainly emerging artists who still live in their countries of origin - from Kazakhstan to Korea, from Mongolia to Indonesia. This art showcases other values and criteria than Western art or art that is produced in the West for the Western art market. It is a postmodern and post-ethnic art that, through paintings, installations, film, video, photography, sculpture, and objects, shows the conflict potential of globalization and its effects on the Asian region. It opens up a panorama of art that occasionally transgresses the borders of our understanding of art and circumnavigates the cape of modernism.