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Abstracts

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Western Desert Iconography: Rock art mythological narratives and graphic vocabularies

Jo McDonald and Peter Veth

The travels of the ancestral beings known as *Wati Kutjarra* (two lizard-men) are central to Western Desert cosmology. The results of their actions, markings and transmogrified forms are often seen in socially 'open' domains and cover and connect features over huge tracts of land. On the central Canning Stock Route of Western Australia there are detailed ethnographic records and ongoing observances of *Wati Kutjarra* by custodians at a number of ranges and water holes where pigment rock art occurs in shelters. At these same locales archaeological excavations have yielded ochres and occupational deposits which suggest these places have acted as aggregation locales through long periods of time. In this paper we explore the dynamics and genesis of socially constituted desert iconography through time.

Joining the dots: Analysing the sustainability of the Australian Aboriginal art market

Meaghan Wilson-Anastasios

Sotheby's estimates between fifty and seventy percent of the Aboriginal art it sells at auction is bought by international collectors. How do those buyers view their acquistions? On the Sotheby's website, you will not find Aboriginal art listed with 'Australian' and 'Contemporary Art' under the 'Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture' department. Rather, it is classified as one of the 'Ancient and Ethnographic Arts', alongside 'Antiquities' and 'Pre-Columbian Art'.

This paper will show that the promotion and perception of Aboriginal art as ethnographic rather than contemporary in nature is but one of a number of important aspects of the market that have implications for the industry's long-term sustainability. This distinction has a significant effect on the way Aboriginal art is distributed, promoted and received by buyers and sellers. Collectors measure the value of ethnographic material by assessing its proximity to a culturally immaculate source. An object has the greatest ethnographic integrity if it emanates from a primitive, isolated community.

Make the Stones Shout: Contemporary museums and the challenge of culture

Christopher R. Marshall

Contemporary museums continue to play a vital role in articulating powerful statements of national and cultural identity for broad and diverse audiences. Focusing on a range of global case studies

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– from recently instituted displays at the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore to the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC and from the British Museum in London to the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne – the author will consider some of the key challenges facing contemporary museums in their efforts to incorporate new insights and approaches to presenting art and culture in contemporary contexts. A particular focus will be provided on the problem of the repatriation/reunification of ancient sculptures and artworks, of which the Parthenon sculptures is a major case.

Art History and Translation

Iain Boyd Whyte and Claudia Heide

This text reflects on the insights gained in the process of launching *Art in Translation*, the first journal dedicated to the best writing from around the world on the visual arts in English translation.

When art history gained academic currency in the later nineteenth century, it was doubly inflected by language. The subject matter was articulated along linguistic divisions, often reflecting national boundaries. At the same time, schools of art writing developed in the major European languages. According to the standard historiography, German was the dominant language of the discipline in the early years, superseded in the second half of the twentieth century by English. This account insists both on an agreed canon of art writing and on a hierarchical relationship between linguistic areas. From a post-colonial perspective both these positions must be challenged. A more differentiated reading suggests that in spite of the hegemonic power of these principle languages, art history has always been more fragmented, diverse, and written in many more languages. While the hegemony of the English language works against diversity, it offers as a global language the opportunity to communicate across linguistic boundaries. This text addresses the politics of translation in art history: the benefits and dangers of English-language domination. How does translation and its avoidance affect the flow of knowledge and the exchange of ideas? Is it possible, via the act of translation, to encourage a more pluralist and polyglot art history? Beyond these ideological dimensions, this article also investigates the ways in which translation theory enables a rigorous critical methodology that can advance thinking about visual culture.

The image of the megalopolis – understanding the complex visual construction of Mexico City

Peter Krieger

The image of the city has always been an important source and tool for defining cultural communities that dwell within. Distinctive street patterns as well as the building scenographies in different cultures and periods document the technological, economic, and cultural capacities of the cities' inhabitants. From Aristotle's practical philosophy up to the current tourist view of the city, where the relics of the past – cathedrals, castles, or town halls – serve as symbolic attractors, the heterogeneous image of the city reveals interesting insights into the history of civilization. Beyond the abstract data used in economic or social sciences research – numbers of inhabitants, income, productivity, and other statistical information – the image (and also the imaginaries) of the city with its high cultural complexity is a topic of research for critical art history which offers unexpected and refreshing material for a transdisciplinary dialogue on the city as the most essential form of

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human culture. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the city form and image have changed considerably, in quantitative and qualitative terms. The increasing number and size of the world's megalopolises (cities with more than 10 millions inhabitants), mainly in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, marks a new epoch of city culture with different structural and aesthetic parameters than those of traditional Old European cities.

This article reviews, first, the new visual constructions of the megalopolis, second, its transformation into artistic and documentary images (photograph, film, digital art, etc.), and third, how they are catalysed into collective mental imaginaries. As an example, I examine Mexico City, a megalopolis of about 20 million inhabitants where cultural fragments of the prehispanic past, the colonial period, and the modern epoch have left their visual traces, to constitute a vital collage; one that has many contrasts as well as the occasional clash in cross-cultural processes. Supported by the recent tendencies of *Bildwissenschaft* (visual studies), this article tries to develop new perspectives of research on the critical phenomena at the beginning 21st century from within the current polycentric and hyperurbanized world.

Visual Culture of the Indian Ocean: India in a polycentric world

Frederick M. Asher

What India produced others wanted. Others therefore wanted India. Although this by no means entirely explains India's role in a polycentric world, it explains a great deal. It also helps us understand India as a fulcrum, at least within Indian Ocean trade. That is, the means by which India's visual products became known and then coveted as well as the means by which India absorbed visual products from other centers of the world long before the age of call centers and other forms of outsourcing by which India engages in the present-day polycentric world.

My article for *Diogenes* examines four periods in India's history that present opportunities to explore India's role in a polycentric world as documented by visual examples. The first is the third-century BCE Maurya empire, which emerged in response to Alexander's march toward the east. While we have some written documentation for India's engagement with the Mediterranean, shared motifs and even the export of luxury goods beautifully fashioned from ivory document the engagement of two of the most important civilizations of the time. The second is the powerful seafaring and sea-trading Chola empire, which left its mark across Southeast Asia with the expansion of Buddhism and Hinduism, with scripts based on those of India, and with a Hindu temple of the thirteenth century, one very possibly designed and carved by Indian artists, whose remains are still to be seen in Quanzhou, China, the Zayton of Marco Polo's writing. The third is India's role in producing export textiles designed specifically for markets outside of India, for example, those of Southeast Asia but extending to the so-called Paisley prints and the plethora of words for textiles derived from Indian languages, e.g. Calico and Seersucker. Finally, the article examines Mughal paintings that incorporate European works and European artists, including Rembrandt, who copied Mughal paintings.

Art History in China

LaoZhu (Zhu Qingsheng)

This paper presents the concept of "active art" as it was shaped throughout the history of Chinese art. It insists on the seminal role of calligraphy to that effect and to the birth of an artistic consciousness in China.

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Other Views: Art History in (South) Africa and the Global South

Federico Freschi

The International Committee of the History of Art (CIHA) has recently been addressing concerns about the unequal distribution of resources around the globe and challenges from post-colonial societies to the older methods and concepts of Western art history. At the CIHA congress in Melbourne in January 2008, one of the key issues for discussion was the extent to which we need to re-think the discipline of the history of art "in order to establish cross-cultural dimensions as fundamental to its scope, method and vision". The national association of South African Visual Arts Historians (SAVAH) proposed continuing these discussions in the colloquium 'Other Views: Art History in (South) Africa and the Global South', held at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg in January, 2011.

A principal focus of the discussions took the 'other view', that is the view from the Global South. What if the centres of intellectual and financial power are reversed? What if the 'developing world' becomes the 'first world'? If South becomes North? In short, we tried to imagine a public intellectual space where such polar reversals can happen, and where new histories of art can emerge which are not necessarily centred on Western-based systems, nor dependent on the West for validation.

This paper explores some of questions central to this debate, and provides a tentative framework for its central aim, *viz*. to complicate the history of art and the relationship between histories in the Global South and the 'North' or 'West'.

Art History in the Cinema Age

Thierry Dufrêne

In the art biennales of today, video has become, like it or not, a universal tool, a sort of "green card" for today's art. It forms a convenient platform, especially when used with subtitles and especially for the artists of emerging countries, as long as they have access to this technique.

Could the art history film equally become a language shared by the community of art historians? This type of film is characterised by the collaboration of a filmmaker and an art historian, such as occurred when Roberto Longhi and Umberto Barbaro together produced their film *Carpaccio* in 1948. Erwin Panofsky, Rudolf Arnheim and Carlo Argan have analysed cinema in this regard. Others have practised it in undertaking art history: Kenneth Clark is one example. Another is Carlo Ragghianti, who made 20 *critofilms* between 1948 and 1964 which he defined as "a reading and a critical analysis of artistic language realised through the visual language of cinema".

Is our contemporary era, marked as it is by the globalisation of art and the proliferation of films on art (documentaries, "art films", experimental films, biopics), beginning thus to create its own art history? If so, of which sort?

This art history through film has a comparative intention, marked by a re-reading of the art of the past, in the way that Bill Viola, for example, is enlivening painting. It has the potential to transform *connoisseurship* by enabling a new relationship to emerge between the eye and the artwork, but it is also a post-colonial history which bursts the boundaries between ethnographic films like those of Flaherty or *Les Maîtres fous* of Jean Rouch (1954) or *Les Statues meurent aussi* of Chris Marker and Alain Resnais, and films of today's highly ritualised "performance art" manifestations. As well it brings consideration to new approaches, such as those of the neuro-sciences and questions the force of images (David Freedberg) and their "agency" (Gell). Henri Storck has written: "The eye of the camera is much more powerful than our own".

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In his book *L'Intemporel* (1973), Malraux wrote that "the museum of the audio-visual" had replaced the "museum of the imaginary". With video and digital art, the art history film has entered a new era, while still remaining an important element of the teaching of art history, as had been wished for from very early on since the 1950s by the art historian Pierre Francastel.

Already in the 1960s UNESCO played an important part in searching out and compiling an inventory of resources relating to film on art. Such investigation needs to be resumed today. But above all, it is the history of the "art history film" which still remains to undertaken at a time when the challenges of a now polycentred world are sketching out a different future.

Paradigms of the Beholder. The Perception of Art in a Global Age: Over Here – Over There

Peter J. Schneemann

This article demonstrates how art history investigates the perception of art at a moment when a main axiom of effect and understanding of an object turns out to be variable; the question of the "where?"

Today the old hermeneutical problem of historical distance is replaced with a geographical challenge, namely that of geographical distance. Not only does the beholder travel more extensively than ever, but also the artwork itself, the object of interpretation, shifts from one context to another. Thus, the beholder often does not fit within the original context in which the work was produced and is therefore constantly looking at "the other".

The author discusses contemporary art and new frameworks of understanding that have become more complex in evoking expectations about the art work as a reference system, as they relate to the beholder's own position to places far away. Concepts which again imply a universal language of art again (e.g. neuroscience) have to be contrasted with both the artist and the audience's desire for the specific, the different.

Portraying The Ptujska Gora Pilgrims

Marjeta Ciglenečki

The pilgrimage church at Ptujska Gora, built around 1400 and devoted to the Virgin of Mercy, is recognized as one of the most highly regarded and valued examples of cultural heritage in Slovenia. Pilgrims, of course, began to determine the nature of the site from the beginning of the 15th century on and a significant number of images depicting the pilgrims to Ptujska Gora have been produced over the centuries. These images provide valuable insight into the demographic shifts in the quintessential Ptujska Gora pilgrim over time. In the 15th century, noblemen and clergymen were portrayed as donators, closely connected to the Virgin (for example, the relief in the main altar with 82 figures under the cloak of the Virgin, and the *predella* of the altar of Our Lady of the Rosary and the frescoes in the Cross Chapel). In the 17th and 18th century it is apparent that the most devoted pilgrims came from the middle classes (see the copper engraving by Wolfgang Kilian, depicting eight miracles). From the 19th century on, peasants and pilgrims from the lower classes attracted the attention of artists (such as Alois Kasimir and France Mihelič). Up until the 1970s, the pilgrims to Ptujska Gora typically reflected the structure of socialist society in which religion was unwelcome; their images were systematically recorded by the photographer Stojan Kerbler.

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The Presence of Cross-Cultural Past in the Art History of Central Europe

Pál Lővei

Central Europe is a mixture of multi-ethnical regions, with a stormy past and many cross-cultural connections. The 19th and 20th centuries saw the birth of several nation-states that used cultural heritage constructs to legitimize their existence, demonstrating their long history and supposed cultural superiority. Characteristics of the minds of the different nations were searched for in the field of art history, too. The old and new states published series of "national" art histories in the second half of the 20th century.

Simultaneous with these "national" art histories was the contradictory notion of using art to promote a unified Europe. Instigated by the political changes of 1989/90, collective actions were brought to the region in the form of several international exhibitions, presenting topics such as Baroque art in Central Europe or "Central Europe around 1000". Organized through international cooperation is the preparation of a nine-volume hand book on the history of art in Eastern-Central Europe, discussed in a European context.

A novelty of the convention of the Council of Europe (Faro 2005) is the definition of "heritage community". According to it groups and/or individuals have the right to express their affinity to any part of European heritage, independently of ownership and localization, and anybody, alone or within a community, may belong to several heritage communities. Interpretations can and will be different, but the right to have access to material and sources of the common heritage has already started to be accepted.

The Challenge of the Object – the CIHA Congress 2012 in Nuremberg

G. Ulrich Grossmann

For the first time since 1871, the International Art History Congress was held on invitation at a museum. From the 15th to the 20th of July, 2012 the "Object" has been the focus of 21 sections and up to 400 lectures. The aim of the Congress was to discuss and redefine the object's role and meaning as a basis and subject matter of art history.

Today's media not only facilitates worldwide communication, but also the "virtualisation" of art history. What consequences does this have for the object itself? What chance and what risks ensue in the virtualisation of our profession? In addition to the virtualisation, we are also experiencing the extraordinary effect of the object itself. Long queues of visitors form to view one piece of art. During war, artworks are protected by international conventions, in particular the amount of damage they are exposed to. Ruined world-heritage sites, and also artwork that is taken hostage, belong to daily politics (looted art).

Up until now, art history has, notably in Europe, had European artwork in focus. Non-European art was often measured with other criterion. Methodical comparative research of artwork from different lands is sensible. How can such research be conducted in the future? Is there a line between a "High Culture", in which art history is interested, and "Folk Culture", toward which ethnology strives?

The sections of the 33rd International Art History Congress are structured around the questions in the dealings and the roles of the object, not on categories, epochs or continents. The fundamental approach of art history research of an object is not dependent on category, age or land of origin. We want, therefore, to compare and correlate similar questions and developments in cooperation with the different cultures, and determine the role of the object in the future of art history.

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