

2nd International Biennial of
Contemporary Art of Seville

Edited by Okwui Enwezor

THE UN- HOME- LY

PHANTOM SCENES IN
GLOBAL SOCIETY

2nd International Biennial of Contemporary Art of Seville
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For we would say that thinking is r
a violence of the being that is said
or perceived. Like a word with n
without a story; an event *par e*
my subject without fail, o
shaped the world as an
game. Hence the c
example, *passag*
word, speaki
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TERRY SMITH

CREATING DANGEROUS LY, THEN AND NOW

To create today is to create dangerously. Any publication is an act, and that act exposes one to the passions of an age that forgives nothing.... The question, for all those who cannot live without art and what it signifies, is merely to find out how, among the police forces of so many ideologies (how many churches, what solitude!), the strange liberty of creation is possible.

— Albert Camus, 1957¹

Becoming an artist was a political choice. This does not mean that I make “political art,” or even “political graphic art.” My choice was to refuse to make political art. I make art politically.

— Thomas Hirschhorn, 2000²

“Art, Truth and Politics” was the British playwright Harold Pinter’s title for his speech accepting the 2005 Nobel Prize for Literature. Awkwardly unfashionable, nerve-jangling elements in art-world discourse, the topics continue to animate the interfaces between art and its broader publics. These zones of contact are actually more like borders than permeable boundaries; heavily patrolled on both sides, they invite incursion, which attracts reaction and, too often, direct repression or subtle evasion. The wise men of Stockholm have been canny players across these contested domains for decades, and their awards are for the most part carefully calculated for maximum effect as symbolic gestures in support of freedom. In his lecture, Pinter spoke simply about his sources of inspiration — no surprise that the list was strangely attenuated — and spent much of his time excoriating a “brutal, indifferent, scornful and ruthless” United States as the greatest force for unfreedom in the world today.³ Targets of his critique responded by doubting his capacity, as an artist, to make expert political judgments and by damning the Nobel committee for pretending to extol his plays when they really wanted to reward his political activism — which, conservative commentators held, is extra-artistic.

Clashes of this kind seem, these days, at once more noisily pervasive as phenomena than before and painfully old-fashioned in form. Conservatives persist with the crude contrasts that surfaced — and succeeded — in the culture wars of the 1980s. On the other side, appeals to general principles such as artistic autonomy have provided poor cover, largely because they concede the main ground: that the battle is to be fought over categories and simple instances, not over processes, interrogations, and complex actualities. Taking sides is the first mistake. Pinter’s speech was an effort to use the most public forum he would ever command to demonstrate what critical understandings of actual and possible linkages between art and politics are like, and to show that these links, like all others between humans, are a web woven in varying degrees and mixtures of good and bad faith. Is seeking to act within this web the way for “truth” to subsist between “art” and “politics”? What might this mean for the increasing number of contemporary artists who refuse this separation and, like Thomas Hirschhorn, seek to “make art politically”? These questions will be my focus in this essay.

What Lies between Art and Politics?

Putting the question in terms such as “art,” “truth,” and “politics” might seem an odd reversion to the moment when many Europeans, and some of the rest of the world, began to draw lessons from the conflagrations, barbarism, and betrayals of World War II. Yet it is

perhaps no accident that we are drawn, in the current conditions of contemporaneity, to an earlier age of aftermath. Given the disjunctiveness of the present, this is no surprise. The more interesting question is: why this particular earlier moment?

At the beginning of his speech, Pinter gives us an immediate clue by recalling something he wrote in 1958: "There are no hard and fast distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true and what is false. A thing is not necessarily true or false; it can be both true and false." The previous year his play *The Birthday Party* had been badly received, *The Dumb Waiter* had fared little better, but both, along with *The Caretaker* (1959), were soon recognized as major contributions to the theater of the absurd. This genre had been pioneered by the Existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, in plays such as *Huis-clos* (*No Exit*, 1944), and by Albert Camus in his *Caligula* (1942). In Pinter's later plays, such as *One for the Road* (1984), *Mountain Language* (1988), and *The New World Order* (1991), he sought to realize, in specific ways, the ideal of *écriture engagée*. His 1958 statement is framed by an Existentialist conception of our alienated condition, of the absence of essences, of the necessity to work actively to realize one's existence. His theater is an outcome of this moment as surely as were such films as Jean-Pierre Melville's *Le Silence de la mer* (1949) and *L'Armée des ombres* (1969).

In 1957, Camus, in his own Nobel acceptance speech, had characterized himself as "a man almost young, possessed only of his doubts and of a work still in progress, accustomed to live in the isolation of work or the seclusion of friendship." Yet this isolation was only apparent: "To me art is not a solitary delight. It is a means of stirring the greatest number of men by providing them with a privileged image of our common joys and woes. Hence, it forces the artist not to isolate himself; it subjects him to the humblest and most universal truth." What is this truth that binds writer and reader, artist and humanity? Camus describes the writer's function as the exercise of arduous duties:

By definition, he cannot put himself today in the service of those who make history; he is at the service of those who suffer it. Otherwise, he will be alone and deprived of his art. Not all the armies of tyranny with their millions of men will free him from his isolation, even and particularly if he falls into step with them. But the silence of an unknown prisoner abandoned to humiliations at the other end of the world is enough to draw the writer out of his exile, at least whenever, in the midst of the privileges of freedom, he manages not to forget that silence, and to transmit it in order to make it resound by means of his art.

Connection here is a sharing of silences, the linking of one solitude to another, as writing and resistance reach out to each other across the clamor, the chaos, what Camus goes on to call "the convulsions of the epoch."⁴

Pinter begins from a different, perhaps opposite distinction but arrives at almost the same point. Having recalled his remarks about the slippages between reality and unreality, truth and falsity, he immediately confines them to art, showing, through a series of striking examples, how the inspiration for each of his plays arose from a single, profoundly puzzling word-image of human disjunction. Then his register shifts. "As a citizen I must ask: what is true? What is false?" This is because, he argues, we live in a world in which

those in power maintain that power by surrounding us with “a vast tapestry of lies, upon which we feed.” He goes on to list the false justifications advanced to cover the invasion of Iraq, then details a sequence of U.S. foreign-policy duplicities in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Chile, its support of dictatorships all over the world, and the maintenance of the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, along with the poverty and imprisonment ubiquitous in the United States itself. He acknowledges that the United States has managed all these “bloody crimes” while receiving little of the obloquy heaped on the Soviet Union during the same period — indeed, it receives accolades, especially its own particular brand of “self-love,” and the support of dependent countries such as Britain. To a dramatist this strategy is “scintillating,” nothing less than “the greatest show on the road.” Against it, “unflinching, unswerving, fierce intellectual determination, as citizens, to define the real truth of our lives and our societies is a crucial obligation which devolves upon us all.” Otherwise we will surrender what little remains to us of “the dignity of man.”⁵

These words seem to circle back to those of Camus. Are they somehow conjured by the rhetorical demands of such prestigious occasions? Camus addressed the Nobel Prize committee fulsomely, lacing elegant expressions of gratitude with poignant hints at the demands of creating dangerously. (“Create Dangerously,” his lecture at the University of Uppsala in December 1957, from which I drew my epigram, is a more forthright and subtle declaration of his position on art and politics.)⁶ Where Pinter ignores the Stockholm sages, opting instead for a rousing stump speech aimed at the world, Camus positions himself as a voice of his generation, “Those men born at the beginning of the First World War who had reached the age of twenty just as Hitler was seizing power and the first revolutionary trials were taking place [the Moscow show trials of supposed traitors against Soviet Communism], who then had to complete their education by facing up to the war in Spain, the Second World War, the regime of concentration camps, a Europe of torture and prisons, [and who] must today bring their children and their works to maturity in a world threatened with nuclear destruction.” In a world seemingly bent on self-immolation, their task was less to remake the world than to keep it from destroying itself:

As the heir of a corrupt history that blends blighted revolutions, misguided techniques, dead gods, and worn-out ideologies, in which second-rate powers can destroy everything today, but are unable to win anyone over, in which intelligence has stooped to becoming a servant of hated oppression, that generation, starting from nothing but its own negations, has had to re-establish both within and without itself a little of what constitutes the dignity of life and death.

Camus prefigures Pinter’s picture of the contemporary condition. The words of both alert us to how little has changed, in the fifty years between their statements, when it comes to the ways in which large-scale power is exercised.

Yet the *scale* of this power has changed, as has some of its style. So, too, have the challenges for citizens, and for artists. In his 2006 State of the Union address, U.S. President George W. Bush divided the world into tyrannies and democracies and nominated “the advance of freedom” as the “great story of our time.” In 1945, he noted, there were “about two dozen lonely democracies on earth. Today, there are 122.” American foreign policy,

he urged, was committed to promoting “self-government” everywhere, and to fighting those terrorists who opposed it.⁷ Yet the leaders of many of these democracies have felt so threatened in recent years that they have been willing to suspend the exercise of fundamental freedoms, even the rule of law itself, as it applies not only to others but also to their own citizens. They do this, they claim, in order to protect their citizens from actual or implied threats against them, to protect the law, and to preserve democracy itself. As he spoke, President Bush was justifying his secret ordering of wiretaps and electronic tracking of U.S. citizens as essential to the War on Terror.

Giorgio Agamben has exposed the hypocrisy of these heavily cloaked assertions of the powers that be: “The normative aspect of law can thus be obliterated and contradicted with impunity by a governmental violence that—while ignoring international law externally and producing a permanent state of exception internally—nevertheless still claims to be applying the law.”⁸ Always claiming short-term expediency, and a response to external violence or internal insurrection, many democracies have brought themselves into a permanent or semipermanent “state of exception.” Indeed, antidemocratic exceptionalism has become the paradigm of government itself throughout the world. It exercises its sovereignty against all comers, including its own citizens, seeking to smother them in illusory comforts while actually reducing them to a “bare life,” stripped of all rights and freedoms, isolated in collective solitude. These governmental entities are in constant economic and cultural struggle against their others—nowadays the oligarchies of China and the Middle East, the left-leaning countries in South America, the volatile autocracies in Africa, what Bush would call the “tyrannies.” To many, including Pinter and Agamben, this division of the world amounts to “a machine that is leading the West to a global civil war.”⁹

Enmeshed within this network of afflicted powers—there are many other closely implicated ones, such as globalizing companies, international agencies, affiliative quasi-communities—how might one act against its constrictive and destructive impulses?¹⁰ To Agamben, politics has been “contaminated by law,” a rule of law that legitimizes state violence—actual or implied violence that, we might add, is overwhelmingly dedicated to the promotion of special interests, in all societies everywhere. “The only truly political action, however, is that which severs the nexus between violence and law.” In the space thus opened up,

We will then have before us a “pure” law, in the sense in which [Walter] Benjamin speaks of a “pure” language and a “pure” violence. To a word that does not bind, that neither commands nor prohibits anything, would correspond an action as pure means, which shows only itself, without any relation to an end. And, between the two, not a lost original state, but only the use and the human praxis that the powers of law and myth had sought to capture in the state of exception.¹¹

“Human praxis” sounds much more humble than the “dignity of man.” Nor is it “the dignity of life and death.” But it may amount to something like the same thing. Confined as we are within the vicious and delusory workings of the sovereignty machine, “pure action” may be the closest we can get, these days, to what used to be named by these values. But what, concretely, is this purity? When does it occur? How might it be found?

These considerations bear directly on the question of art, truth, and politics. They open out the idea of politics, releasing it from the confines of official public spheres, in which the only permissible agents are professional politicians and their institutions of representation and dissemination. Deconstruction has already performed this operation on the idea of truth. A parallel opening out of the idea of art has been going on since the 1950s, led by artists and picked up by many critics, historians, and philosophers. While the world seems to morph into an ever-deepening strangeness haunted by recurrent, chimerical familiarities, even as it seems to accelerate toward catastrophe, these kinds of openings strive to give us the tools to see the shapes of contemporaneity, and to glimpse modes of survival within it.

Contemporary Art in the Conditions of Contemporaneity

What is the current world picture? How has it changed since the postwar period in Europe, and since decolonization opened up Africa, Asia, and South America? As the world order built on First, Second, Third and Fourth World divisions implodes, what arrangements of power are emerging? They are much subtler than those theses about a "clash of civilizations," and the other kinds of theories that still underlie the world-picturing of some powerful nations and all kinds of fundamentalism. In this section I will make some remarks (necessarily schematic) about this, and about the kinds of art that are being made in response to these changing conditions. In this way, among the plethora of artistic responses to the new circumstances, we may be able to glimpse artwork that embodies the concreteness of pure action. Let me begin with two contentions.

Contention 1. *Contemporaneity is the most evident attribute of the current world picture*, encompassing its most distinctive qualities, from the ideoscape of global politics to the interiority of individual being. This picture can no longer be adequately characterized by terms such as "modernity" and "postmodernity," not least because it is shaped by frictions between antinomies so powerful that universal generalization is impossible, as is generalization about that resistance. It is nonetheless far from shapeless. Within contemporaneity, it seems to me, at least three sets of forces contend, turning each other incessantly:

- (i) Globalization's thirst for hegemony in the face of increasing cultural differentiation (the multiteity—simultaneous presence of differences—that was freed by decolonization), for control of time in the face of the proliferation of asynchronous temporalities, and for continuing exploitation of natural and (to a degree not yet seen) virtual resources against the increasing evidence of the inability of those resources to sustain this exploitation—for these reasons, among others, globalization is bound to fail.
- (ii) The accelerating inequity among peoples, classes, and individuals that threatens both the desires for domination entertained by states, ideologies, and religions and the persistent dreams of liberation that continue to inspire individuals and peoples.
- (iii) An infoscape—or, better, a spectacle, an image economy or "iconomy," a regime of representation—that is capable of the potentially instant yet always

thoroughly mediated communication of all information and any image anywhere, but that is at the same time fissured by the uneasy coexistence of closed, highly specialized knowledge communities, open, volatile subjects, and rampant popular fundamentalisms.

These developments have long prehistories within modernity; their contemporary configuration was signaled in the 1950s (not least in art that prioritized various kinds of immediacy), burst out during the 1960s, has been evident to most since 1989, and unmistakable to all since 2001. "Contemporaneity," I submit, is the best name for this situation, as all of these qualities are inherent in the concept of the contemporary. Far from being singular and simple—a default for the modern—the contemporary signifies multiple ways of being with, in, and out of time, separately and at once, with others and without them. Of course these possibilities have always been there: *con tempus* has within its very source the duality of being and time. The difference, now, is that the multiplicities of contemporary being predominate over the kinds of generative and destructive powers named by any other comparable terms (for example, the modern and its derivatives). After the era of grand narratives, they may be all that there is. Thus, they point to a state beyond periodicity, with all that that entails.¹²

Contention 2. *Art today is shaped most profoundly by its situation within contemporaneity.* Certainly the achievements and failings of modernist, colonial, and indigenous art continue to pose inescapable challenges to current practice, but none of them, singly or together, is able to provide an overarching framework. In art worlds, contemporaneity manifests itself in three main ways (I have space here only for assertions and examples, not for arguments).¹³

Institutional Recursion, or Contemporary Art Remodernized

Contemporary art as a movement took shape in the 1980s in economically advanced societies, those committed to spectacle capitalism in their own domains and to globalization in the world at large. The movement was mostly driven by markets seeking to recover from the 1960s and '70s, when the preoccupations of many artists were political, conceptual, and noncommercial, as well as by artists who rejected these preoccupations themselves, and by institutions, especially museums of modern art, seeking to maintain their relevance and audiences. It primarily celebrated artists who continued to work in traditional media (especially painting), who could adapt existent media (notably large-scale sculpture and color photography) to modernist taste, and who could perpetuate traditional subjects through calibrations of new media (including installations, video, and digital work). The movement tends to recuperate modernist values and practices, recurring to them constantly, as if to a touchstone. As a recursive modernist art, though, contemporary art risks its deepest connection to contemporaneity, and courts—and may indeed be sliding into—residuality. This is a kind of remodernism (in an analogy to remodeling a house), one that operates by giving what is essentially modernist art a contemporary look (contemporizing it, in an analogy to winterizing a house), and thus creates a "contemporist" style, or, more broadly, "contemporism." But these are all ugly words, their impurity all too evident.

It is no surprise that artists whose work has become emblematic of this recursive institutionality rate highest in the markets for contemporary art. Jeff Koons, for example, has moved from a Warholian ironization of consumerist imagery to becoming its high-art icon. In this sense his art might be said to have left what Jacques Rancière labels “the aesthetic regime” and entered “the regime of representation.”¹⁴ Koons’ strategy has been taken up and extended by a younger generation, notably Takashi Murakami and Yoshito Nara, as well as countless others. Their acceptance of globalized commercialism accompanies an acute recognition of some of its realities, notably in Murakami’s theories about Superflat style in Japanese art and Little Boy infantilism in Japanese culture, especially since World War II.

Nevertheless, the strongest artists within this tendency were, and are, of two sorts. First there are those who tackled questions arising from their experiences living either in the centers of contemporaneity or on its edges, and who generated personal yet profound (if sometimes sensational) works in fresh, often surprising mixtures of media: performance, environmental work, installation, process, video, and new media. Damien Hirst, for example, has produced powerfully pointed imagery of the inevitability of death and the depredations of the pharmaceutical industry, setting all of his excess imagery within severe yet precisely minimal frameworks.

An equally strong body of work within this movement is that of those artists who have been able to find ways of transforming traditional media so as to carry content as pertinent as that being explored in more contemporary modes. This move is exemplified by the art-historical reversal in Richard Serra’s passage from the antiformal experimentation of his thrown, scatter pieces of the mid-1960s to the baroque spatiality of his subsequent Cor-Ten steel sculptures. It is no accident that his *Snake* (1997) is the only artwork in the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, that matches aesthetically the even more baroque building that houses it. Nor that a major commercial enterprise, Gagosian Gallery in New York’s Chelsea district, was designed to accommodate regular exhibitions by artists such as Serra.

Beyond this point, most art museums and galleries still committed to remodernism undergo a curatorial meltdown. Between the late-modernist and the contemporary galleries yawns an incomprehensible, seemingly unbridgeable gulf. Nowhere was this more evident than at the reopening of The Museum of Modern Art in New York City in 2004, in the contrast between the surety with which the historical collections were housed and the meltdown that occurred in the rooms devoted to contemporary art. In contrast, the display at Dia:Beacon, an hour north of New York, which opened a year earlier, was focused precisely on those artists whose commitment to Minimalist modernism was the most trenchant, bold, and refined.¹⁵ Unless, however, it wishes to remain a perpetual monument to this moment, it now faces the question of how to move on from this rapidly imploding paradigm.

Difference and Critique: The Continuing Emergence of the Postcolonial

The second main tendency in contemporary art does not—in fact could not by its nature—constitute a movement, but two major streams may be discerned within it, each resulting from underlying forces: the decolonization of countries and cultures formerly

part of Euro-American empires, and the persistence within the “advanced” societies of the critical spirit manifested during the 1960s.

At different times and in distinct ways, artists from Africa, South America, North and Southeast Asia, Australasia, Oceania, the zone that Marina Grizinic calls “(East of) Europe,”¹⁶ and the Middle East experienced cultural developments that, generally speaking, and over the forty years since the late 1960s, have unfolded in three overlapping but sequential phases.

- (i) A social call to emphasize endangered, newly asserted, or revived nationalism in their work.
- (ii) A reaction in favor of their personal imperatives as individual artists, and toward seeking some profile within international contemporary art.
- (iii) A forging, in some cases, of a hard-won but still tentative alloy of these two elements.

For a few artists who have been active throughout the period, the challenges occurred in this three-part sequence—though not, of course, with the same intensity or in the same way. Others chose to stay with one of these phases, while others, of course, began their careers during one of the sequence’s latter stages. But something like this pattern can be seen in contexts as widely different as those of various African states undergoing decolonization and Latin America during the revolutionary and fascist periods. Since around 1970 it has also appeared in Australian Aboriginal art in relation to land rights, for example in Djambawa Marawilli’s *Madarrpa Fire/Saltwater* (2005–6), an installation of exquisite ocher paintings on bark and on burial poles at the 2006 Sydney Biennale. Here Marawilli detailed the Dreamtime creation of Blue Mud Bay, near Yilpara in the Northern Territory, the subject of a claim by his people in the Native Title tribunal. He has said, “I don’t want people to go to exhibitions and galleries and see people looking at pretty pictures anymore. I want people to look at my paintings and recognize our law. It’s all I can do.”¹⁷

The play of obligations to community and to selfhood is complex enough for all beings. It is further complicated in many cases by the twentieth-century legacy of closely contested nationalisms, civil wars, ethnic cleansings, foreign interventions, and displacements due to economic necessity. Chinese artists, for example, have experienced these phases in jumbled, accelerated order since the 1980s. Postmodernist thought made an impact in China in the later 1970s, after the demise of the Cultural Revolution, but in the 1980s what artists most deeply sought—even while they still saw their enterprise as a collective effort—were the phases of Western modernism and Enlightenment philosophy that the Cultural Revolution had cut off. Modern art (*xiandai yishu*) became contemporary art (*dangdai yishu*) during the 1990s, particularly after the Tiananmen Square “incident” of 1989 destroyed illusions of collectivity for many, precipitating an alienated individualism. At the same time, international interest in Chinese art addressing these problems opened up not only patronage and markets but opportunities to tackle larger subjects. In recent years, as a result of China’s relentless pursuit of the “four modernizations” to learn from the West in order to achieve economic self-reliance in

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agriculture, industry, science and technology and the military, the conditions that led to high modernism in European cities in the nineteenth century are uncannily reproducing themselves. Whether there will be an outgrowth of realist art—paralleling the rise of realism in French painting during the 1850s, for example—remains to be seen.¹⁸

Parallel developments occurred at the shrinking peripheries of empires everywhere, including those at the borders of the expanding European Community and the evaporating Soviet empire, Grizinic's "(East of) Europe." For obvious reasons, rewriting history is a fraught compulsion in this region, shared by states as much as by interest groups. As István Rév shows, this thirst is driven by a desire for justice that, in withering paradox, tends always to operate retroactively.¹⁹ More optimistic in spirit, the *East Art Map* (2002) was a project in which the artists' group Irwin mobilized twenty art critics, curators and artists to present up to ten crucial art projects from their respective countries during the past fifty years, consequently redrawing the art-historical map of the region. Since the mid-1990s, video artist Péter Forgács has been reusing home movies he has found to trace shadows of the Holocaust, failed totalitarianisms and the false promises of global development in the personal memories of individuals.²⁰ Experiences like these echo well beyond national boundaries: in his Sher-Gil archive project, the Indian artist Vivan Sundaram is engaged in a parallel search through the photographic archive of his own family for ghosts of artists whose dreams were both in and out of place—including, in this case, through marriage, Bombay and Budapest.²¹

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The second major stream of anticolonial critique follows from the evident fact that spectacle capitalism and globalization have not won total consent among artists in the advanced economies; many are alert to its costs, both at home and abroad. These artists have developed practices—usually entailing research over time, widespread public involvement, and lengthy, didactic presentations—that critically trace and strikingly display the global movements of the new world (dis)order between the advanced economies and those connected with them in multiple ways. The "conspiracy" drawings that Mark Lombardi made in the 1990s, for example, offered detailed maps of the connections between major institutions, powerful individuals, governmental structure, legitimate markets, and the various black economies that shadow all of these structures. Perhaps the most thorough work of this type is that of Allan Sekula, whose photographic series *Fish Story* (1994–99) and *Titanic's Wake* (1998–99) underscore the huge quantity of commodity exchange that is the material basis of globalization, and trace, in sharply observed detail, the social impacts of this world culture of work.

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A number of artists seek to imagine the impacts of these broad-scale changes on more psychic levels, showing them as discontinuous narratives of personal experience. Since the early 1980s Denis del Favero has been staging installations, more recently using digital projections, that evoke the dislocations of immigrant experience, of subjection to surveillance, and of family trauma. An important stream in Hirschhorn's work involves installations showing globalization as a kind of war machine bent on creating nightmare scenarios, caves of banality and standardization, revelations of what the world would look like if the desires precipitated by globalization were actually realized. Fittingly, Hirschhorn concentrates on this topic in his installations in American galleries, notably those at Barbara Gladstone, New York, in 2003 (*Cavemanman*) and at the ICA, Boston, in 2005

(*Utopia, Utopia=One World, One War, One Army, One Dress*). A more generalized symbolizing of the fears haunting globalization, and of the hopes for community that strive to oppose its effects, is to be found in some works of Anthony Gormley, notably his "Field" projects, consisting of handmade (indeed, hand-sized) clay figures, roughly humanoid in shape, each with uplifted head and haunting eye sockets. The first of these works was *Field for the Art Gallery of New South Wales* (Sydney, 1989), the most recent *Asian Field* (2003), which consisted of 210,000 figures made by 350 people from Xianshan village, northeast of Gungzhou.

A number of other artists base their practice around exploring sustainable relationships with specific environments, both social and natural, within the framework of ecological values. Andy Goldsworthy, Olafur Eliasson and Carsten Höller are best known in art circles, but increasing numbers of artist collectives are involved in direct action at local levels, including Ala Plástica (Buenos Aires), Park Fiction (Hamburg), Wochenklausur (Vienna), and Huit Facettes (Dakar, Senegal). Others imagine the outcomes if attempts to correct human-induced degradation of natural processes were themselves strangely subverted: in the 2005 series "Nature's Little Helpers," Patricia Piccinini's lifelike mutant figures share the details of ordinary life with equally mutant-like humanoids.

Overall, these postcolonial and antiglobalization tendencies have disturbed, to the point of nearly overturning, the implicit (and at times quite explicit) world picture that came to sustain high modernism, and to which remodernist art clings. A number of artists, especially those from South America, have been alert to this situation, and have made works highlighting it. Joaquín Torres-García's 1936 sketch of the continent inverted—the signature image of his "School of the South," intended as a sharp reminder of where "our north" was for artists of the region—soon became iconic of Latin American art as such. Many artists from the region have used the cartographic imagery of the two continents to draw attention to the excesses of colonialism: the bloody entrails bursting through Portuguese tiles in Adriana Varejão's *América* (1996) take on those familiar shapes, suggesting that colonization is built on sacrifice but that the bodies will return, as phantasmagoria, to reclaim the territory. In his collage *Right You Are if You Think You Are* (2004), Nelson Leirner conjured this battle less optimistically by using plastic paste-ons popular with children to profile the continents: Mickey and Minnie Mouse for the northern, Posada-style skulls for the southern. Alfredo Jaar, in his 1998 work *Weltanschauung*, generalized this strategy by showing how different the world looks when mapped according to the Peters projection model, as distinct from the Mercator model. Visiting its author, Arno Peters, in Bremen, Jaar gave him the opportunity to explain that this projection simply puts the equator in the center of the space, whereas Mercator's lowers the equator to allow a more detailed representation of the northern hemisphere. In 2004, Jaar began a website, *Project for a Revolution of the World Wide Web*, in which you can log on to a Peters projection and choose a country in which you would like to start a revolution. After much apparent electronic activity, a message from Gandhi appears: "First they ignore you. Then they laugh at you. Then they fight you. Then you win." The message is the same, no matter what country you choose. This quality of mild, indirect, yet unswerving persistence toward liberation is a powerful mood, one much needed in these times.

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Time, Place, Media, Mood

The polarity between official First World and critical Rest of the World art implied above is in fact a densely connected dichotomy, not only because all artists of serious intent continue to acknowledge the legacy of the great artistic “shifts” of the 1960s, nor simply because they all work in the same overall conditions of contemporaneity, but because art continues to be subject to the generational drive—it is incessantly taken up by new artists. We can note the emergence, during the past decade, of a wide stream of artists who use archival, web-surfing strategies and remixing, postproduction aesthetics to move beyond the binary character of the two great tendencies while using many of their signature elements. The preferred mode? Slight gestures, feral strategies, mild subversions, small steps. But to what purposes? And in the name of what values? Much unofficial contemporary art does seem random, apolitical, naïve, wishful. I cite the Kazakhstani artist Almagul Minibayera’s statement accompanying her work at the 2006 Sydney Biennale only for its representative qualities:

In my video performances I show my vision of the world through the prism of “Punk Romantic Shamanism,” as I call it. It seems to me the perfect language of contemporary art. It is being alternative enough to reach out to the post-rebellious culture of the 1960s, ’70s and early ’80s. It is poetic enough to reach out for the “souls” of those who are bored with the present day “corporate consumerism.” It is naïve, innocent and anti-Hollywood. It also represents the animistic philosophy of my culture which is trying to leave its legacy in a globalized, technological society.²²

Is there a more precise way to exercise judgment in the conditions of contemporaneity? I suggest that at least four themes course through the pervasive heterogeneity of the current situation. Thousands of artists are now focusing their wide-ranging concerns on questions of time, place, mediation, and mood. More precisely, they are concerned with the nature of multiple temporalities, with the experience of (dis)location, with the excitements and distractions of transmediation, and with questions as to how all of these shape individual affect and collective effectivity. In other words, they are alert to the conditions of contemporaneity—bleak as they are—yet seek situatedness within them, however transient.

The jarring synchronicity of disparate temporalities is acutely evident in contemporary Chinese art. In his 2003 video *Factory*, Chieh-Jen Chen records the visit of a group of Taiwanese workers to an empty factory in which they had previously worked, and in which they now view a film shot by the artist of their earlier protests against the business’s closure. The work takes us to the heart of the processes of the madly modernizing China, the delirium of which is also conjured in the photographs of such artists as Weng Fen, Yang Zhenzong and Chen Shaoxiang.

“Media specificity” remains a concern of some theorists of contemporary art, yet artists have for decades been transposing the qualities of one medium into another with inventive abandon. Indeed, mobility as to media is contemporary art’s most obvious marker. In this respect many artists work at the level of style, creating hip, clublike, storefront environments: John Armleder, Jim Lambie, Imi Knoebel. Some, notably Douglas

Gordon and Stan Douglas, remix already mediated imagery to imply different narratives. Others do the same time in order to open fissures in cinematic and media narration: Pierre Huyghe, Candice Breitz, and Cliff Evans. In his series "The Iberoamerican Legend," Martin Shastre creates a Leigh Bowery-like scenario filled with counter-stars from Montevideo ("the fountain of video art"), actors in a funky, imagined future world run by Americans of Spanish heritage. In the spirit of the 1970s group Antfarm, some seek to intervene directly by manipulating the mass media: the Yesmen, for example, posed as spokesmen for Dow Chemical so convincingly that they managed to persuade the BBC World television channel to broadcast, on December 3, 2003, the company's apology for the deadly chemical spillage at its plant in Bhopal, India. Others effect art's interrogations through the dense surfaces of street media: notably the countless anonymous and pseudonymous graffiti artists, such as Banksy, who ask us to imagine a city where graffiti wasn't illegal, a city where everybody could draw wherever they liked. Where every street was awash with a million colours and little phrases. Where standing at a bus stop was never boring. A city that felt like a living breathing thing which belonged to everybody, not just the real estate agents and barons of big business. Imagine a city like that and stop leaning against the wall—it's wet.²³

Small-scale interventions, do-it-yourself subversions, mutely stubborn refusals, gentle suggestions for living differently. Krzysztof Wodiczko has invented a number of media that enable the shy, the repressed and the marginalized to communicate their deepest thoughts to others, even to strangers, via indirection. These include wearable prostheses such as *Dis-Armor* (since 1995), exploited workers in the border factories having their say as projections on the dome of a cultural center in Tijuana (2003), and abused women speaking as twenty-foot-high caryatids on the columns of the Zacheta, a major public building in Warsaw (2005). Jorge Macchi extracts details from telephone books, street directories, and newspapers consisting of just a few words, or the blank spaces around words, and reassembles them into imagery of the absences in city life: skyscrapers, speakers' corners, meetings—an echo still, in Argentina, of those who disappeared during the years of the dictatorship. Contemporary life is laced with the fallout from the years of violent closure that froze so many societies in fear—and does so, still, in many places. Working in a similar but perhaps more open climate in Brazil, Rivane Neuenschwander has moved from works that record the passage of time across places to those that trace the incidentals of human usage: the maplike imagery in her series of "paintings" entitled "Starved Letters" (2000), for example, was made by snails consuming the mounted rice paper. In *Conversations* (2002) Neuenschwander collected the "sculptures" made by friends while unconsciously playing with items on a table during meals.

On quite another scale, this same spirit of gentle persistence pervades Francis Alÿs's 2002 project *When Faith Moves Mountains*. During the last months of Alberto Fujimori's dictatorship in Peru, at Ventanilla, near Lima, an area covered with *favelas* sited precariously on the sand dune that surround the city, 500 volunteers worked to shift a 1,600-foot-long ridge about four inches from its original position. Contrasting this act of defiant, poetic possibility to the icons of environmental sculpture, Alÿs described his intentions:

Here, we have attempted to create a kind of Land Art for the landless, and, with the help of hundreds of people with shovels, we created a social allegory. The story is not validated by any physical trace or addition to the landscape. We shall now leave the care of our story to oral tradition.... Indeed, in modern no less than pre-modern societies, art operates precisely in the space of myth. In this sense, myth is not about the veneration of ideals—of pagan gods and political ideology—but rather an active interpretative practice performed by the audience, who must give the work its meaning and its social value.²⁴

The interplay between personal and collective experience is explored in different ways by the Turkish filmmaker Kutlug Ataman. For *Kuba* (2004), Ataman interviewed forty residents of an “outlaw” district of Istanbul, giving each of them the chance to tell their stories. The installation consisted of forty monitors, placed apart and set up before homely chairs. Individuality is evident but so is community, along with the complexities of the relationships between both. The installation invites you into the community, to take the time to learn what kinds of time it takes to create community, and does so without invading your distance.

In a recent article, Clare Bishop highlighted certain problems that limit collaborative art today. One is an exaggerated split between “art” and “politics,” such that the values of one are seen, from both sides of any ideological division, as antithetical to those of the other. Aesthetes see “community art” as unappealing, even ugly “social work,” while those who believe that value resides above all in community consensus see aesthetic considerations, from high style to skeptical imagination, as elitist impositions. As Bishop acutely notes, these distastes subsume generalized notions of the aesthetic and the social/political within an equally abstract notion of the ethical.²⁵ That these ways of thinking generate opposite outcomes, depending on one’s prejudices, is no surprise. It is the division into contra-categories that is the problem: this kind of thinking is not only inappropriate to the conditions of contemporaneity, it can be dangerous, to oneself and to others. The works I have cited above are all examples of what it is like to think, feel, make and do beyond these blinkers. These works display, usually on their surfaces, the maleficent estrangements that are overtaking the present; they also show, usually through studied indirection, openings toward the creation of beneficent values, however odd or unlikely they may at first seem. These are the two great things that art can do, and do at the same time. Art does so both as overt showing and as inference, as a kind of withholding that slowly unfolds from within its processes. These practices are its “truth,” one that does not exist within or between categories but uncategorically.

Endless

None of these concerns are new. Our standing in relation to temporality and locality, affect and effect, is at the core of what it has always been to become, that is, to the shaping of being—human, animal, thingly. The configuration of these elements at the conjunction between broad-scale world-picturing and particular, local world-making shifts constantly, sometimes incrementally, sometimes in patterns that are sharply visible and widely influential.

Certain thinkers and artists are alert to these changes. In 1951, Martin Heidegger reached for the image of a farmhouse in the Black Forest; not, he cautioned, to exemplify the ideal solution to the postwar housing shortage (a topic that frames his essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking") but rather to illustrate "the essence of dwelling," the core aims of which he defined as "to preserve the fourfold, to save the earth, to receive the sky, to await the divinities, to initiate mortals."²⁶ During the decades since, many artists have sought to create settings in which dwelling might be experienced with this degree of depth and intensity, yet without submersion in the misleading imagery of spectacle. This was the explicit aim of Lygia Clark's move, around 1965, from manipulable sculptures to her series of therapeutic actions entitled *Structuring the Self*. In his environment *Tropicalia*, at the Museo de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, in 1966-67, Hélio Oiticica took long steps toward an art based on "direct experience," of a kind that, he hoped, "would stand up against imagetic international pop and op art, in which a good part of our artists are submerged." In 1969, in *Eden*, installed at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, he realized this ambition by providing a series of settings inviting open-ended, full mind-and-body immersion in raw materials, simple structures, and cultural detritus.²⁷ During a visit to Brasília in 1960 as part of a U.S. delegation, the designer Frederick Keisler escaped the opening ceremonies to visit the shantytown that had been created by the workers building the capital. There he found himself drawn into the shack of one family, sensing there another, extraordinarily powerful conception of dwelling, one that stood in stark contrast to the elaborate and ultimately hollow homage to European modernism and Brazilian modernization that was the new capital. The experience led him to finalize development of his Endless House project, another striking effort to imagine the essence of dwelling.²⁸ The *Cidade Livre* and other satellites outside Brasília have since markedly outgrown the official city, and now constitute one of the largest conurbations in the region.

The point of these examples is that, in contemporaneity, postcolonial trafficking between cultures moves in many directions but keeps circling back to the four main themes that preoccupy contemporary artists. Ruminating on the global mobility of artists from Africa, curator Simon Njami points to the essential isolation of the artist in the midst of his or her people, the exchange of rejection and obligation that is at the heart of the artist's social contract, no matter what the circumstances:

There are many reasons for leaving beyond the obvious political and economic ones: no longer being able to share, in the case of contemporary artists, for example, your inner language with the people around you. Realising that you will have to go elsewhere to find a silence that corresponds to you. This is no doubt what being contemporary is all about. Artists share the same quality of silence, expressed according to different accents and sensibilities, and through these silences their background and vision of the world appear.²⁹

This stress on silence goes back, of course, to Camus, to existential self-realization and social obligation in the context of the world's absurdity: no surprise that it has recurred today. It is an acute pointer to the inner trajectories of thousands of artists around the world.

Think, then, of the richness in this regard of the work of artists such as Georges Adéagho, Jean Michel Bruyère, and William Kentridge, just to take artists for whom the problems of Africa are paramount. Of parallel importance is the work of globally networked collectives such as Slumdweller International and Global Studio, who bring a range of skills from a variety of distant sources to bear on specific, extreme problems of housing.

Artists such as those discussed in this essay, along with many others, are making visible a paradox: a shared sense that the fundamental, familiar constituents of being are becoming, each day, steadily more strange, unfamiliar, and not shared. Along with many other kinds of action, art also shows that the urge to seek sustainable flows of survival, cooperation and growth continues unabated. Whatever the forces arraigned against these aspirations—including those of institution and exclusion, correctness and cooption—they continue to engage the attention of the most interesting artists working today. In Rancière's terms, by activating the aesthetic regime that is their deepest inheritance as artists (practices of endless interrogation and of infinite invention), they offer us disjunctive insights into what Pinter, as we saw, characterized as the "tapestry of lies" out of which the current regime of representation is woven. While the battle of the big categories—including those of "politics," "truth," and "art"—continues to rage across the surfaces of this public regime, it does so as a contest of crude polarizations, precipitating further devastation. Instead, artists offer us places, pauses and pathways through important aspects of our estrangement. They present instances of embodied connectivity and situatedness within the accelerating diversification of difference that drives our contemporaneity.

Territoriality, and Sovereignty in Africa," *Public Culture* 12 (2000): 259-84.

- 65 In international law, "privateers" are defined as "vessels belonging to private owners, and sailing under a commission of war empowering the person to whom it is granted to carry on all forms of hostility which are permissible at sea by the usages of war." I use the term here to mean armed formations acting independently of any politically organized society, in the pursuit of private interests, whether under the mask of the state or not. See Janice Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).
- 66 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Capitalisme et schizophrénie* (Paris: Editions de minuit, 1980), 434-527.
- 67 Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), especially Chaps. 2 and 4.
- 68 See Jakkie Cilliers and Christian Dietrich, eds., *Angola's War Economy: The Role of Oil and Diamonds* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2000).
- 69 See, for example, "Rapport du Groupe d'experts sur l'exploitation illégale des ressources naturelles et autres richesses de la République démocratique du Congo," *United Nations Report No. 2/2001/357*, submitted by the Secretary-General to the Security Council, 12 April 2001. See also Richard Snyder, "Does Lootable Wealth Breed Disorder? States, Regimes, and the Political Economy of Extraction" (paper).
- 70 See Loren B. Landau, "The Humanitarian Hangover: Transnationalization of Governmental Practice in Tanzania's Refugee-Populated Areas," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 21, No. 1 (2002): 260-99, especially 281-87.
- 71 On the *commandement*, see Achille Mbembe, *On the Post-colony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), Chaps. 1-3.
- 72 See Leisel Talley, Paul B. Spiegel, and Mona Girgis, "An Investigation of Increasing Mortality among Congolese Refugees in Lugufu Camp, Tanzania, May-June 1999," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 14, No. 4 (2001): 412-27.
- 73 See Tony Hodges, *Angola: From Afro-Stalinism to Petro-Diamond Capitalism* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001), chap. 7; Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War* (London: Hurst & Company, 1999).
- 74 See Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, trans. C. Stewart (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1984), 227-80.
- 75 Martin Heidegger, *Etre et temps* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), 289-322.
- 76 Heidegger, *Etre et temps*.
- 77 Bataille, *Oeuvres complètes*, 336.
- 78 For what precedes, see Amira Hass, *Drinking the Sea at Gaza: Days and Nights in a Land under Siege* (New York: Henry Holt, 1996).
- 79 Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, 63.

IN THIS TIME OF PHANTOMS

- 1 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Idées et germes de nouvelles traduits et préfacés par Valéry Larbaud*, Fata Morgana, Montpellier, 1979, p. 47.
- 2 This fragmentary outline by Hölderlin is quoted by Heidegger in *Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry*.
- 3 Quoted by Roberto Calasso, *K* (New York: Knopf, 2005).
- 4 Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace* (New York: Routledge,

2002).

- 5 We could, if we joined in Kafka's strange humor, see in this sentence of infinity, in its very meticulousness, the very principle of the comical, if not the grotesque side of these spectral times. Thus Calasso: "The comical is the meticulous: such is the rule. Kafka formulated it, although he immediately eliminated the passage in which he declared it (and it can be read in *The Castle*: "What is truly comical is simply what is meticulous." The applications of this sentence are scattered throughout the length of his entire work. (Calasso, K.)
- 6 A parallel and almost contemporary manifestation of that dethroning I mention: in 1749 the portrait-masks some painters made reproducing features of some famous person and which people wore in their wish to "have themselves recognised" were forbidden. This carnival game of doubles, of surprise and ambiguity, undoubtedly introduced a principle of deligitimising the powerful which came about not only through the expropriation and unlimited placement of certain features, but from the freedom the subject took on to reveal, through this playful metaphor, the deceptive truth of all esteem. Reality is always anamorphic (Cf. Manlio Brusatin, *Storia delle immagini*).
- 7 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).
- 8 P. Valéry, *Monsieur Teste*.
- 9 This is the story of Josef K., the ultimate man, who furthermore wants to live a little in death because all of life does not give him a break, his torment does not let him rest. But living death—that exteriority—is precisely what is forbidden to him, as we are shown in another story by Kafka, "The Hunter Gracchus."
- 10 Jean François Lyotard, "El imaginario postmoderno y la cuestión del otro en el pensamiento y la arquitectura," in *Pensar-Componer/Construir-Habitar*, Ed. Arteleku, San Sebastián, 1994, p. 36.

CREATING DANGEROUSLY, THEN AND NOW

- 1 Albert Camus, "Create Dangerously," in *Resistance, Rebellion and Death* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1960), p. 191. Lecture given at the University of Uppsala, December 1957.
- 2 Thomas Hirschhorn, in an interview with Okwui Enwezor, in *Thomas Hirschhorn: Jumbo Spoons and Big Cake, The Art Institute of Chicago; World Airport, The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago* (Chicago: Lowitz + Sons, 2000), pp. 13-14.
- 3 Harold Pinter, "Art, Truth and Politics," *The Guardian Weekly*, December 8, 2005. Also at <www.nobelprize.org>.
- 4 Camus, "Speech of Acceptance Upon the Award of the Nobel Prize for Literature," in *Resistance, Rebellion and Death*, pp. 195-98 passim. Also at <www.nobelprize.org>.
- 5 Pinter, "Art, Truth and Politics." David Hare's *Stuff Happens* (2005) is a clear example of the effort Pinter has in mind. A compelling play about power, it explicitly, graphically displays the lying machinations of the sovereignty machine—as it was exercised by the actual players who wove the web of lies to justify the invasion of Iraq.
- 6 Camus, "Create Dangerously," pp. 190-91.
- 7 George W. Bush, quoted in *the New York Times*, February 1, 2006, pp. A20, 21.
- 8 Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 87.
- 9 *Ibid.*

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- 10 See Retort, *Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War* (2005, rev. ed. London: Verso, 2006), including the authors' responses to questions posed by *October* editor Hal Foster. See also Julian Stallabrass, "Spectacle and Terror," *New Left Review* 37 (January/February 2006): 87-106.
- 11 Agamben, *State of Exception*, p. 88.
- 12 More developed versions of this argument, along with some highly developed commentaries on and contestations of it by Antonio Negri, Rosalind Krauss, Robert Storr, and many others, may be found in Terry Smith, Enwezor, and Nancy Condee, eds., *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity and Contemporaneity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, forthcoming 2007).
- 13 Elaborated in Smith, "Contemporary Art and Contemporaneity," *Critical Inquiry* 32, No. 4 (Summer 2006), and "World Picturing in Contemporary Art: Iconogeographic Turning," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art* 7, No. 1 (2006).
- 14 Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics* (London: Continuum, 2004), *passim*.
- 15 Thus its exclusion of such iconoclasts as Robert Morris, its discomfort with Robert Smithson, and its relegation of misfits Louise Bourgeois to the upper rooms and Bruce Nauman to the basement. Dia:Beacon is of course haunted by the famous earthworks projects supported by the Dia Foundation, which were conceived in opposition to the art gallery and the "white cube" museum but run the risk of becoming museal objects in natural settings.
- 16 Marina Grizinic, *Situated Contemporary Art Practices, Art, Theory and Activism from (the East of) Europe* (Frankfurt am Main: ZRC SAZU, and Ljubljana: Revolver, 2004).
- 17 Howard Morphy describes the context in Charles Merewether, ed., *2006 Biennale of Sydney; Zones of Contact* (Sydney: Biennale of Sydney, 2006), pp. 176-77.
- 18 See, for example, Li Xianting, "Major Trends in the Development of Contemporary Chinese Art," in Chang Tsong-tzung, ed., *Chinese New Art, Post-1989* (Hong Kong: Hanart T Z Gallery, 1993); John Clark, *Modern Asian Art* (Sydney: Craftsman House, and Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998); and chapters by Gao Minglu and Wu Hung in Smith, Enwezor, and Condee, *Antinomies of Art and Culture*.
- 19 István Rév, *Retroactive Justice: Prehistory of Post-Communism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).
- 20 Péter Forgács is also director of the Private Film and Photo Archive at the Open Society Archive, Central European University, Budapest, of which Rév is director.
- 21 See Vivan Sundaram, *Re-take of "Amrita": Digital Photomontage* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2001).
- 22 Almagul Minibayera, quoted in Merewether, *2006 Biennale of Sydney*, pp. 182-83.
- 23 See <www.banksy.co.uk>.
- 24 Francis Alÿs, "A Thousand Words: Francis Alÿs talks about 'When Faith Moves Mountains,'" *Artforum*, Summer 2002.
- 25 Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents," *Artforum*, February 2006, pp. 178-83.
- 26 Martin Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," in *Basic Writings* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 336. Also in this volume, p. 17.
- 27 See *Helio Oiticica* (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 1969), n.p. Recreated in Carlos Basualdo, *Tropicália: A Revolution in Brazilian Culture* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2005).
- 28 See Frederick Keisler, *Inside the Endless House* (New York:

- Simon and Schuster, 1964), chapter VIII. See also Pieter Bogner and Peter Noeve, eds., *Frederick J. Keisler, Endless Space* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2001).
- 29 Simon Njami, "Chaos and Metamorphosis," in *Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent* (London: Hayward Gallery, 2005), p. 18.

NOTES ON THE POLITICAL IN CONTEMPORARY ART

- 1 Michel Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended," Lectures at the College de France, 1975-1976 (New York: Picador, 2003), p. 36.
- 2 Framework, No. 4, 2005 (Helsinki)
- 3 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).
- 4 István Mészáros, *Socialism or Barbarism: From the "American Century" to the Crossroads* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), p. 36.
- 5 Guantanamo Bay Gazette, vol 62, No. 24. Rear Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr., quoted in *New York Times*, June 10, 2006, p. 16.
- 6 This position echoes, for example, throughout Susan Sontag's influential *On Photography* (1977). More complex positions are pursued in early essays by, for example, Allan Sekula, John Tagg, and Martha Rosler.
- 7 Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 1968, in Barthes, *Image-Music-Text* (London: Fontana, 1977).
- 8 While the notion of relational aesthetics put forth by Nicolas Bourriaud (Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Dijon: Presses du Reel, 1998), forwarding interhuman relations, remains useful, the argument above is more aimed towards the kind of post-Tiravanijan practices identified as relational work of the present.
- 9 Edward Said, "Travelling Theory," in Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).
- 10 Artist Mel Chin organized the GALA Committee, which produced various artworks/interventions to be inserted into *Melrose Place*. See for example <<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/chin/card1.html>>.
- 11 Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (Routledge: London, 2005).
- 12 Classification is not the goal of the above argument and examples become easily much too arbitrary. But consider imagining artists such as Lukas Einsele, Oliver Ressler, Hito Steyerl and Jeremy Deller as possible exemplifications of the first category, while conceiving of The Atlas Group or Critical Art Ensemble as being of the second.
- 13 Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 18, 23.
- 14 Websites with information about the artists and activist projects mentioned include <www.fadaia.net>, <<http://hackitectura.net/>>, <www.geobodies.org>, and <www.multiplicity.it>.
- 15 Obvious additional examples of geopolitical gravity/emergency would be the Mexican/U.S. border and Palestine/Israel.
- 16 Etienne Balibar, *Politics and the Other Scene* (London: Verso, 2002), p. 63.
- 17 Mouffe, *On the Political*, p. 69.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- 20 Jacques Rancière, *Le Partage du sensible. Esthetique et politique* (La Fabrique éditions : Paris, 2000), p. 46. Own