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Article

Contemporary Art and the Post-1989 Art World

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THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL IN 1989, ALONGSIDE A SERIES OF OTHER SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL EVENTS that includes the collapse of the Soviet Union and authoritarian regimes in South America, and the end of apartheid in South Africa, changed the political composition of the world. These events also marked the beginning of the global domination of neoliberal doctrine in economic and political structures, whereby privatization and the free market have become increasingly influential. The year 1989 was also a turning point for the unprecedented growth of contemporary art, not only in traditional art centres, but also on the peripheries where international art markets had not previously been active. For example, the fall of the Eastern Bloc created an influx of Eastern European and Russian art that changed the landscape of European contemporary art. On the other hand, after the shock of the Tiananmen Square massacre a new generation of Chinese contemporary artists produced art that challenged Western art criticism and the economic system of distribution. Subsequently, the increased audience and market for institutionalized contemporary art resulted in a proliferation of art biennials and private museums throughout the world.

Art historian Julian Stallabrass has commented: 'The global events of 1989 and after – the reunification of Germany, the fragmentation of the Soviet Union, the rise of global trade agreements, the consolidation of trading blocs, and the transformation of China into a partially capitalist economy – changed

the character of the art world profoundly.'[1] Museums, large galleries, and international biennials have become increasingly dependent upon corporate funding to survive, and the institutional art world has become deeply connected to corporate capital in order to organize and manage the new art market system.[2] In his 1990 essay, 'Selling the Collection', Philip Weiss talked explicitly about this shift in the museum context: 'To a great extent, the museum community's crisis results from the free-market spirit of the 1980s. The notion of the museum as a guardian of the public patrimony has given way to the museum as a corporate entity with a highly marketable inventory and the desire for growth.'[3] Simply said, after 1989 art and the culture industry came to have a closer relationship than ever before. This relationship has shifted the agenda of the institutional art world away from proud displays of national 'high' culture to a privileging of the spectacular potential of art exhibitions.

Cultural challenges to Eurocentric discourses and the appearance of new art zones around the world have caused the art world to take more seriously these new, peripheral developments in 'contemporary art'. Meanwhile, established museums and large art galleries have adopted more corporate strategies, which often promote entertainment at the expense of education. For example, the Louvre recently partnered with Nintendo to make digital entertainment software, including high-resolution imagery, virtual gallery maps, a dozen languages of audio commentary and art games, available to museum and website visitors who purchase the Nintendo 3D program for $19.99. Additionally, many large museums in the U.S. host themed in-house parties during special holidays to attract new members and visitors. Meanwhile, a handful of independent curators have become 'stars' of the jet-set art world. This *crème de la crème* of the institutional art community frequently travel from one exhibition to another in order to take the pulse of contemporary art production around the world and to 'make sense' of the rapid consumption of artworks. In 1999, Peter Schjeldahl, the art critic at the *New Yorker*, coined the term 'festivalism' to point to the technologically-oriented nonsalable art circulating the biennials, celebrated primarily for its potential as spectacle:

> I call it a festivalism that has long been developing on the planetary circuit of more than fifty biennials and triennials, including the recent Whitney Biennial. Mixing entertainment and soft-core politics, festivalism makes an aesthetic of crowd control. It favors works that do not demand contemplation but invite, in passing, consumption of interesting – just not too interesting – spectacles.[4]

Debates about the art world's expansion through new biennials, museums, art fairs, and commercial art galleries, as well as the extension of the art market to thriving financial markets, such as India, China, Russia and the United Arab Emirates, dominate current discussions of contemporary art. Susan Buck-Morrs rightly points out that what is called the 'global art world' is a historically unique phenomenon that emerged with the new global economic order: 'The world trade in art intensified in the 1970s and 1980s as a part of the general financial revolution, along with hedge-funds, international mortgages, and secondary financial instruments of all kinds'.[5] What Buck-Morrs calls 'the general financial revolution' is the liberalization of the movement of capital and re-emergence of global finance markets that prepared the ground for the expansion of the neoliberal economic system into all corners of the world. This is an economic programme that concentrates on deregulation of business, privatization of public activities and assets, elimination of or cutbacks to social welfare programs, and reduction of taxes on corporate businesses.

In the late 1990s, India, China, and Southeast Asia emerged as new financial regions and rose to compete with the Western centres. Concomitantly, an increasing demand in the art market for contemporary art of the Far East meant that it began appearing in large exhibitions in the West. All the while, the new, curious gaze of the Western world was increasingly informed by postmodern and postcolonial theories that sought to break with the modernism and colonialism of old. These theories guided institutional art practice, creating a shift in art historical discourse, and introduced new ideas into the canon. This theoretical shift affected the reception of non-Western contemporary art in the West, by institutionalizing it within the ideas and structure of the Western art canon. As James Elkins explains it:

> Indian, Chinese, and Southeast Asian scholars write Western-style essays and books, adopt Western armatures for their arguments, hold exhibitions and colloquia, create departments and curricula, all in the Western manner. The discipline itself has been exported and has found new homes, and countries such as China and India are producing art histories compatible with Western ones.[6]

From the 1990s and into the millennium, the subject of the most heated debates over contemporary art was whether globalization caused the expansion, pluralization, and democratization of the art world or, rather, contracted it. It was often concluded that globalization both homogenized and fragmented engagements with and responses to the art world.[7] These debates eventually led to the term 'contemporary art' being used synonymously with 'global art'. Both terms projected an awareness of larger cultural horizons—an awareness of diversity and plurality in culture and society—thus weakening what was distinctive, culturally and politically, to the art works they were used to describe. Indeed, it was the abstract nature of these phrases that largely appealed to the art world. Thus, 'contemporary art' began to connote a certain style that emerged with the globalization and technologization of the world, rather than a period of time. Art critic Hans Belting has an interesting take on this:

> … It is global production and distribution that 'defines contemporary art.' But we encounter a certain resistance of Western critics to speak of global art since they fear that the Western art scene will lose power when art is globalized. For the same reason, they would favor the notion of 'contemporary art' as it is familiar and since it sounds neutral with regard to newcomers in the art world.[8]

While Belting critiques the Eurocentric art world he reveals the internal logic of the current institutionalization of art: where developing worlds were previously excluded from the Western art world's historicity, they must now be welcomed in, albeit without any loss of power for the Western art tradition.

In the non-Western geographies, modernization does not necessarily mean Westernization. In those regions, where dramatic political and economic shifts happen continuously and rapidly, contemporary art not only signifies a certain time period or the use of a non-traditional medium, it also implies art that counters the Eurocentric and homogenizing aspects of the so-called 'global art world'. In these places—now semi-peripheries of the art world—the term 'contemporary art' is far from being politically neutral: It refers to art that engages, in one way or another, with the intertwined developments between the making and circulation of art and changing economic relations. Thus, in the newly included areas of the non-West, the idea of 'contemporary art' is not a synonym for 'global art' as in the Western art world, but is a contestation of it.

In addition to its spread into these new peripheral areas, there has also been unprecedented growth in the older, more traditional art centers. In France alone, more than twenty museums and art institutions have been built or renovated, including the Musée d'Orsay and Centre Pompidou. Meanwhile, in New York, the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney have newer, bigger buildings; In London, Tate Modern and the Saatchi galleries were launched; and new Guggenheim Museums have been established in Bilbao and Berlin, with another in Abu Dhabi in development.

Additionally, within the past decade, the contemporary artistic praxis in the Arab world has flourished in part due to renewed real estate investments and capitalistic ventures. In the Arabian Gulf region, the opening of auction house branches such as Bonham's, Christie's (March 2005 in Dubai), and Sotheby's (its first sale of Modern and Contemporary Arab Art was held in October 2007 in London) and upcoming new franchises in Abu Dhabi for the Guggenheim and the Louvre (the former, designed by renowned architect Frank Gehry and the latter designed by Jean Nouvel, opening in 2017) attest not only to a growing demand for artworks produced by Arab artists but also point to the globalized spread and brand-name appeal of these institutions. Other sites of interest and investment in contemporary Arab art have also emerged, such as the establishment of the Arab Museum of Modern Art (Mathaf) in Doha, Qatar (which opened in December 2010) and the Museum of Modern Art in Kuwait City. In a region formerly bereft of arts venues and institutions, this recent spate of new museums promotes further development of a specific art market and the cultivation of a clientele to support this market.[9] In areas such as these, contemporary art and economics have an equally beneficial relationship: while private capital attracts art for the support systems and strong infrastructure it creates, art similarly attracts investors to the new global cities.

Indeed, one dynamic strategy of open-market capitalism has been to use culture and art as a resource for local governments to market their respective cities to real-estate investors, and global tourism, to corporate businesses seeking good public relations and to cultural tourists who contribute to the global image of the city. As a result, linkages between political, social, technological, environmental, and art spheres have been established. However, this raises the question of who benefits from the contemporaneity of contemporary art? The following example illustrates a fraction of these connections and benefits.

Regarding an agreement between international art fair, Art Basel and Swiss luxury tobacco brand, Oettinger Davidoff Group in 2012, Hans-Kristian Hoejsgaard, president, and CEO of Davidoff, explained:

> Davidoff and Art Basel is a perfect fit, building on a well-established relationship between two organizations with joint roots in Basel. With historic ties to European markets, both companies have expanded rapidly in the US in recent years, while actively developing new markets around the globe, especially in Asia. Our customers share many common interests with Art Basel's patrons. As we forge closer ties with the world of art, Art Basel is the ideal partner, and we look forward to a long-term collaboration as our brands evolve worldwide.[10]

Art Basel's co-director, Marc Spiegler, added: 'As Art Basel is expanding, we seek partners like Davidoff who are intensifying their engagement with the arts.'[11] It is interesting to note that just before this agreement, Davidoff, headquartered in Basel Switzerland, developed the Davidoff Art Initiative in

Miami as a part of the company's new public-relations campaign. Davidoff's investment in art not only smartens up its corporate image but also helps it to normalize cigar smoking and perhaps make it fashionable. The company advertised this initiative: 'Davidoff Cigars is extending the reach of contemporary art to Davidoff's products and environments worldwide.'[12] This merger of art and business benefits both in terms of expanding their markets all over the globe. Additionally, Davidoff began an artist residency program in La Romana, in the Dominican Republic, which 'seeks to help emerging and mid-career Dominican and Caribbean artists develop their skills, make connections within global artistic networks, earn exposure for their work, and share their expertise with others.'[13] The first artist of this residency program was Cuban-born Dominican artist Quisqueya Henríquez, a 1992 graduate of Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, who was already a globally-recognized artist, having participated in Art Basel in Miami in 2008.[14] During his residency in 2013, Henríquez created a series of artworks for the inaugural Davidoff Art Edition. This special edition of cigars and Henríquez's prints was available at Davidoff's Collectors Lounge at Art Basel in Hong Kong in May 2014. Davidoff had operated a similar VIP lounge in the art collectors' division at Art Basel in Miami in 2013. In this walk-in humidor, a cigar roller from the Dominican Republic demonstrated 'the art of blending and the art of rolling a Davidoff Cigar.'[15]

With these partnerships and promotions Davidoff romanticized the exploited labor of Dominican cigar workers and used this romanticization as an outlet to sell cigars to the elite art enthusiasts, adding a further dimension to the exploitative mechanism of cigar manufacturing in developing Caribbean countries. On the other hand, this exoticization of cigar labour attracts wealthy tourists to the Dominican Republic, and the Dominican government justifies the promotion of such tourism as a driving force for local economic development–another mechanism of the exploitation of natural and human resources worsened by neoliberal globalization.[16]All the while, Hong Kong and Miami secured their position in the league of global cities created by real estate and financial markets, by hosting the world's premier contemporary art fair.

There have been many more examples of art fairs using contemporary art as a resource to conceal and/or legitimize the logic and effects of the contemporary neoliberal economy. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that the art world and the corporate world have not only been linked to the privatization of the art sector and the overwhelming apparatus of private sponsorship, but have also used the same technologies and organizing principles employed by corporatism to increase production, marketing, and exchange. Meanwhile, art world professionals are regarded as resourceful and creative entrepreneurs in this new economy that produces intellectual property and innovation—the immaterial labour that the neoliberal economy needs.[17]

When art production itself became more dependent on the market, mainstream art criticism also ceased to be independent of those forces. After the 1980s, the major art magazines available in the United States, such as *Frieze*, *Flash Art*, *Artforum*, and *Art in America,* were skewed in favour of commercial art activity. Very likely this development was mainly because the new private galleries and other private art institutions that boomed in this period were instrumental in the financing of these magazines. By the 1990s, curators started filling in the gaps of 'critical' art criticism and assumed the responsibility of propagating views at odds with the logic of the market. With that shift, the curator went from being someone 'in the team' to a professional consultant who dominated the organization of discourses surrounding

contemporary art exhibitions. Hence, the curator came to function as a significant creative agent in his or her own right, actively participating in the development of artists' projects and in the selection of mediating devices employed in the presentation of an exhibition. Some artists reacted to this new hierarchy while they continued building careers in the biennial system. Art critic Hazel Friedman summarizes the new power of the curator:

> In its most dynamic incarnation, curatorial power is about the ability to promote dialogue, to try and scramble the hierarchies, to bring new breath to old bodies. In its vulgar incarnation, curatorial power is about the might of right; right artists; right discourse. Right time, place, and response. It is about the ability to turn yesterday's artist starving in a garret into the brightest star in the art firmament; to condemn one genre to death and transform another into gospel.[18]

As Friedman argues, the curator now also functions as a significant creative agent in his or her own right, actively participating in the development of artists' projects and in the selection of mediating devices employed in the presentation of an exhibition–the exhibition's mode of dialogue with the intended public(s). Moreover, the curator must now negotiate the intricate relationships that pertain between himself/herself (the curator is often representative of international currents in the art world) and the local artist/local audience in the geographical location of a biennial or the museum.

Sociologist Pascal Gielen analyzes the current state of contemporary art by using Paolo Virno's argument on immaterial labor and post-Fordism: in a post-Fordist economy, even immaterial goods are turned into commodities. Gielen suggests that the dematerialization of artworks parallels the process of post-Fordization, which emphasizes the transition from material to immaterial labour.[19] Gielen further states:

> Design and aesthetics–in other words, external signs and symbols–are major driving forces in today's economy, because they constantly heighten consumer interest. We are all too familiar with this point of view, which has been propagated by countless postmodern psychologists, sociologists, and philosophers since the 1970s.[20]

Gielen looks at the proliferation of biennials from the point of social labor and calls this phenomenon 'post-Fordization of the museum'. In his analysis of the post-1989 art world, Gielen claims, 'the museum is infected by the biennial virus'.[21] This refers to the 'increase in temporary exhibitions and an inversely proportional decrease in research into and attention to the collection'.[22] When the exhibition itself is regarded as an artwork, whoever has had 'the idea' to organize it becomes a quasi-artist– the author of the immateriality of the labour. Hence, the curator, typically working as a global agent, becomes part of the co-modification of the artworks, as it is through the curator's ideas that the artworks are utilized. On the other hand, although Gielen's assumptions hold true for many large-scale exhibitions, the collaborative models for curatorial production often conflict with the conventional notion of the curator. Interdisciplinary roles that now define the curator's practice, especially in the extension of their activities beyond institutional frameworks, are increasingly significant given the existence of multiple art worlds: the institutional art world that complies with neoliberal directives and the alternative art worlds that question the over-arching logic of this relationship.

After the neoliberal restructuring of the economy through growing markets, the international flow of consumer goods has paralleled the flow of

immigrant workers, while correspondingly in the art world, curators and artists have moved with the artworks as they circulate among transnational mega-exhibitions, museums, and art fairs. This movement of art world professionals has also pointed to the emergence of a new, controversial type of 'nomad' artist. This nomad artist often lives in one of the urban centres, exhibits in many others, and travels from one international biennial to another in the same way an executive circulates to secure new exhibition deals.[23] This artist does not come forward as a genius, outsider, or even the bohemian figure that we encounter throughout the history of Western art.[24] The nomad artist promotes him/herself in an in-between existence with an identity that oscillates between his/her local cultural roots and global cosmopolitanism. For example, Nigerian/British artist Yinka Shonibare dresses decapitated mannequins in eighteenth-century aristocratic attire but with patterned fabrics of African design. One sees the mannequins as Black subjects, but the symbol of colonialism--the aristocratic attire--is that of the White man. Shonibare rejects the way in which he is expected to treat popular subjects in the self-other binary. As such, Shonibare also successfully places his identity in-between his own British and Nigerian nationalities and in-between his different cultural roots. Artist Georg Schöllhammer explains further:

> It is primarily the youth, namely the immigrant children of the second or third generation in London, Paris, Los Angeles, New York, and other 'global cities who no longer fit into the identity models brought over and whose social positioning 'in-between' must be regarded as a typical phenomenon of our times, who have become the darlings of the global exhibition scene. Their identities appear to be built for the needs of the European world-culture exhibition industry: they carry the genetic traits of the ethnic other, clearly bringing the cultural capital of family or social experience of break and continuity, the knowledge of another social or historical construction and a complex network of experiences into their work. The question of to what or for what they belong becomes an existential challenge for them.[25]

Another aspect of this global cosmopolitanism in the contemporary art world is the rise of the biennial. In the past two decades, the number of art biennials has grown significantly. There were approximately ten bi/triennials in 1989, and today, there are over a hundred, about sixty of which are international mega events.[26] Each year, new biennials are added from parts of the world far removed from the art world's historical centres, the majority of them sponsored by private corporations. It is not surprising to note that some successful biennials were associated with the emergence of neoliberal political and economic landscapes. The Istanbul Biennial, for example, was founded after the end of Kenan Evren's military dictatorship (1989); Gwangju Biennale in South Korea, was founded after the democratic revolution of 1995, and Manifesta (The European Biennial of Contemporary Art), emerged after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the re-charting of Europe's geopolitical territory. The emergence of these events has indicated the gradual restructuring of economies according to neoliberal principles. International art biennials have been so popular and so influential in defining and shaping the current state of the institutional art world that some analysts refer to this phenomenon as 'the biennalization' of contemporary art.[27]

This 'biennalization' has been associated with the dictatorship of the curator and has been criticized for producing extremely standardized exhibitions that no longer foster a level of intimacy among artworks, artists and discourses–a claim underlined by the fact that it is generally the same artists

and curators who travel from one biennial to the other. Art biennials are also criticized for encouraging an increasing standardization of medium to formats that are mechanically or electronically reproducible, such as video art, film, photography, and Internet art. In Western biennials, these contemporary art forms express and emphasize an important aspect of neoliberalization: the expansion of communication and networks. However, this is not the case for biennials in other regions, where high-end technology is still for the privileged few. Instead, the feeling of spectacle afforded by the technology becomes the focus and artworks such as sound installations, large on site-installations, talking billboards, and interactive computer works, are deemed 'biennial art'.[28]

In the 1990s' climate of multiculturalism, optimistic observers initially regarded the biennalization of contemporary art as an emergent space for the redistribution of cultural power, especially in the non-Western world. After the millennium, however, observers have recognized the new phenomenon of art biennials as a continuation of nineteenth-century world exhibitions, where neo-colonial profits were subtly calculated and used as a tool for the globalist system of neoliberal expansion–a new form of hegemony and recolonization by the West.[29] The latter view suggests that although peripheral biennials promised to end the hegemony of the United States and Europe in art, the contemporary art circulating the globe in these biennials is still judged by the international art world, based on institutional (i.e. Western) art standards, and creates a standardization of postmodernist pluralism. Thus, the alternative spaces that biennials might offer lose their credibility and any decentralizing effect, as Rasheed Araeen, the founder and editor in chief of the journal *Third Text*, has noted:

> The recent globalization of the capitalist economy, still dominated and controlled by the West, has attained a new power and confidence, which is now being translated through the globalization of world cultures. This has created a new space and job opportunities for the neo-colonial collaborators, and with this has emerged a group of ethnic or multicultural functionaries, in the form of writers-cum-curators from different parts of the Third World. With the rhetoric of exclusion on their tongues and an appeal to the liberal conscience of Western society, these new functionaries of the system drag anyone and everyone, so long as they belong to their own ethnic or national groups, to the art market of the West. We thus have Chinese, Africans, Latin Americas, etc., promoting their Chinese (which could include Southeast Asians), African and Latin American artists respectively. As for history or ideology, they are no longer needed.[30]

Araeen sums up this contradiction in the art world very well. Just as the recent globalization of capitalist economies marginalizes nonwestern economies, the recent globalization of contemporary art under neoliberalism cannot effectively address the ongoing structural marginalization of nonwestern artists. The rhetoric of inclusion may serve the logic and philosophy of the market, but it does not ensure the representation of oppressed groups.

While it is crucial to acknowledge that the contemporary biennial, as an institution, sits on an interlocked relationship of corporate and artistic spheres, we should take into account multiple discontinuities and contradictions flowing both from this relationship and the biennial institution. In a dialectical approach, David Craven warns us about the one-sighted view of biennials and taking on the phenomenon of a homogenous system of institutional relations:

> In fact, biennials, which never simply 'reflect' neoliberalism or globalization, are densely mediated institutions even as the terms of this mediation are quite diverse, depending on the nation at issue and the regional history under consideration, as well as contestation. As a group, the international biennials are multidirectional entities that embody contested meanings, which oscillate between colonialism and/or neocolonialism versus anti-colonialism, on the one hand, and nationalism and/or transnationalism versus internationalism, on the other hand. Consequently, it is simply an ahistorical assertion to write that 'extraordinary proliferation of biennials is driven by the same forces,' no matter on which continent they occur or in relation to which set of regional tensions.[31]

Another point that should be made is that biennials around the world have very different infrastructures, sponsorship mechanisms, ideologies and conditions for integration (or resistance) to neoliberal globalization. Therefore, they cannot be lumped together in a single perspective of criticism with a deterministic conclusion about their submissiveness to neoliberalism and their pseudo-inclusiveness. In fact, all biennials are influenced ideologically, and, to a degree, practically, by international currents of the global art economy, the effects of which yield a certain standardization. However, each biennial also has its unique local dynamic that resists the imposed directives of the biennial model, and each biennial has a different dialogical relationship with its local art community that affects the level of its reception to international currents.

Havana Biennial is a good, albeit controversial example as it has been a key space of contestation between the international art system that pressures the Cuban art community to open up to international markets and the revolutionary goals of the Cuban government. Since its launch in 1984, the Havana Biennial has acted as a buffer zone between local art institutions and the international art market. While acknowledging the powerful hand of international markets, it has also supported and guarded local art interests. Because of the direct engagement of the state with cultural productions in Cuba through cultural policies and government-run institutions, the Havana Biennial depends on other art institutions, as is the case with other privately sponsored biennials. Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam (Wifredo Lam Center of Contemporary Art) is the state institution that organizes the Havana Biennial and controls the majority of visual art activities in Cuba. It produces most of the exhibition catalogs published in Cuba and the magazines *Arte Cubano* and, more recently, *Arte por Excelencias*, which launched its first edition during the 10th Biennial in 2009.

The curatorial team for the Havana Biennial, which is appointed by the government, includes experts in the areas of art and culture, many of whom are also regular contributors to the aforementioned magazines and others that promote Cuban art locally and globally. At the same time, Cuba's two major private galleries, *Galería Habana* and *HB,* which handle the Cuban art trade in the international art market, are largely dependent on the Havana Biennial. They contribute to the Biennial by hosting performances, collective activities, and workshops as side venues for the Biennial and in turn, they gain sales and exposure for their collections of contemporary Cuban art to the international biennial crowd.

However internationalized it is, the Havana Biennial's *raison d'être* is tightly connected to the ongoing revolutionary struggle in the cultural and educational sectors of Cuba. La Bienal de la Habana was one of the many cultural festivals and institutions born in early 1980s Cuba. Others include the Festival of New Latin American Cinema, the Havana Ballet Festival, the House

of the Americas, the National Print House, and the New Latin American Cinema Institution, which followed the establishment of the Ministry of Culture and the foundation of the Instituto Superior de Arte, in 1976. Cuban cultural institutions and the Havana Biennial were founded to challenge Western value systems embedded in colonialist discourses with the cultural solidarity of Latin America, Africa, and Asia—geographies with a historical resistance to Western hegemony. Since its inception, therefore, the Havana Biennial has operated as a venue for the disputation of the competing agendas held by various state actors, as well as the discourses that determine Cuba's place in the neoliberal global order.

The Havana Biennial is the site of political, linguistic, and artistic struggle between the state and the internationally renowned Cuban artists who participate. This dynamic is especially prominent in Tania Bruguera's works, both within and outside of the Biennial. One significant example is the long-term, performance-like project titled *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* (Behavior Art School), organized by Bruguera from 2002-2009.

Bruguera's work at the 10th Havana Biennial at the Wifredo Lam Center of Contemporary Art dealt with the idea of official language and dialogue. For the *Cátedra Arte de Conducta,* Bruguera, created a stage at Havana's Instituto Superior de Arte and invited Cubans to talk about anything for one minute. She also provided 200 disposable cameras to the public for documenting the event. During one-minute speeches, two actors–a man and a woman dressed as officials from the Ministry of the Interior–attempted to place a dove on the shoulder of each speaker. This gesture recalled an event that had occurred on January 6, 1959, when a white dove landed on Fidel Castro's right shoulder while he gave his initial speech of the revolution. At the time, the dove provided proof for the followers of Santeria–the Afro-Cuban religion–that the gods supported Castro because he was spiritually 'crowned' as the leader of the Cuban people. Upon taking the stage, one woman cried hysterically, another screamed, and one young man remained silent for the duration of his allotted minute. One participant, in the spirit of Castro, claimed, 'This should be banned'. Another was thrown off the stage because she exceeded the one-minute rule, and approximately thirty other speakers criticized the government's restrictions on the freedom of speech and the use of the Internet.

At the start of the 2009 Havana Biennial, the Cuban Minister of Culture, Abel Prieto, was interviewed by Pablo Espinoza for Cuba's popular communist newspaper *La Jornada*. In that interview, Prieto spoke highly of the Biennial, asserting that one of its principle objectives is to build an alternative to the concessions market and describing it as a vehicle to defend the idea of the Cuban utopia. When asked about Bruguera's performance, he condemned some of the participants for being provocateurs but also defended free speech: 'This is one of the subjects of critical art in Cuba. We are promoting a critical art of reflection to help us pinpoint our flaws so that we can defend the utopia. If the criticism comes from a position of commitment to the country, the results can be really fruitful'.[32] Prieto convincingly demonstrated that the Ministry of Culture continues to serve as a buffer between the demands of the Castro government and the demands of a new generation of artists, who have become a part of the global art world, enjoying privileges, fame, and fortune unavailable to previous generations.

With the island's tourist sector opening up to the giant American market, the Havana Biennial has already become one of the cultural attractions for dollar flow. How this will affect the character and the quality of Cuban art and the revolutionary goals of the Biennial is yet unknown. The Havana

Biennial still occupies an important space for social negotiations between the Cuban state and Cuban artists and between the Cuban artists and the ever-expanding global art market. Yet, the Biennial's infrastructure, goals, and achievements should be considered within the larger framework of the contestations of the international and local benefits to the island.

As is also the case at other international biennials, while globalized art world professionals in Havana immerse themselves in a superficial review of the local art scene that is already filtered through the local art elite and their professional and political agendas, some local artists make opportunistic use of the global art networks, through the biennial system, to get a foot in the global art market. Nevertheless, who will be represented in the global museums, international biennials, and mega art events still depends on the hierarchies that proliferate first locally and then through the relationship of the local art structure to the 'globalized' art institutions. Thus, being represented globally and being legitimized as a part of the 'global art system' is a restrictive situation that only allows inclusion based on certain qualifications and expectations. The globalization of contemporary art, just like the neoliberal global economic process itself, is not a democratic process that entails automatic entry for the peripheral and/or underrepresented artists and artistic practices to the international production and circulation of art.

The globalization of art has always been experienced unevenly in different regions and at different times. For example, in Northern Europe, in the early nineteenth-century, humanist thinkers considered the relationship of art to economics by acknowledging the economic status of the artist, valuation, and consumption of art, while the rest of Europe, under the control of the Habsburg Empire, maintained a feudal patronage system. Since 1989, when the Berlin wall, which had separated communist and capitalist worlds, came down, marking the official end of the Cold War, the art world has demonstrated a growing commitment to a narrative of contemporary art that emphasizes its ties to transnational capital. Hence, as argued here, the institutional art world is not homogenous, neither globally nor nationally. Moreover, due to the uneven geographical development of neoliberalism, contemporary art practices are often uneven and incoherent, as demonstrated by the differing infrastructures, sponsorship mechanisms, and ideologies that have existed in the various international art biennials. They cannot, therefore, be lumped together and subjected to the blanket criticism that they are submissive to neoliberalism. In fact, every biennial has a different ideological and economic relationship with its local art community that affects the level of its integration to international currents. While the institutional art world aids private profit with the proliferation of international art biennials and museums, this activity also generates an unprecedented level of energy and creativity that opens up new discursive spaces and forms alternative practices at the local level, which in turn challenges the standardization of the biennial institution. In the relationship between the art world and neoliberal globalization, neither the processes of domination nor the strategies of resistance are fixed and predictable.

Notes

1 Julian Stallabrass, *Contemporary Art: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.7.

2 See Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) and Chin-Tao Wu, *Privatizing Culture: Corporate Art Intervention Since the 1980s* (London and New York: Verso, 2002). Hence it is important to emphasize that the institutional art world does not represent the entire production and organization of contemporary art in the world and that there are multiple worlds of art.

3 Philip Weiss, 'Selling the Collection', *Art in America* 78 (1990), 124-131 (p. 129).

4 Peter Schjeldahl, 'The Global Salon', *The New Yorker*, July 01, 2002, p.94.

5 Susan Buck-Morrs, 'Visual Studies and Global Imagination', *Papers of Surrealism*, Issue 2 No. 2 (2004), 1-24 (p. 4).

6 James Elkins, *Stories of Art* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p.150.

7 See John Byrne, 'Contemporary Art and Globalization: Biennials and the Emergence of the De-Centered Artist', *International Journal of the Humanities* 3(2003), 169-172 and Charlotte Bydler, *The Global ArtWorld Inc.: On the Globalization of Contemporary Art* (Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University Press, 2004).

8 Hans Belting, 'Mapping Global Art GAM: Critical Perspectives on Current Issues', (2009) <http://gam2.zkm.de/blog/2009/08/26/hans-belting-mapping-global-art-introductory-remarks> [accessed 29 April 2010].

9 The art world's interest in contemporary Arab art was augmented after the Arab Spring in 2011. In the summer of 2011, the 53rd Venice Biennial reserved a big room in the Arsenal for Arab art. Until that time, some Arab countries were renting a space in Venice to exhibit as a part of parallel events.

10 News release, 'Davidoff Announces Major Sponsorship with Art Basel', (2012) <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/davidoff-announces-major-sponsorship-with-art-basel-147782555.html> [accessed 11 August 2013].

11 Ibid.

12 News release, 'Davidoff Cigars, Associate Partner of Art Basel, Announces Three Major Steps for The Davidoff Art Initiative', (2013) < http://bluemedium.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Davidoff-Miami-Press-Release.pdf.> [accessed 12 August 2013].

13 Ibid.

14 The September 2007 issue of *ARTnews* named Henríquez one of twenty-five art world trendsetters.

15 News release, 'One Year after Davidoff Announces Major Steps for the Davidoff Art Initiative', (2013) <http://www.acigarsmoker.com/2013/06/12/one-year-after-launch-davidoff-announces-major-steps-for-the-davidoff-art-initiative/ > [accessed 12 August 2013].

16 Tourism services negotiations have been used particularly by the United States and European Union to increase pressure on the governments of developing countries to abolish restrictions on foreign ownership and to allow a high degree of self-regulation by transnational corporations in the sector. This resulted in selling or leasing vast areas of land to private investors and allowed a massive unregulated exploitation of natural and human resources for tourism purposes. For more on the subject, see Richard Gehrmann, 'Tourism, Exploitation, and Cultural Imperialism: Recent Observations from Indonesia', *Social Alternatives* 13 (1994), 12-26.

17 Rosalinda Gill and Andy Pratt, 'Precarity and Social Work: in the Social Factory?', *Theory, Culture & Society* 25/7-8 (2008), 2-13 (p. 3).

18 Hazel Friedman, 'The Curator as God', *Mail and Guardian*, (10 October 1997). <http://server.mg.co.za?mg/art/reviews/97oct/9oc-biennale2.html> [accessed 26 October 2015].

19 See Pascal Gielen, 'The Art Scene: An Ideal Production Unit for Economic Exploitation?', *Open!* 17 (2009), 1-7, and Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004).

20 Ibid, p. 9.

21 Gielen, 'The Biennial: A Post-Institution for Immaterial Labor', *Open!* 16 (2009), 1-10 (p. 7).

22 Ibid.

23 For more on the 'nomadic art elite' see Carol Becker, 'The Romance of Nomadism: A series of Reflections', *Art Journal* 58 (1999), 22-29.

24 As we know, the artist's image changes when his role in society changes. For example,

the concept of 'genius artist' emerged in the fourteenth century Renaissance, with the rise of humanism, which asserted an individual's worth and emphasized knowledge. In the nineteenth century, bourgeois attitudes developed at the same time as the rise of the bourgeoisie, and artists saw themselves as self-made unique individuals. The twentieth century artist as an 'outsider' figure prevails along with the concepts of alienation in the visual arts and continues until the 1970s.

25 Georg Schöllhammer, 'Art in the Era of Globalization,' *European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies* (1999), <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0303/schoellhammer/en> [accessed 26 October 2013].

26 Figures cited are from the website, universes-in-universe.org–a site dedicated to visual arts from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and international art biennials. Universe in Universe (2011) <http://www.universes-in-universe> [accessed 12 December 2014].

27 The concept of 'biennalization' was formulated by Gerard Haupt, in Berlin in the late 1990s, to refer to the phenomenon that peaked during the 1990s and consisted of the multiplication of contemporary art biennials in the world's large and small urban capitals. See Larissa Buchholz and Ulf Wuggenig, 'Cultural Globalization between Myth and Reality: The Case of Contemporary Visual Arts', *Art-e-fact* 4 (2005). <http://artefact.mi2.hr/_a04/lang_en/theory_buchholz_en.htm> [accessed 12 July 2009].

28 Noël Carroll, 'Art and Globalization: Then and Now', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 65 (2007), 131-143.

29 Two important anthologies of criticism of biennials bring together different perspectives on this phenomenon. See Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic, eds., *Manifesta Decade*, and Marieke van Hal, Solveig Ovstebo and Elena Filipovic, eds.,*The Biennial Reader: An Anthology on Large-Scale Perennial Exhibitions of Contemporary Art* (Bergen: Bergen Kunsthall, Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010). See also Philip Auslander, 'The Biennale and Its Discontents', *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 76/26 (2004), 51-57.

30 Rasheed Araeen, 'Beyond Postcolonial Cultural Theory', *The Third Text Reader: On Art, Culture, and Theory*, eds., Rasheed Araeen, Sean Cubitt, and Ziauddin Sardar (London: Continuum, 2002), pp. 342-343 (p. 342).

31 David Craven, 'Institutionalized Globalization: Contemporary Art and Corporate Gulag in Chile', in *Globalization and Contemporary Art*, edited by Jonathan Harris (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 479-495 (p. 493).

32 Pablo Espinoza, 'Bienal Habanera Cuba fomenta un arte crítico para defender la utopía: Abel Prieto', *La Jornada*, (5 April 2009), 13-14 (p. 13).

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